

# PORT ELLIOT SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS AN OUTLINE HISTORY

## Foreward

In 1914 young Port Elliot men went off to fight in World War One (1914-1918).

During World War 1, Port Elliot was a venue for soldiers on recreation leave. In May 1917 the idea of planting 'Honour' trees for fallen soldiers was posed by adding to an existing stepped garden on the side of a hill facing Horseshoe Bay on the Port Elliot foreshore. In June 1918, the first 12 trees were planted on the cliff overlooking Fisherman's Bay. A large water tank ensured an adequate water supply for the gardens. The 12 wooden boards naming each soldier initially placed with each tree, were updated with brass plaques in 1970. Local men, both soldiers and airmen from later wars, were also recognised by additions to the gardens including a World War Two Memorial (1943-1945), and more trees acknowledging World War Two, the Korean (1950-1952) and Vietnam Wars (1963-1973).



*Soldiers Memorial Trees – Horseshoe Bay – C. 1920's*

Over time, various locals and council staff helped plant, extend and care for the gardens. In 1931 the Port Elliot Town and Foreshore Improvement Association members were involved in additions to the gardens and in the early 1980's Council did a big upgrade of the gardens with assistance from members of the Association. Working bees by Association members continue to this day, meeting at the gardens twice a month.



*Soldiers Memorial Trees – Horseshoe Bay – C. 2018's*

The gardens include the Soldiers Monument Park (Memorial Norfolk Pines and Cypress Trees), WWII Memorial Lookout, geranium and rose gardens, fernery and garden shed and includes Continental Park and the croquet lawns in The Strand.



In 2007 local resident Robert Miller collated and documented an outline history of the Port Elliot Soldiers Memorial Gardens from what records he could find. The following information is what he was able to collate. Where there has been further information obtained post 2007, or minor errors of fact have been found in his history, we have placed footnotes or bracketed corrections within his original text.

Ruth Miller 10 September 2018

# PORT ELLIOT SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS

## AN OUTLINE HISTORY

By **ROBERT J. MILLER – 21 NOVEMBER 2007**

There has been an absence of documentary evidence and plans related to the Port Elliot Soldiers Memorial Gardens, including the Memorial Trees, Plaques, Rose Beds, Fern House, Summer House, Gardeners and land control. The 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018 was the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the planting of the first 12 Memorial Trees to local soldiers.

This is a history – a limited documentary – from printed evidence. There are omissions as data has been unavailable. Errors may be evident. The outline is possibly compounded by bias. Various plans for the gardens have been mentioned but have not been sighted, e.g. C.C. Reade of 1917 and H. Day of 1933, and in May 1939 Councillor H. H. Hanby's scheme plan for improving the Soldiers Memorial Gardens.

Illustrations include photos from various sources, my own plan based on an aerial photo and improvised measurements, and a framed photo of circa 1920.

Robert J. Miller<sup>1</sup> 21 November 2007



*Port Elliot Soldiers Memorial Gardens – aerial view - 2017*

## PORT ELLIOT SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS

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<sup>1</sup>The Reverend Robert John Miller was a school teacher, historian and Uniting Church Minister and retired to Port Elliot in the mid 1980's. His wife Avis Jean Miller joined him in Port Elliot when she retired from the role of Principal, Annesley College in 1996. Robert was a committee member of the Port Elliot Town and Foreshore Improvement Association. Reverend Miller passed away in Port Elliot 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010.



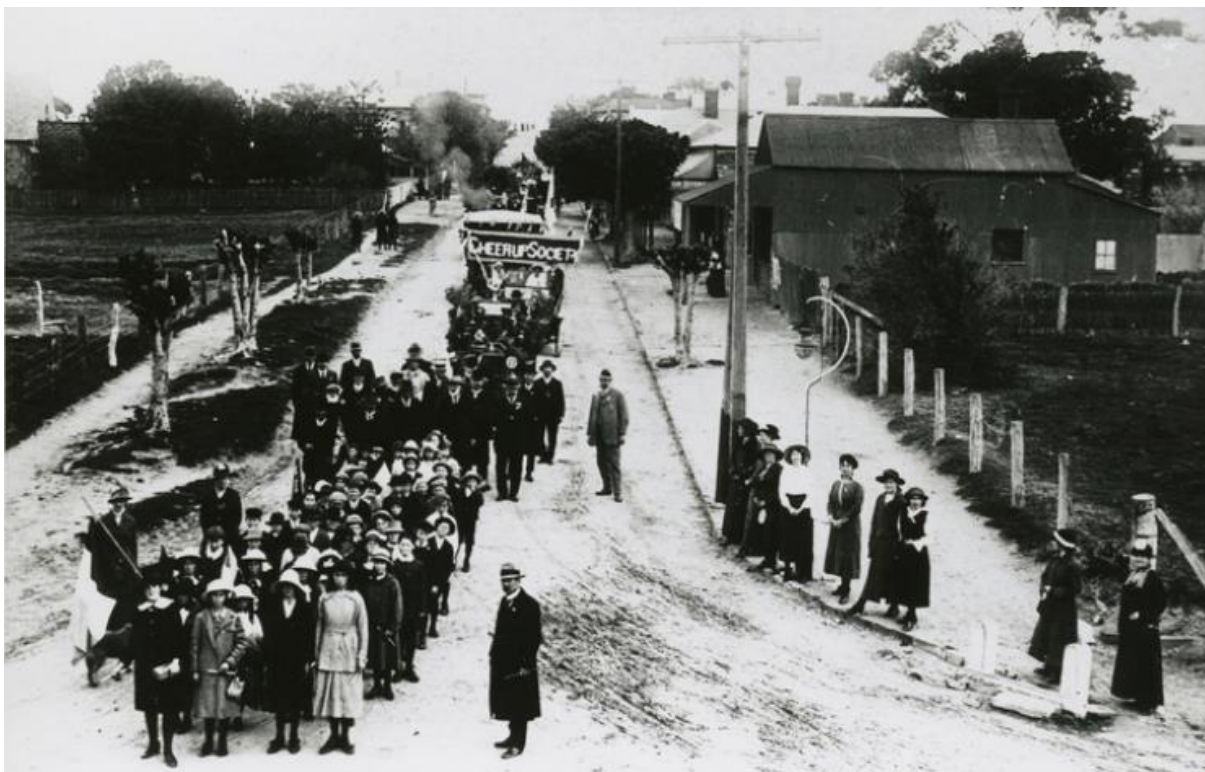
*Soldiers Memorial Trees in the Memorial Gardens above Horseshoe Bay C. 1920*



*Sunrise March 1997 – The Harbour Masters Reserve*



*Garden and Jetty – Port Elliot - 1917*



*The Port Elliot Cheer Up Society – Procession during WWI – Dodd’s Corner*

The Port Elliot Cheer-Up Society had its fortnightly meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1916 at Cliff House under the Chairmanship of President Miss Nellie Welch<sup>2</sup>. This Society on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1916 (which may have arisen from supporters of the local Red Cross Society), held a Farewell Social in the Port Elliot Institute for two local boys. By the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1916 the Society had purchased a Port Elliot Role of Honour, which was presented at the Institute Hall the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1916<sup>3</sup>.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> July 1916 the Annual General Meeting of The Cheer-Up Society elected Miss Nellie Welch President, Mrs. Emily Trigg as vice-president, Irene Abbott to replace Doris Harding as Secretary and A. Arthur as Treasurer<sup>4</sup>. On the 18<sup>th</sup> May 1917 a public meeting was called concerning Honour Trees for soldiers, possibly as wounded Alex Hiltunen had returned and subsequently died in January 1917, and for other soldiers lost overseas<sup>5</sup>.

In May 1917 there were existing gardens on the foreshore at the foot of the cliff. On Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May 1917 a large representative group attended the Institute Hall where Mr. H. H. Hanby was elected Chairman of a committee of 20 persons, with A. Arthur and Miss Nellie Welch elected joint Secretaries. The committee

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<sup>2</sup> Victor Harbor Times 1913-1993.

<sup>3</sup> Port Elliot & Goolwa District Council Minutes Books 1914-1952

<sup>4</sup> Victor Harbor Times 1913-1993.

<sup>5</sup> Victor Harbor Times 1913-1993.

was to study proposed sites for a Soldiers Memorial Garden and report on 3<sup>rd</sup> June. Some of the committee members met on a Wednesday afternoon on a proposed site and were joined by the newly appointed S.A. Town Planner Mr. C. C. Reade. He was visiting Victor Harbor concerning a similar proposal for Soldiers Memorial Gardens and also proposed sites at Goolwa and Port Elliot.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> May 1917 Reade suggested a site first proposed in 1916, but that site was no longer available, so he chose a site above Fishermans Bay overlooking gardens and the Bowling Green. No plan indicating this proposal has been found. By June 1917 permission was sought from the Commissioner of Railways to plant Memorial Trees, and this was obtained by the 22<sup>nd</sup> march 1918<sup>6</sup>.

During 1917-18 Mr. Reade had drawn sketches (not sighted) including an 'Italian Piazza' designed for the spot where in December 1918 Port Elliot tennis players wanted to put down 2 more tennis courts. Reade also planned 2 more grass courts half way down to the jetty<sup>7</sup>.



*Foreshore Port Elliot – C. 1930*

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<sup>6</sup> Port Elliot & Goolwa District Council Minutes Books 1914-1952

<sup>7</sup> Town Planning Dept. correspondence Docket G.R.G 20/1920 following letter from Port Elliot Ladies Improvement Committee

## PORT ELLIOT'S BIG DAY – THE TREE PLANTING

The Victor Harbor Times of the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1918 recorded “...the planting of the first 12 trees on the cliff overlooking Fishermans Bay on Wednesday last. Mr. Hamilton Welch capably presided and arrangements for the day were in the capable hands of Miss Welch. Appropriate addresses were delivered by the Revds. George Slade and A. C. Stevens BA.

Twelve trees were planted for the following fallen by relatives or friends:

<b>PTE Eric Walker</b>	Mrs B. Williamson
<b>SGT Frank Willoughby</b>	Miss Welch
<b>PTE A. E. Vince</b>	Mr. Vince
<b>PTE Clarence S. Padman</b>	Mr. Ragless
<b>PTE Roy A. Bright</b>	Mrs. Sibly
<b>PTE W. R. Baker</b>	Miss Harding
<b>CPL Vernon Lanyon</b>	Miss Lanyon
<b>PTE Leslie Alexander</b>	Mrs. Good
<b>LCPL Eric G. Padman</b>	Mr. Raglass
<b>PTE Alexander Hiltunen</b>	Mr. Trigg
<b>PTE Lance Swift</b>	Mr. F. Swift
<b>PTE Gilbert J. Snell</b>	Mr. H. Welch

*In the evening the Port Elliot Brass Band played sacred airs at the Town Hall and Mr. Hubert Basham presided over a magnificent gathering at a Violet Day Memorial Service<sup>8</sup>. Revd. G. Slade conducted prayer in memory of the fallen, and the Revd. A. C. Stevens BA and the Rector Revd. T. M. Boyer BA suitably addressed the gathering. Appropriate hymns were sung with Miss Nellie Welch at the piano.”*

PTE W. R. Baker's tree was planted by Miss Harding, (probably Rita Doris Emily Harding), later Mrs. Arthur Hornsby, Secretary of The Cheer-Up Society at the time. It appears that the tree nearest the World War Two Memorial Lookout

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<sup>8</sup> [The First Violet Day – By Catherine Manning, History SA](#), 'Violet Day', SA History Hub, History SA

Before the poppy became the recognised flower for war memorials, the violet in South Australia, was the 'symbol of perpetual remembrance'. Violet Day was first held in Adelaide on 2 July 1915. Alexandrine Seager, Secretary and Organiser of the Cheer-Up Society, is credited with the creation of the event. The original idea appears to have been to remember the war dead, in reaction to events at Gallipoli in April that year, but the commemoration extended to honouring the wounded and all those who had made sacrifices for their country.

may have been Bakers, but the plaque currently there has the name of CPL L. Ray Pellew, although he was not named among the first twelve.

A number of other Name Boards, e.g. CPL Ernest Lovell, PTE Howard G. Dodd and CPL L. Ray Pellew were later placed at the foot of trees but no record has to date been found of when and by whom.

Name boards or plaques were revised as in 1918 the first 12 wooden boards with names were placed at the foot of trees. Names were repainted in 1943, repainted in 1944 and 1955. In 1956 Mr. Greenwood had them repaired, in 1957 re-lettered, and in 1965 repainted by Council<sup>9</sup>.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1969 concrete bases were proposed with brass plaques held down by 4 bolts. These plaques were completed by 6th November 1970 by Jack Rogerson.

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<sup>9</sup> Port Elliot RSL sub-Branch Minute Books 1942-1993 – History by Keith Dodd 1992

## THE BRASS PLAQUES

THIS TREE WAS PLANTED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
CPL L. RAY PELLEW  
KILLED IN ACTION  
FRANCE. NOV. 5. 1914

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DVR SIDNEY SWIFT  
DIED OF WOUNDS  
FRANCE. AUG. 25. 1916

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PTE LANCE SWIFT  
KILLED IN ACTION  
FRANCE. MAR. 24. 1918

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PTE GILBERT J. SNELL  
KILLED IN ACTION  
FRANCE. APR. 24. 1918

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PTE ALEX HILTUNEN  
WHO DIED  
JAN. 5. 1917

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PTE ROY BRIGHT  
KILLED IN ACTION  
FRANCE. NOV. 21. 1917

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PTE CLARENCE PADMAN  
KILLED IN ACTION  
FRANCE. SEP. 27. 1917

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LCPL ERIC G. PADMAN  
KILLED IN ACTION  
FRANCE. SEP. 27. 1917

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PTE A. E. VINCE  
DIED OF WOUNDS  
AUG. 4. 1916

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PTE LESLIE ALEXANDER  
KILLED IN ACTION  
FRANCE. AUG. 4. 1916

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CPL VERNON LANYON  
DIED OF WOUNDS  
SEP. 19. 1915

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PTE ERIC WALKER  
KILLED IN ACTION  
GALLIPOLI.  
AUG. 11. 1918

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CPL ERNEST LOVELL  
DIED OF WOUNDS  
FRANCE. JUN. 30. 1918

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PTE HOWARD G. DODD  
KILLED IN ACTION  
GALLIPOLI.  
MAY. 2. 1918

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SGT FRANK WILLOUGHBY  
FELL AT GALLIPOLI  
NOVEMBER 1915

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THE AIRMEN  
WHO FELL DURING  
THE GREAT WAR  
1914-1918

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IN MEMORY OF  
THE FALLEN SOLDIERS  
OF NEW ZEALAND  
1914-1918

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TO THE MEMORY OF  
GORDON F. HIGHMAN  
SGT PILOT RAAF  
KILLED MIDDLE EAST  
JUNE 14.1942

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DOUGLAS C. COOTE  
SGT WOp/AG RAAF  
KILLED NEW GUINEA  
JUNE 21.1942

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RAYMOND J. RICHARDSON  
SGT WOp/AG RAAF  
MISSING RABAU  
FEB. 23.1942

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THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR  
LIVES IN THE KOREAN WAR  
1950-52

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IN MEMORY OF THOSE  
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES  
IN THE VIETNAM WAR  
1962-73

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## ALEXANDER HILTUNEN

Alexander Hiltunen, a member of the RSL, died at Port Elliot on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1917. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1917 a memorial stone was erected on his grave in Port Elliot-Middleton Cemetery.

Aleksander Hiltunen, a Russian Finn, arrived at Port Adelaide as a sailor in 1910, and made his way to Port Elliot. He spoke no English but conveyed by hand signs to Mrs. Trigg of Cliff House that he was very hungry. She treated him as if a son, teaching him English and gave him some experience at a trade.

He enlisted in the 12th Australian Infantry Battalion 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade AIF on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1914, and was posted on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1914 to Mena Camp Egypt, then on to Gallipoli.<sup>10</sup> After being wounded at Gallipoli, and the discovery of first pleurisy, then tuberculosis, he spent many months recovering in various hospitals before eventually being repatriated home to Australia in December 1915. He did not want to embarrass his friends at Port Elliot, so obtained a job as a watchman at Port Pirie, where his money ran out paying doctors expenses. He returned to Adelaide and sought help, but was refused, being told "...he already had a pension." [He had been granted a disability pension of some £78 per annum].

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<sup>10</sup> Aleksander Hiltunen, born 6<sup>th</sup> April 1890 in Wiborg, Finland, arrived Australia 15<sup>th</sup> October 1910. Naturalised an Australian citizen 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1913. (Cert.15129)

Using the anglicized form of his christian name, he enlisted as Alexander Hiltunen in the 12th Australian Infantry Battalion 3rd Brigade AIF on 2nd September 1914, Service No: 652, and was posted on 21st September 1914 to Mena Camp Egypt, then on to Gallipoli.

On 2nd May 1915 he suffered a bullet wound to his right foot and was sent back to Overseas Base Mustapha. Following his recovery, on 14th June 1915 he embarked on the HMT Southland at Alexandria and returned to his unit at Gallipoli on the 27th June 1915.

On arrival however he was found to be suffering a bad case of of dysentery and was hospitalized first at Gallipoli then transferred on 30th June 1915 to No 16 Stationary Hospital at Moudros, on the island of Lemnos.

He was transferred to Malta on 14th July 1915 via the SS Clan MacGillivray, arriving on 18th July 1915 and transferred to St. Andrews Hospital Malta. By this time he had been diagnosed with pleurisy, and subsequently tuberculosis in his right lung, which he is thought to have contracted in Egypt during February 1915.

On 30th July 1915 he was embarked on HMAT Ceramic and taken to St. Georges Hospital London, where his TB was confirmed, and decisions about his future service were deliberated. He spent some weeks of rehabilitation at Pinewood Sanatorium, then known as the London Open Air Sanatorium run by the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. He was deemed unfit for any further service and arrangements were made for his repatriation to Australia. He embarked 7th November 1915 on the SS Runic in Portland England and was returned to Australia, arriving at 7 Army General Hospital Keswick on the 18th December 1915. He then transferred to Kalyra Sanatorium on 24th December 1915. He was discharged from the AIF on 3rd May 1916.

He succumbed to his illnesses at Port Elliot on the 5th January 1917.

[Alexander Hiltunen's Service Records](#)

He returned to Port Elliot and told his friends of his condition, and Mrs. Trigg then nursed him for some time until joined by Nurse Doudy, who assisted until his death on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1917. Four returned servicemen were pallbearers at his funeral.

A concert party led by a Mr. Ball sought to raise funds for a headstone to be placed on his Port Elliot grave. Later a concert which included a Miss Trigg among the singers was held at Cliff House Drawing Room to raise funds for a headstone and a fence. A sum of £5.00 was raised.<sup>11</sup>

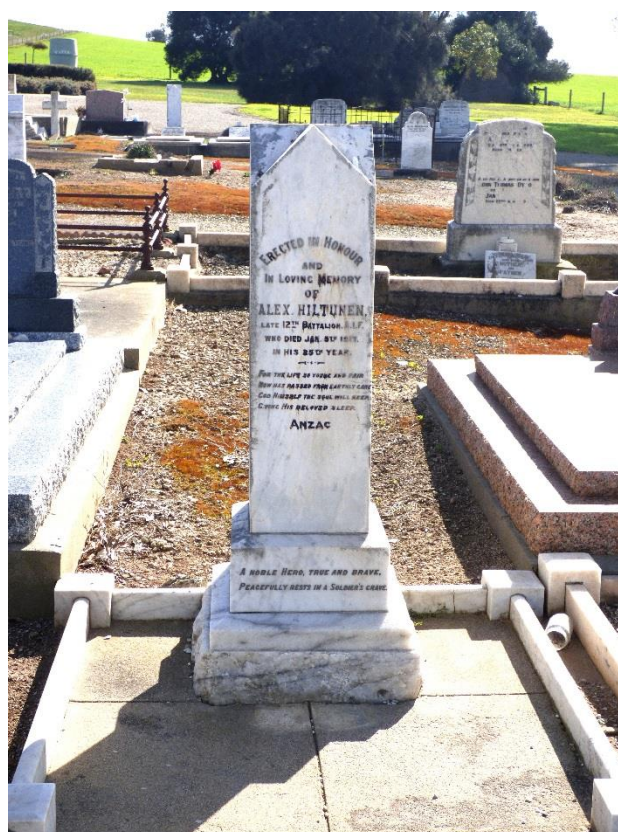
The headstone below in white marble is in the Port Elliot Cemetery and stands about 4 ft.[120 cm] tall and has the following wording inscribed upon it. On the reverse side is an Australian Commonwealth Military Forces badge.

*Erected in Honour  
And  
In Loving Memory  
of  
Alex Hiltunen  
Late 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF  
Who died Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 1917  
In his 25<sup>th</sup> year*

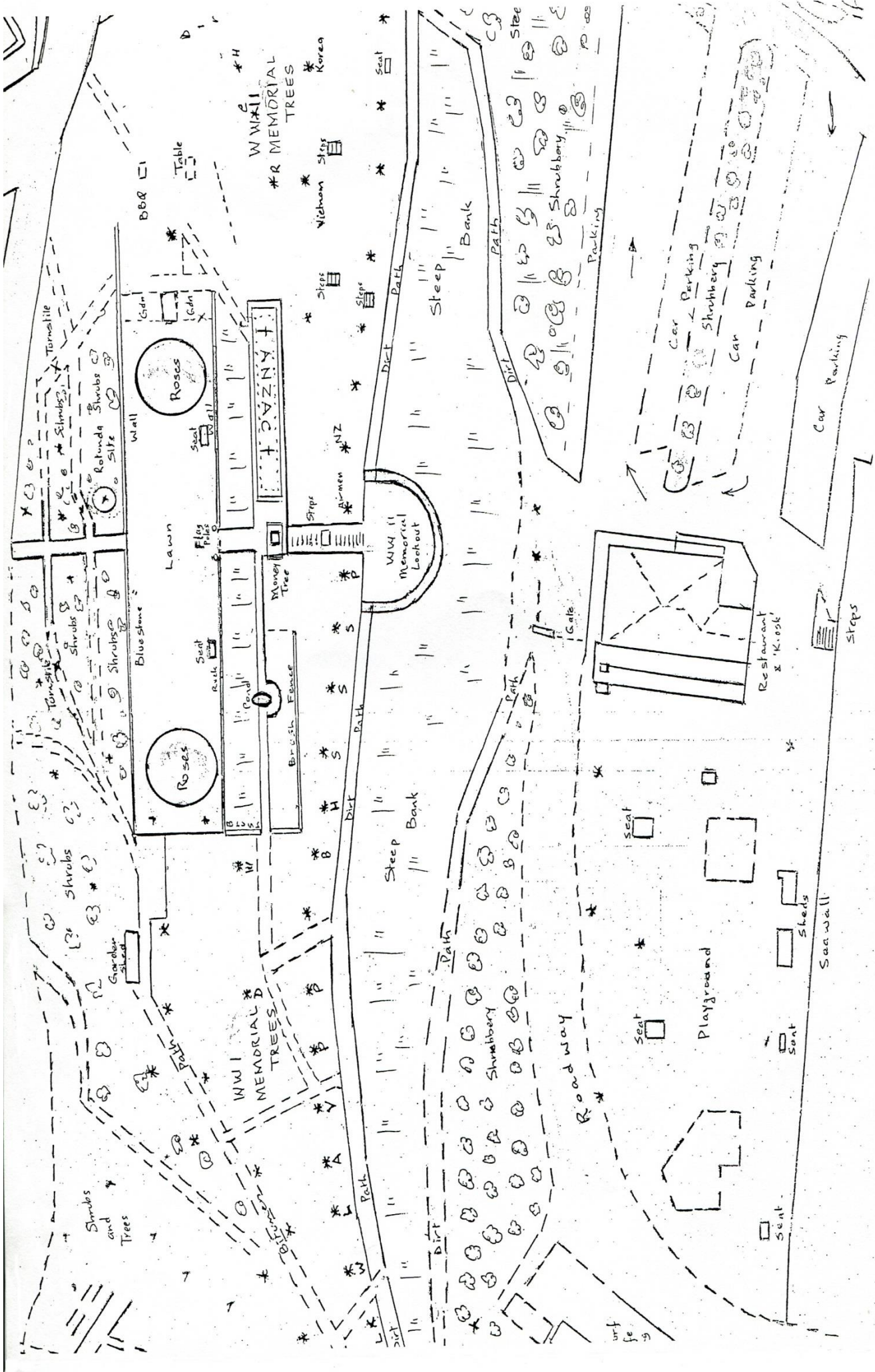
*For the life so young and fair  
Now is missed from earthly care  
God himself the soul will keep  
Giving his beloved sleep*

ANZAC

*A noble Hero true and brave  
Peacefully rests in a soldiers grave*



<sup>11</sup> Victor Harbor Times – 17<sup>th</sup> January 1917



Robert Miller's 2007 Plan of the Soldiers Memorial Gardens & Foreshore

## NAME PLAQUES AT TREES

*[Refer plan on previous page]*

### WORLD WAR I

*[Left of central path from WWII War Memorial]*

P	1	PTE L. Ray Pellew §
S	2	PTE Sidney Swift
S	3	PTE Lance Swift
S	4	PTE Gilbert J. Snell
H	5	PTE Alexander Hiltunen
B	6	PTE Roy A. Bright

PATH

P	7	PTE Clarence S. Padman
P	8	LCPL Eric G. Padman

PATH

V	9	PTE A. E. Vince
A	10	PTE Leslie Alexander
L	11	CPL Vernon Lanyon
W	12	PTE Eric Walker

PATH

L	13	CPL Ernest Lovell
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*§ It appears that PTE Ray Pellew's name replaced that of PTE W. R. Baker.*

*[Left of brush fence from pond]*

W	14	SGT Frank Willoughby
D	15	PTE Howard G. Dodd

*[Right of central path from WWII War Memorial]*

- 16 Airmen who fell during the Great War 1914-18
- 17 The Fallen Soldiers of New Zealand 1914-18

### WORLD WAR II

*[Right of ANZAC Plot]*

R	18	SGT Raymond J. Richardson RAAF
C	19	SGT Douglas C. Coote RAAF
H	20	SGT Gordon F. Highman RAAF

### LATER CONFLICTS

*[Right & below level of ANZAC Plot]*

- 21 Korean War 1950 - 1952
- 22 Vietnam war 1962 - 1973

## GARDENS and PLANS

On the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1919 Mr. J. W. Trigg sought a water supply for 'the Gardens'. On the 18<sup>th</sup> December 1919 he wrote a letter on behalf of the Town Improvement Society to the Commissioner of Public Works seeking '*...a permanent water supply for the Soldiers Gardens and adjacent flower beds etc. along the beach at Port Elliot. Some time ago the late Railways Commissioner ...laid out grounds and planted flowers and shrubs along the beach. Subsequently the residents prepared and planted gardens and the croquet lawns as a Soldires Memorial. This property adjoins the Railway Gardens. A water main runs past the property. The large tank we have erected on the Soldiers Gardens could be kept full and gravitate over the area needing attention.*' Mr Ritchie replied on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 1919 that he had seen the Hydraulic Engineer, who agreed to supply water to the Soldiers Gardens, and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1920 was notified that '*...the work was completed on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1920.*'

On the 17<sup>th</sup> April 1920 Miss E. Dodd of Port Elliot Ladies Improvement Committee wrote to Town Planner Mr. C. C. Reade seeking a plan of proposed gardens '*...enclosed find a rough sketch of the grounds where the Soldiers Memorial trees are planted... We wish to improve the grounds and would be much obliged if you will suggest a plan...Norfolk Island pines are growing beautifully.*

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 1920 Reade visited Port Elliot whilst working at Victor Harbor, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1920 [Miss Dodd] asked '*...will it be advisable to order Norfolk Island pines and have them planted 20 feet apart as you suggested when you were here ...Grounds are looking beautiful and Mr.Hutchison, Railways employee, has dug around the trees and planted the steep bank below the creepers and cleaned up all the area ...anxious to get plan ...get on with work before winter is over ...*' By the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1920 Reade wrote '*...am forwarding under separate cover plan of Port Elliot Soldiers' Memorial ...in pencil ...(too busy to do in ink).*'

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1931 Mr. H. C. Day, who had been Senior Draughtsman to Reade, and for some time to January 1930 was Town Planner, prepared a plan which was to be on display in The Port Elliot Institute, but no copy of this plan has been found.

## PORT ELLIOT RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE INVOLVEMENT

The Port Elliot RSL sub-branch formed on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 1942, and on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 1943 approval was granted by RSL League Headquarters. This occurred after the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1943 when it was agreed to name trees for WWII. CPL Collin Williams and SGT W/OpAG Douglas Cook [Coote], although these names may not be accurate<sup>12</sup>.

The RSL discussed on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 1943 the planting of trees in memory of fallen comrades of WWII. A committee comprising Mr. Gray, Mr. W. [Bill] Tuffery and Treasurer the Rev'd. D. L. Benson were to meet Councillors and discuss types of trees and sites.

## SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS POST WORLD WAR I

From July 1932 Mr. W. D. MacDonald and the Association carried on the gardens work with general improvements to the Foreshore, Soldiers Gardens including Continental Park and the Soldiers Monument Park, with Mr. T. K. Barnes to carry on the work for the Association. He appears to have continued his involvement until 1941, whilst on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1949 "*...T. K. Barnes work was noted with appreciation.*"

In March 1933 James Dodd was thanked for work on the Foreshore and Monument Gardens, and Town Planner Mr. Day's plan for Port Elliot was to be on show at the Institute. Later that year Mr. C. G. Smith was to make a Collection Box for the gardens. In July 1935 Norfolk Island pines were to be planted between the Life Saving shed and the jetty.

It is difficult to know how long and for what Alex Hutchison was employed but in August 1935 he was to be retained as Foreshore Caretaker. At least for some of the time during his employment he was responsible for care of toilets for the District Council from the Foreshore at Port Elliot to Boomer Beach. Some of his time involved caring for the Foreshore Gardens and also for the Soldiers Memorial Gardens [SMG].

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<sup>12</sup> CPL Collin Williams has no known memorial amongst the trees. There are no records for WWII for a Collin Williams from SA, but four possible members named Colin [first or second christian names] born in SA – 3 enlisted in SA, 1 in Watsonia, Vic.

SGT Cook was in fact SGT Douglas Coote, for whom a plaque is current.

In November 1937 a Soldiers Memorial Gardens sign some 3 ft [91cm] x 1 ft [30cm] on 5" x 5" [13cm x 13cm] posts was to be erected at the entrance on Murray Place. It was decided in January 1938 that a rosemary hedge should replace tamarisks alongside the Summerhouse wall. Water was running down the cliff wall and bank from the street and washing away the dirt at the bottom of the steps. Efforts were considered to limit this, and in June 1964 terraces were made below the road level opposite Cliff House with adequate drainage.

In February 1941 Mr. Carnegie Smith was to build a granite Collection Box in the gardens, while it was proposed that on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 'The Fernery' was to be opened by Mrs. J. W. Smith with a plaque to note the opening, however Mrs. Smith declined to have her name recorded.



*A Christian Convention held on the foreshore in Port Elliot – 1936.  
Note the Memorial Trees in the Soldiers Memorial Gardens above.*

## **SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS POST WORLD WAR II**

Mr. S. Vince was assistant caretaker from the 27th April 1947, but was replaced in April 1948 by Mr. William Tuffery, a returned soldier, who from the 25<sup>th</sup> October 1949 was paid for foreshore work.

In June 1954 Mrs. Eileen Whelan [nee Sibly, later Mrs. Monty Warrender] who lived in the Harbour Master's cottage, was planting flowers and gave pot plants, and in July 1958 gave a small pond for fish.

In January 1962 Lloyd Murfet dug and weeded a plot in the SMG, and by the 3<sup>rd</sup> February Keith Dodd reported that the 'Lest We Forget' bed had been damaged by hot weather, so he watered and revived the bed.

From 1969 Doug Sweetman, as Council Overseer for an extended period, supervised drainage work and stabilized cliff banks, as well as undertaking garden maintenance.

When it was reported in December 1980 that the flower plants needed replacing, a committee comprising Mesdames Rose Hogg, Doris and Nan Brittain and Keith Dodd were appointed to pursue the issue. Henry Arthur, Bill Richardson and Ken Hogg helped when the patch needed weeding, and needles raked and burnt. Flowers were then reported as 'growing well' and a few replaced.

In March 1939 an ANZAC Service was to be held at 11:00 AM in the Soldiers Memorial Gardens, and later on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1944 it was considered appropriate to hold the ANZAC Day service at 06:23 AM in the gardens, where it continued for some five years. By 1944 Postmaster Durward placed an order for 10 new Norfolk Island pines, which had arrived by the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1944, and were to be planted on the 10<sup>th</sup>. On the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1944 it was decided to leave their planting until after the end of the war.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1954 the Country Womens Association [CWA] sought approval to plant 2 candle pines for Colin Williams and Douglas Coote, and it was reported by the Town & Foreshore Association Secretary on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1954 that they had been planted. These were probably the 2 cypress trees still [in 2007] at the south eastern end of the rose gardens area.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1958 trees at the SMG were named for three 1942 airman. A Special Dedication Service was held on Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1960. Three growing Norfolk Island pines at the northern end of the gardens were dedicated and marked with plaques to the memory of the three airmen, namely SGT WOp/AG Raymond J. Richardson RAAF, SGT WOp/AG Douglas C. Coote RAAF and SGT PLT Gordon F. Highman RAAF, whose lives were noted in 1942 as lost from the Port Elliot area. There was also a plaque placed at a tree for Korean War servicemen and women<sup>13</sup>.

Name boards or plaques were revised as in 1918 the first were wooden boards with names for the twelve. Names were repainted in 1943, repainted in 1944 and 1955. In 1956 Mr. Greenwood had them repaired, in 1957 re-lettered, and in 1965 repainted by Council.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1969 concrete bases were proposed with brass plaques held down by 4 bolts. These plaques were completed by 6th November 1970 by Jack Rogerson.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1979 as SGT Willoughby's tree had died, the plaque was shifted to another tree by George and Albert Brittain and J. Mitchell just prior to the 02:15 PM ANZAC Sunday Service.

In 1988 a Vietnam plaque was fitted on a concrete base and dedicated in an official service.

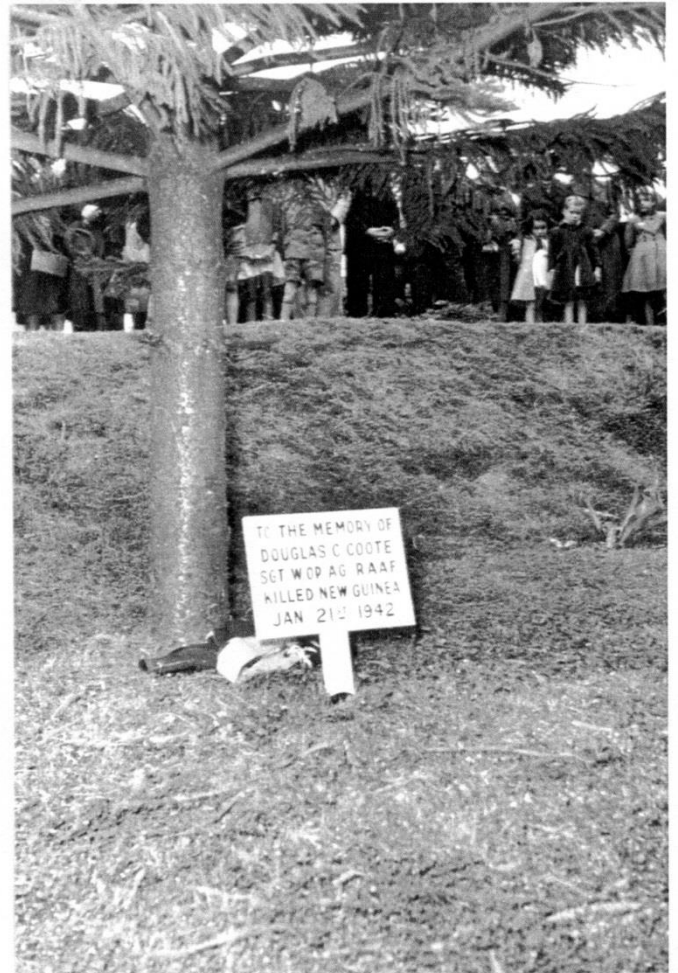
In 2007 the plaques of the World War II airmen were moved to the seafront row of trees, and for some reason the Korean and Vietnam plaques were placed between them.

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<sup>13</sup> Victor Harbor Times



Gordon F. Highman



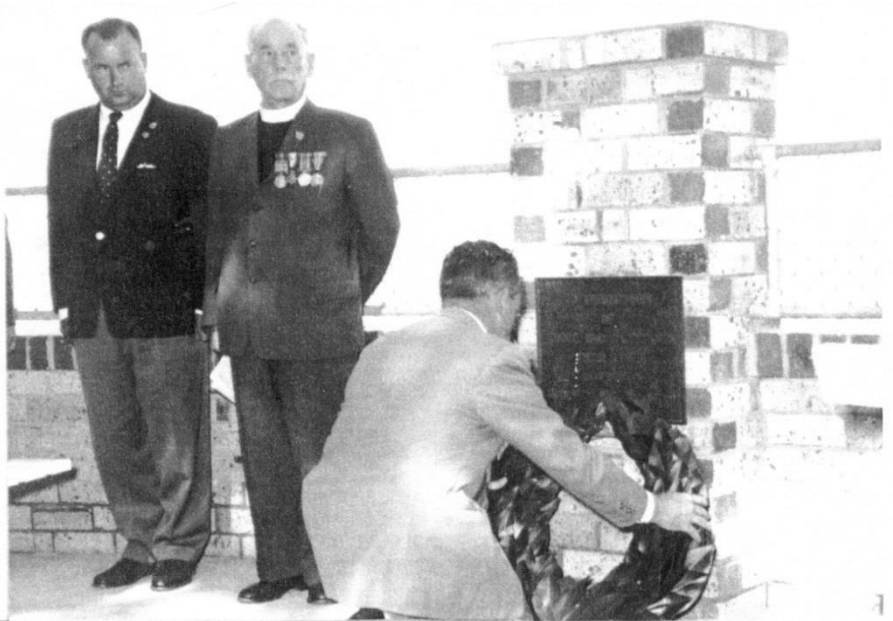
Douglas C. Coote



Raymond J. Richardson

ANZAC Day 1960  
Dedication of  
Memorial Trees  
to WW2  
Casualties

War Memorial Lookout  
Dedication  
12th November 1961



ANZAC Day 1960  
RSL Members

Korean War  
Casualties  
Memorial  
Dedication



## SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS – SOME FURTHER HISTORY

During the 1920's a railway employee named Alex Hutchison planted flowers from the kiosk against the cliff face to the Life Saving rooms and Ladies swimming beach.

About this time Mrs. Trigg was tending flowers in 'gardens' when Joe Barton<sup>14</sup> was between 10 and 12 years old, but little is heard again until March 1931 when James Dodd provided and planted flowers and shrubs at the north end of the gardens.

In June 1931 Mr. C. G. Smith submitted plans for additions to the gardens which the Town & Foreshore Association accepted, and during the following summer Mr. F. Barnes attended to the gardens.

In 1982 Mr. Edward [Ted] Harding, then a council worker for some 6½ years, was instrumental in upgrading the gardens. Some 1400 seedlings were planted each year from 'gifts' from the 'money tree' in the gardens. He also replaced the old wooden garden shed with a new one.

By the 4th March 1983, Mollie Ellis, during her time as Councillor, proposed that work between the steps and the kiosk was required, possibly by planting geraniums. Messrs. J. Lawson, D. Small and K. Dodd helped, while Town & Foreshore Association members were involved between the Memorial Lookout and the breakwater. By the 15<sup>th</sup> March some 400 geranium cuttings had been planted.

Kallan Dennis, Head Gardener in the 1990's for the Council, provided support for working bees by local volunteers until 2003, until David Mullins replaced him. At this time, "Dad's Army", led by Brian Jarman and Rod Hussey, began a new era in Council support for upgrading the gardens by upgrading the watering system.

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<sup>14</sup> Joseph Edwin Barton [1916-2016], 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF 1941-1946, partner with brother Cliff in Barton Bros. Motor Garage Port Elliot, Councillor & later Mayor of Port Elliot & Goolwa District Council, Chair & later long term Patron of the Port Elliot Town & Foreshore Improvement Society.

## **ROSES IN THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS**

Little information can be found about the Rose Gardens from the District Council, the Town & Foreshore Improvement Association, the RSL minutes or the Victor Harbor Times.

By the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1943 kerbing around the roses was to be completed, and on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1949 Bill Tuffery explained the desirability of extending the present rosebuds, but a decision was postponed until members inspected the gardens. During August 1954 Mrs. Smith, daughter of Mrs. Trigg had pruned some roses.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1981 it was proposed that bush roses be planted in the rectangle and Keith Dodd thanked helpers at SMG especially the two ground diggers. It was proposed then that 3 standard roses be planted near the cross and by the 1<sup>st</sup> July Mrs. Lorraine Pomery, Mr. J. Lawson, Mr. Hubert Abbott and possibly Mr. Ivan Ellis offered to donate these, which were obtained from Mr. Catt. By the 5<sup>th</sup> of August the roses planted by Keith Dodd on the 27<sup>th</sup> March were reported to be budding, and he dug over and fertilized the roses as they needed attention.

Roses had been growing in the circular beds on the lawn area from at least the 1980's, and in 2006 the kerbed rose area was dug over, fertilized and pruned by Dad's Army Town & Foreshore members and Council employees. Regular care and water improved the display.

## **THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS FERN HOUSE**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1941 Mr. S. R. Gray proposed a fern tree garden be created in the southern corner of the Lawn, with the District Council to be directly responsible for the fernery, and for which he would be willing to obtain ferns from the eastern states. By 26<sup>th</sup> August the following year it was almost completed, with a brush fence and including a small pond. The roof was to be completed by Messrs. H. Fraser and M. Meyer. On the 15<sup>th</sup> November 1942 at 2:30 PM it was to be officially opened by Mrs. J. W. Trigg with a proposed bronze plaque bearing the name of Mrs. Trigg for her involvements in the garden, however she declined to have her name on the plaque.

In May 1950 a cleanup was required, and in May 1957 a suggestion that care of the fernery was 'a specialized job' because of the state of the plants, but the RSL

opposed the proposal of the Town & Foreshore Association. In 1970 disrepair of the structure led to it being dismantled.

### **THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS SUMMER HOUSE**

The Summer House was erected on the northern side of the steps from the Murray Place pedestrian entrance. The steps were rebuilt from stone after 1968 and during the period of Mr. Frank Mudge's tenure as Town & Foreshore Association Chairman. Near these steps down into the rose garden level, a circular line can be seen on a later aerial photograph. No data about its erection or opening has been found, but on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1938 the Town & Foreshore Association members suggested that a rosemary hedge replace tamarisks alongside the wall.

Ten years later palings needed to be replaced and in 1949 a dangerous tree alongside was removed. Whilst some older residents recall this refuge, no data has been found about its removal. The structure was demolished about 1970.



Soldiers' Memorial Gardens, Port Elliot

*The Summer House from a contemporary booklet of Views of Victor Harbor and Port Elliot  
courtesy of Geoff Mudge*

### **THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL LOOKOUT**

A proposal for a WWII Memorial, a curved lookout overlooking Horseshoe Bay, was first mooted at a RSL sub-branch meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1945, and a War Memorial Committee with representatives from RSL, Town & Foreshore

Association and The Fathers Association were to meet to discuss this on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September at 8:00 PM. In a report of the community committee appointed to manage the project on the 5<sup>th</sup> October, contact was to be made with Mr. Day, government Town Planner, for assistance and advice. The local committee was then to meet the day after Mr. Day had attended.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1945 at a special meeting concerning a war memorial, Mr. S. R. Gray, who had made the original proposal, suggested a Gala Day "Port Elliot Soldiers Memorial Day" to be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> December to raise funds and submitted a proposed programme. When Mr. Gray was farewelled on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1946, Mr. Durward, the 1946 President reported 'he considered enough funds were on hand to complete the War Memorial'.

Building had commenced in 1946 but ceased when funds ran out, although various appeals were made into 1961. No work was carried out on the project for a number of years. George Brittain, Secretary of the committee, worked in a number of ways to achieve its completion, but it was not until July 1961 that Jack Rogerson completed the work. Twelve RSL men volunteered to assist to fix wire mesh fencing on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1961.

The Remembrance Service was held at the new War Memorial, including laying of wreaths and reciting of the Ode. On the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1961 it was dedicated by two Boer War veterans, Mr. H. G. M. Cole and the Reverend H. Hobbs. The RSL President thanked Mr. Brian Francis, president of the War Memorial Committee, Mr. Ivan Cooper, RSL representative, Mr. George Brittain and all sub-branch members. The dedication went without a hitch, and Ivan Cooper gave a summary of the newly formed committee's efforts in completing the War memorial.

### **THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL GARDENS LAND**

It is difficult to clearly delineate land and boundaries for the gardens, but it appears the main land involved was a Railway Superintendents Reserve and portions of the Harbour Masters Reserve. Most is now Crown lands under the control of Alexandrina council. In 1918 the then Railways commissioner gave permission for the tree plantings.

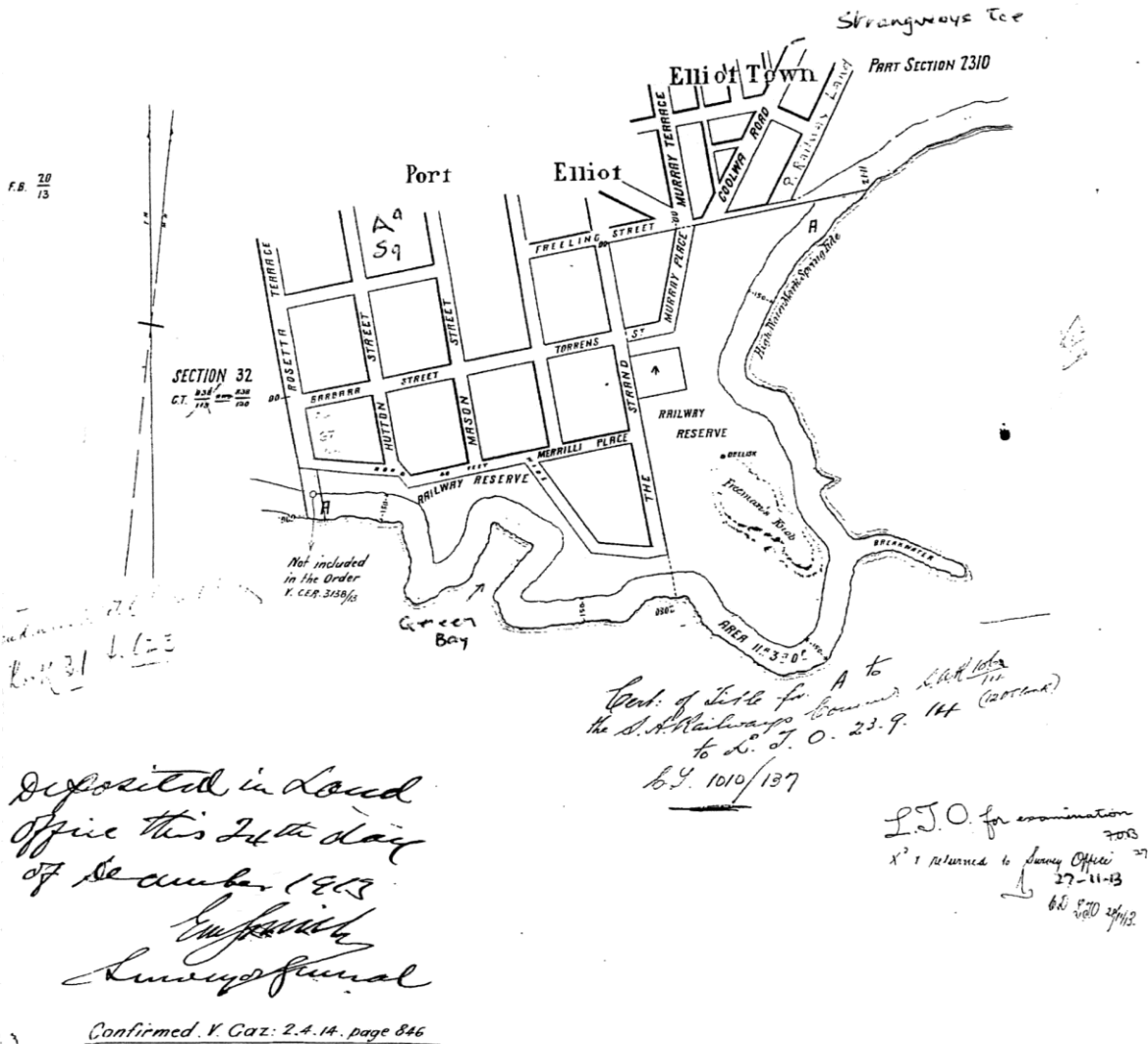
From January 1852 Port Elliot was declared a Government Town, and 12 x quarter acre blocks were formally allotted for public auction. In 1854 the

foreshore of Encounter Bay at Port Elliot came under the control of the Port Elliot – Goolwa Superintendent of Railways as a reserve, with a portion under the control of the Harbour Master also as a reserve.

In 1914 some of the land was under the control of the Immigration & Tourism Department. The cliff face area to the high water mark level was closed and transferred to the Crown. The rest of the inland area of Section 295 including the Obelisk was a Railway Reserve from the east side of Rosetta Terrace to the 'Camping Ground'.

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RP 953



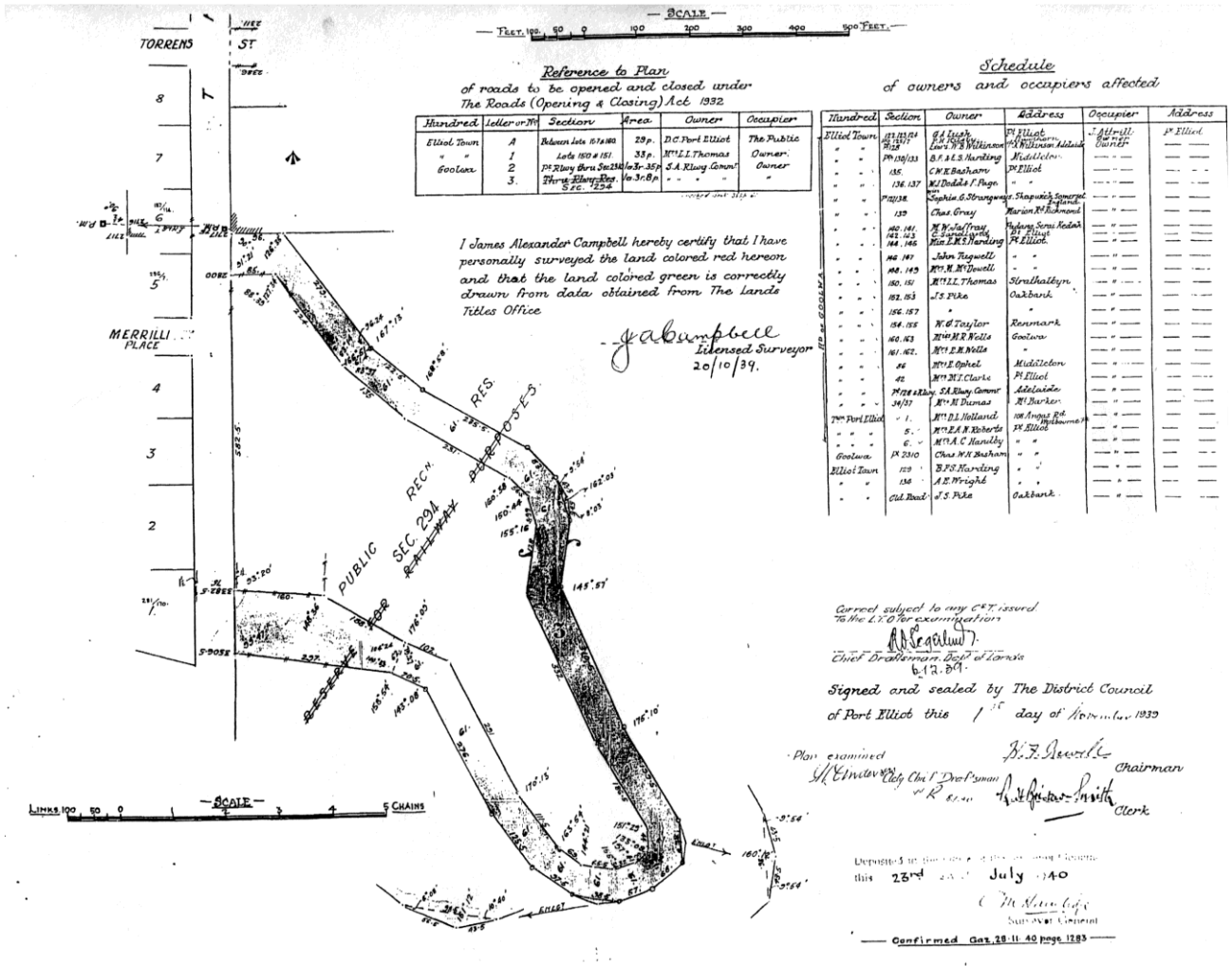
Land Titles Office - Registered Plan RP 953 of 1914

In 1940 some land was transferred from the Harbours Board to the District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa.

As late as 1955 some land was still a Harbours Board Reserve, but in 1958 a Railway Reserve closed road passed to the District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa, and in 1961 a lease was given for 21 years for a kiosk.

In 1976 land passed to the District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa as a Public Recreation Reserve, whilst in 1967 Section 394 was made a Life Saving Reserve, whilst an Obelisk Reserve also was extant.

In 1995 Section 295 was designated a Public Recreation Reserve under the District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa and later, Alexandrina Council<sup>15</sup>.





**Rectangular  
Rose Garden  
Pre 1982**



**Lest We Forget  
Ground Cover  
Pre 1982**



**ANZAC  
Ground Cover  
12 November 1961**



**Rose Garden  
Entrance - 2007**



**View of Gardens  
from above Surf Club  
2007**



**View from near Obelisk  
2007**