



THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA HIGHGATE SUB BRANCH

www.highgate-rsl.org.au

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Highgate Happenings February 2024

February Lunch Arrangements

Our next lunch is on Monday 19 February. Time 1200 for 1230h. Cost is \$50 per person, raffle \$5 if you wish to indulge. Due to the season, ties optional. Bookings can be made at:

<https://forms.gle/ex3zTn2YPvsNuWNh6>

And the response link;

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NscqE-sziKkbcxm4l6EvIK-NOXP7w5Kwz1polJkE4XA/edit?usp=sharing>

The Committee is well aware of the issues which occurred at the last lunch with layout and seating and are working with the Anzac Club to resolve these.

The menu will be Prosciutto Wrap Chicken Breast, Carrot Puree, Polenta Cake, Corn Salsa, Jus; Lemon Curd Tart, Swiss Meringue, Raspberry Coulis,



Our guest speaker is Ashley Morrison, sports commentator, author and award-winning documentary filmmaker. Born and raised in England Ashley moved to Australia in his 20's. Following a career in newspapers he continued to work in the print media before moving into radio and television. He has commentated at various World Cups and at the Olympic Games. He has written five books including the biography of arguably Africa's greatest boxer, Azumah Nelson, and has two more in the pipeline. He has also made four award-winning documentaries, one being "Mark Our Place" which tells the story of three Irishmen who all played for the same rugby club in Dublin, all went on to play for Ireland and all were awarded the highest military honour for valour, the Victoria Cross.

Thank you to our raffle supporters:



GROVENOR HOTEL

Hay Street, East Perth

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President's Reach-Out:



Dear Highgate Member, Happy New Year to you.

A warm welcome to three new members to Highgate - Terry Jones, transferred from Riverton and new Affiliates Meredyth Blackwell-Bell and Ann Kennish. I also wish Committee member Howard Montagu and Associate member and Sub-Warden Shirly Mooney, a speedy recovery from their ailments.

This year we have a great selection of guest speakers to ensure there is maximum incentive to attend our monthly lunches. Our lunch held on 22nd January, 2024, was no exception with our very popular guest speaker Richard Offen. Richard attracted an attendance of 83 people, a great number. The lunch held on Level 1, and therefore right next to the kitchen for more efficient hot-meal serving, did have some teething problems in terms of table layout and seat numbers. Anzac Club staff were away the week previous on their break so that created some setup challenges for the staff. We will work through these issues with the Anzac Club Manager and review our internal registration to make the registration/seating process more seamless.

I mentioned previously our fantastic sword raffle. The sword, to be generously donated by member Leon Griffiths and his company Sword World, comes with a retail value of circa \$1500. I say circa as there are three ADF sword patterns from which to choose – Navy, Army and Airforce, each with a slightly different retail price. The package includes sword of choice, tan leather sword bag and sword knot. We are awaiting raffle permit approval from the relevant authority, but tickets should be available to purchase at the February luncheon. Tickets will be \$20 each and there are only **300 tickets** to be sold. We will also make tickets available online to better facilitate sales and for sale to a wider market. The draw will be at our Highgate lunch on 20th May 2024, at 12.15pm and drawn by our guest speaker on that day in May, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC. The results of the draw will be published on the Highgate website on 3rd June, 2024. The proceeds from the sales will be to assist members and subsidise some of our high function costs, so I encourage all to participate and buy a ticket/tickets for the common good of our membership.

I wish to thank Honorary Highgate member and Honorary Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr Gabriele Maluga for her superb and tireless support to Highgate. Dr Maluga books a table for 10 regularly. Dr Maluga invites some excellent guests to Highgate including many of our foreign countries' Consular representatives in Perth. This exposure is not only fantastic for Highgate, but for the RSLWA generally.

I invite all to check out our very informative and user-friendly website at www.highgate-rsl.org.au that member Ian Petkoff maintains. There is much information, particularly of historical importance on the site that I am sure you will enjoy reading. Thank you, Ian.

I look forward to your attendance at our February 19th lunch where our guest speaker is Ashley Morrison. Ashley is a sports commentator, author and award-winning documentary filmmaker. More details on Ashley and other matters of interest will appear in our Highgate Happenings created by our very hard-working Secretary, Greg Wilson.

John Cleary



Happy Birthday February Babies

Peter Velterop, Mick Coyle, David Grace, Phillip Bleach, John Forward, Alan Pritchard, Greg Smith, Henry Atturo, Jinkil Lee, Ruth Shean, Kevin Whiting, Don Rae, Lenore Fairfield.

What's Happening

19 February – Ashley Morrison, freelance broadcaster and commentator.

18 March 24 – Jonathon Langer - Chiropractic and Soft Tissue Therapist.

Anzac Day – Warden of the SWM.

20 May 24 – Senator Linda Reynolds.

17 June - Dr Leon Warne COO Little Green Pharma.

15 July - President RSLWA.

19 August - AGM & OBE/OBN lunch

16 September TBA

21 October - Phil Orchard "Living with Parkinsons"

Welcome

Affiliate Members Meredyth Blackwell-Bell; Ann Kennish

Wish to contact the Secretary?

Please use highgate.secretary@sb.rslwa.org.au and no other email account.



Australians at War – FEBRUARY

1 February 1943. Last Australian forces sail for home from the Middle East. Japan's entry into the war forced the Australian Government to decline British requests to concentrate on the war in North Africa and Europe. Australia began to 'look to America' for support and concentrated the bulk of her forces against the Japanese

2 February 1968. Baria recaptured. The 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, recaptured Baria after the Tet offensive. The effects of the Tet Offensive were felt most acutely by the Australians when the Viet Cong attacked targets around Phuoc Tuy's provincial capital, Baria. The attacks were repulsed with few Australian casualties, though the Communists suffered heavy losses.

9 February 1943. Japanese defeat on Guadalcanal. After the ill-fated Philippines campaign, Guadalcanal was the first test of land strength between Japan and the United States in the Second World War. Japanese reverses at Guadalcanal contributed to their having to withdraw from the Kokoda Trail in 1942 when they were almost within sight of Port Moresby.

10 February 1944. End of Japanese resistance on the Huon Peninsula. Fighting in the Huon Peninsula lasted from August 1943 until mid-February 1944 and involved heavy fighting at such places as Lae, Finschhafen, Sattelberg, Shaggy Ridge and the Ramu Valley.

11 February 1951. Chinese launch their fourth phase offensive in Korea.

12 February 1940. First convoy of Second AIF reaches the Middle East. Australia's first land campaign of the Second World War took place in North Africa against the Italians.

13 February 1946. Main Australian contingent of BCOF sailed for Japan from Morotai. Australian personnel played a prominent role in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan at the conclusion of the Second World War in the Pacific. They were allotted the devastated Hiroshima Prefecture on the island of Honshu.

13 February 1965. First Australian SAS Squadron advance party departs for Borneo The SAS served in Borneo during Confrontation to gather intelligence, conduct reconnaissance patrols and collect information on topography.

14 February 1942. The Vyner Brooke, carrying 65 Australian nurses and other refugees from Singapore, was sunk by Japanese aircraft one day after leaving the island. The survivors made their way to Banka Island where one group of nurses were massacred by their Japanese captors. Only Sister Vivian Bullwinkel survived the massacre.

15 February 1942. Fall of Singapore. Over 15,000 Australians taken prisoner by the Japanese on Singapore. For both Britain and Australia this was a terrible military defeat.

18 February 1941. Australian troops arrive in Singapore. Australia recognised that Singapore was vital to its own defence, without the island the British fleet had no suitable base for operations in the South East Asia. The 8th Division was sent to bolster the island's defence in the event of Japan's entering the war.

18 February 1943. 9th Division arrives in Fremantle. Having served in North Africa the 9th Division was ordered back to help defend Australia against the Japanese.

21 February 1956. Australian and British aircraft bomb Kluang, Malaya. The raid was staged against the jungle base of the 7th Independent Platoon, Malayan Races Liberation Army in Central Johore and was carried out by Lincolns of No. 1 Squadron RAAF and Canberras of No. 12 Squadron RAF. It wiped out the camp and was regarded as the most successful of the 4,000 sorties flown by the Australians in Malaya.

23 February 1967. Major P.J. Badcoe, Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, originally of Adelaide, South Australia, leads an attack against Viet Cong troops - it was the first of three acts of bravery between February and April 1967 for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

25 February 1951. Hill 614, Korea. 12 Platoon, D Company, 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, captured this important piece of high ground at the second attempt, enabling the United Nations' forces northward advance to the Albany Line to continue.

27 February 1942. Battle of Java Sea. In two separate actions off the coast of Surabaya involving heavy losses in Allied shipping. HMAS Perth was involved in the battle and was one of the few allied ships to survive. The action delayed Japanese landings in Java by only one day.

29 February 1972. HMAS Sydney arrives at Vung Tau. On this voyage Sydney embarked 457 soldiers. HMAS Sydney made 21 voyages to Vietnam during the war.

State War Memorial – Sub-Wardens Wanted

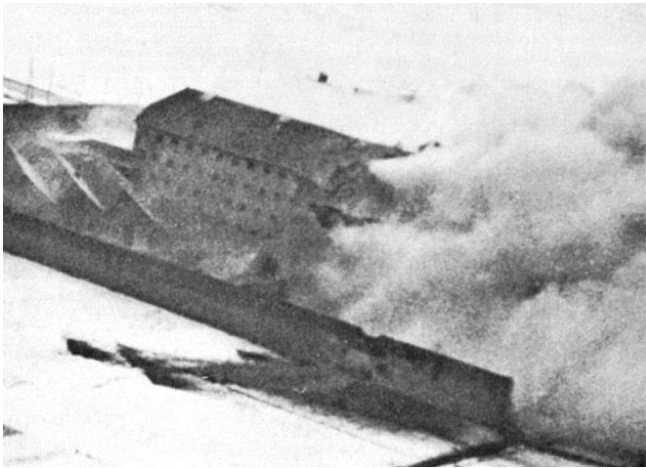
The next service at the State War Memorial is for the WRAAC Association on Friday, 16th February - 1700 for 1730hrs at the Flame of Remembrance,

"Highgate Sub-Branch is tasked by RSLWA with a leadership role supporting ceremonial and commemorative functions at the SWM through the positions of the Warden and Sub Wardens of the SWM and the activities of the Honour Avenues Group.

Due to age and health issues, a number of Sub-Wardens have retired and we are looking for additional members to become a Sub-Warden to assist at commemorative services. Approximately 17 – 20 services are conducted annually.

If you are interested in joining your fellow RSLWA members as a Sub-Warden, please contact Deputy Warden Geoff Simpson M. 0408 925 432 or email gsimpson001@optusnet.com.au"

Operation Jericho



On **February 18, 1944**, 18 of the legendary Mosquito fighter bombers of the Royal Air Force, Royal New Zealand Air Force, and Royal Australian Air Force embarked on a plan to attack the Amiens Prison in northwest France to free the 700 French Resistance members imprisoned there. The weather that day was so bad that one of the RNZAF pilots thought it was “either some form of practice or some form of practical joke.” Nevertheless, the group flew across the English Channel at just 15 meters (50 ft) above the waves, though five had to turn back due to

radio and engine problems. Now down to 13 planes, Group Captain Charles Pickard carried on with the raid.

At 12:01 PM, the bombers attacked the prison wall to allow the prisoners a route of escape. They demolished the blocks where German officers were standing guard, many of whom were killed or wounded. Two Mosquitos also attacked the nearby train station, buying the prisoners time while the German garrison was distracted. Only two aircraft were lost in the attack, including the one flown by Pickard. While 258 prisoners escaped, 102 were killed in the raid, and another 155 were captured.

The circumstances involving the request and the true purpose of the mission are still secret. While it has been purported that the request came from the French Resistance, which had members in the prison scheduled to be executed, a post-war investigation by the RAF revealed that Resistance leaders were not aware of the raid until the RAF requested a description of the prison. A (Most Secret) letter of March 1944 thanked the RAF for the raid. When the head of the SOE French section, Maurice Buckmaster, was confronted with the letter, signed by "C", he stated that he had never seen it and that he had not requested the raid and did not know who had.

A 2011 BBC television documentary on Operation Jericho speculated the raid may have been intended to divert the attention of German military intelligence from Normandy, where the Allied invasion of France took place on 6 June. Even today, no one is sure who ordered the raid or why, but the sheer skill and courage shown by the Mosquitos are undeniable.

Just Joking

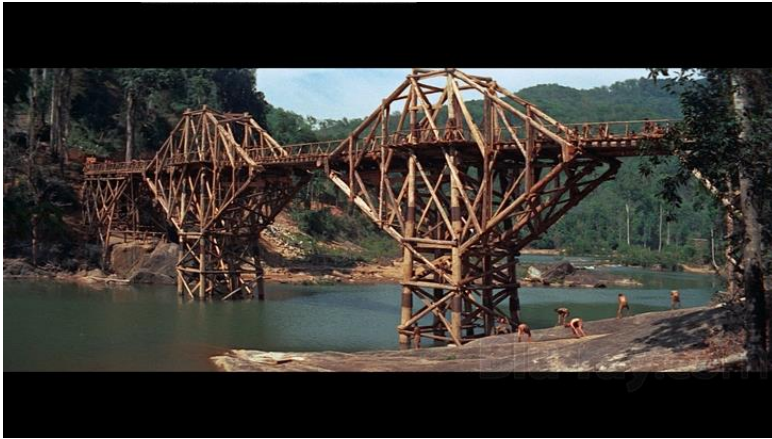


A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking around with a flyswatter.

“What are you doing?” she asked. “Hunting flies;” he replied. “Oh! Killed any?” she said.

“Yep, 3 males, two females”, came the answer. Intrigued, the wife asked “How can you tell them apart?” Husband, “3 were on a beer can, 2 on the phone.”

As you get older you start to realize which drinks give you a hangover. For me it's usually the ones after my 10th drink of the night that get me every time.



JANUARY 11, 2024

The Bridge on the River Kwai

One of the most globally renowned railway bridges is arguably the Bridge on the River Kwai, immortalized in the epic 1957 war film based on Pierre Boulle's 1952 book. This iconic structure became synonymous with the

Japanese World War II construction of the Thai/Burma railway, a harrowing endeavour marked by the use of slave labour. While the film portrayed a specific bridge over the Menan Khwai Noi River, in reality, the railway ran parallel to it for over 150 kilometres, traversing rugged terrain that demanded the creation of numerous cuttings, embankments, and wooden bridges over tributaries.

Approximately 30,000 prisoners of war and over 80,000 civilians perished under brutal Japanese conditions during the railway construction—a toll far surpassing the depicted hardships in the film. Notably, the most significant bridge built was a wooden structure over the Mae Klong, repeatedly targeted and destroyed by Allied planes before being replaced with a more resilient concrete and steel design.

Intriguingly, the Bridge on the River Kwai, as portrayed in the movie, wasn't situated in the actual location of the Menan Khwai Noi River but rather in Ceylon (modern-day Sri Lanka), where two bridges were specially constructed for the film set. The facts surrounding the construction and location have been further complicated by renaming a section of the river to Kwi to align with tourist expectations.

Despite these discrepancies, the book and film have received widespread acclaim, earning recognition for their crucial role in shedding light on the immense pain and sacrifice endured by the thousands involved in the construction of the Burma Railway. The legacy of the bridge, both in reality and on screen, stands as a powerful reminder of the human cost of war and the resilience of those who endured immense hardships—contributing to the freedoms and privileges enjoyed in today's world. *(Article courtesy Frontline)*

Mount Eliza Escarpment Project



Necessary changes to the Mount Eliza escarpment below the State War Memorial will soon see the area reimaged. The following from the BGPA Newsletter is provided for the information of Highgate members.

A special place

Mounts Bay Gardens (Goonininup) beneath the Mount Eliza escarpment is a special place in the hearts of Kings Park visitors and locals. The escarpment rises steeply from the Swan River to a high point in the landscape of 65 m, with popular features including the Kokoda Track and Lover's Walk.

The area is well known for its post-colonial landscape features including its impressive Moreton Bay Fig trees. The Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA) has maintained the escarpment and its post-colonial heritage landscape values over many decades, with arborists and geotechnicians caring for the landscape's trees, steps and rock features for the enjoyment of our community.



New threats in Mounts Bay Gardens (Goonininup) require an immediate response

2021 saw the arrival of the declared pest Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) to the Perth region. PSHB is a beetle native to Southeast Asia. The beetle attacks a wide range of trees by tunnelling into trunks, stems and branches.

Ongoing surveillance at Kings Park has identified trees at Mounts Bay Gardens (Goonininup) including Moreton Bay Figs, Port Jackson Figs and Coral Trees all displaying signs of significant PSHB infestation.

About the size of a sesame seed, PSHB excavates tunnels in trees where they cultivate a *Fusarium* fungus as a food source. This fungus spreads in the tunnels blocking the flow of water and nutrients in the tree. This blockage has caused (or will cause) trees to become unsafe, and they will eventually die. If not removed, trees infested by PSHB can also become a constant source of beetles that can disperse and impact neighbouring trees. There are no effective chemical treatment options available.

We need to act now to protect people and plants

The risk to our Western Australian Botanic Garden, natural landscape features across Kings Park and to the safety of visitors is real if we don't take action.

The Mounts Bay Road location of the trees is in close proximity to the Western Australian Botanic Garden and the many rare and endangered flora protected in its collection.

Unless decisive action is taken, these infested trees will spread the beetles beyond the escarpment boundary, putting at risk the vital Perth asset of Kings Park and also the urban canopy of the surrounding suburbs.

The progression of the infestation also poses a future risk to visitors from dead and dying branches if the infested trees are not removed promptly.

What does this mean?

The severity of the infestation requires the removal of all infested trees. The majority of the tree removals will affect Moreton Bay Figs, which mainly support lorikeets and foxes. Reimagining the area with Western Australian plantings provides the opportunity for us to provide greater support for our native fauna into the future.

Once the tree removals have been completed, BGPA will engage with Traditional Owners, stakeholders and the community to develop a place vision for Mount Bay Gardens that will restore it to a more natural landscape and enhance its status as a place of cultural heritage, rich biodiversity and user experience.

Working together to heal country

BGPA and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) recognise the significance of this site to Traditional Owners. All efforts will be made before, during and after the project to consult Elders and protect cultural heritage.

The tree removals are not the end! BGPA will work to restore Mounts Bay Gardens (Goonininup) in Mount Eliza escarpment.

These necessary landscape changes have provided the opportunity to 'reimagine' this popular area with a focus on culture, native plantings and greater visitor amenity.

Putting the focus on culture

The next step seeks to create an environment that reflects Whadjuk Noongar culture, history, and values and reestablish Mount Eliza escarpment as a meaningful connection between Kings Park and the Swan River.

Why native plantings are so important

Biosecurity and climate change are becoming greater challenges every day. Local flora species are much more resilient to threats as well as vital habitat and food for our native animals and birds. Once the trees are removed, we're putting our focus on restoration for our future.

Copied from BGPA Summer Scoop Newsletter



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