

The Southern Yarn

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

April/May 2021

downundercalendar

APRIL

ANZAC Day

Sunday April 25

Various services around Australia: online links are available to take you to Canberra War Memorial, capital cities and other towns around Australia where services and parades may be held. Remember, here in Winnipeg it will be Saturday, April 24. COVID restrictions and/or lockdowns will affect times and services so we cannot for sure know in advance what will go ahead.

READER FEEDBACK

Thanks to Margaret Munn for this ingenious little link from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Simply click on any bird and it will sing for you. Maybe you'll even recognize some from your own back yard.

www.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/bird_songs_interactive

Thanks also to Malcolm for sending this beautiful photo of a green birdflower plant from Australia, which has leaves shaped like hummingbirds.



Top: Charlie and Judy Powell; Jenny Gates; Janet and Dennis Woodford.
Bottom: Philip Blain; Margaret and Peter Munn.

Hats on, and off

Report on social chat: Saturday, March 20 at 2 pm, via Zoom. Well, that was fun for all who joined in the social chat via Zoom. You never know what you're going to get (where has that been heard before?) but the talk ranged from Norman Lindsay's *Magic Pudding*, to movies/books, to learning a bit more about members backgrounds. What an interesting – and interested – bunch we are. Perhaps we can do this again before too long?

A Poem for Anzac Day

25th April, 1915 (By a New Zealander) "New Zealanders before August advance"



III.

The hush of a chill spring morning,
The race to the ragged beach,
The hail of the searing shrapnel,
And the big shells' angry screech;
Up and up to the ridges,
Through the bullet-belching brush,
To the hell of a fire-girt dawning
And the flame-edged Turkish rush.

IV.

The soft Levantine breezes
Steal o'er the storied spot;
The flanks of Achi Baba,
The red-stained Daisy Plot,
The gullies east of Anzac,
The slopes of Sari Bair
Are silent now; yet ever
We honour those who're there.

V.

Their names shall live for ever
In the Halls of Memory.
They gave their lives as ransom
That we who live be free.
They bought us peace and freedom,
Nor grudged the utmost price.
God grant that we prove worthy
Of their great sacrifice.

I.

They came from field and factory,
From desk and fishing fleet,
From shearing shed and foundry,
From hill and plain and street;
Kin of the old sea rovers,
Sons of that stubborn strain
That swallowed all invasions –
Saxon and Norse and Dane.

II.

Men of the far young countries
New-won by their fathers' toil;
Taut from an endless striving,
Sons of the sea and the soil;
Little they knew of warfare,
Their lesson was all to learn –
These men of the Golden Wattle,
These lads of the Silver Fern.

online

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[Source: National Army Museum – Te Mata Toa: <https://www.armymuseum.co.nz/a-poem-for-anzac-day/>]

editorially yours

Charlie Powell



It seems like the “dry” has started here in Manitoba – so little snow during winter that there is no spring runoff! The rural community is worried, therefore we all should be. “The Dry” also makes the list of top 25 Aussie films at the box office. Of course, we all know which one is still way out ahead of the rest ... see NewsfromOz, p.5. You’ll also learn who owns some of the iconic brands downunder. Speaking of which – I recently gratefully accepted an unfinished jar of Vegemite with a Best Before in 2016! Still good, and still Yum!!

As we commemorate ANZAC Day again this year, whether at the usual outdoor service or virtually, pay attention to the Padre. Just as chaplains play an important role in our annual services of remembrance, they played an even more vital role in the trenches. One such example is featured in this month’s Getting to know, p.6. And, speaking of the clergy, the Bird I view this issue is the Cardinal, p.8.

All this and so much more – thank you to our advertisers and contributors – Judy, Jenny, Peter, Margaret, Ed, Malcolm, Terry.

Charlie Powell



BushYarn

Dad, Mum and Dave were sitting around the kitchen table having a cup of tea when the telephone rang.

Dave sauntered over to the phone, answered it and then put the receiver back as he laughed.

‘Ha, those city people are practical jokers. One of them just called to say it wuz a long distance from Sydney!’

*[Source: “Classic Bush Yarns,
by Warren Fahey, 2001]*

president's ramblings

Peter Munn



Hi all,
Spring has all but sprung in sunny St. Vital, blue sky above, and beautiful sunshine gradually warming away the cold of winter. Some golf courses have opened already, and by the time you read this, most will have opened in Winnipeg. We were out walking the other day, along with others who had the same idea, and it was nice not to have to worry about snow piles on the sidewalks, and slippery ice patches to negotiate. I now have had my first jab of vaccine, Margaret gets hers next

week, and hopefully this is one large step closer to getting all our lives back to normal.

One thing that is now becoming more of the normal pattern of life is Zoom (and related technology) meetings. When something is so user friendly and satisfying to use, and free to boot, it’s not surprising that millions have taken advantage of it, especially when close contact has been restricted for so long. Talking with distant friends and relatives, and club members is just so much more personal when you can see friendly smiles on the other side of the ether.

Take care, I’m off to book a round of golf,

Peter



DUCW member Liz Hydesmith (left) walks with friends on Lake Manitoba over the Easter weekend. A few weeks of warm weather are required to melt the big lakes’ winter cover.

More than
40 years’
South Pacific
experience

Hang in there, mates!

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Exploring Aussie Towns with Bruce Elder

I stumbled across the Aussie Towns website while looking for items to post on the DUCW's Facebook page. I had never heard of that site before, and quickly looked for one of my favourite places – Burrumbuttock. When it wasn't there, I wrote to Bruce Elder who runs the site, and suggested he might want to add Burrum to the list. This is his reply ...

There are 1,323 towns on Aussie Towns – hardly all the towns in Australia. In fact, when I started I had 1,466 towns, but whittled it down to something a little more manageable. The sole criterion for inclusion was, "If I was driving through the town, why would I stop?" Sadly Burrumbuttock – I do love the name – didn't make that cut. Sorry about that.

Thanks so much for encouraging people to check out the site. When it was finally finished, about a month ago, I wrote:

Well, it is done. At precisely 1.05 pm yesterday, after working every day for the past 2,797 days, I finally finished my magnum opus, Aussie Towns. All 1,322 of them.

I started on June 20, 2013, and finished on February 15, 2021, and during that time, wrote a total of 2,663,486 words. For those who like comparisons, that is about 33 novels. I also drove to every town in Australia – at least the 1,322 towns I wrote about – and took tens of thousands of photographs and collected seemingly endless brochures and local history books. Yesterday, 5,480 visitors used the site and, on an annual basis, it attracts over 2 million people each year. It is being used and that is all I ever asked.

In essence, Aussie Towns started as a project to write detailed, useful and hopefully definitive accounts of all the important towns in the country. The aim was to answer the primary question: "Why am I here?" I believe that most people travel without a clear idea of what they want to see or why they want to see it. I wanted to point them towards things that were fascinating and explain exactly why those things were interesting.



Bruthren, Vic, is one of the towns on Bruce Elder's Aussie Towns website.

How did a town make the cut? Simple. If I could answer the question "Why am I here?" in a way that would appeal to people who might want to visit that town, then it was in. The answer may have been: a **quirky Big Thing** – there are so many of them and they are worth recording, Aussie Kitsch at its finest; some genuinely **interesting history** about the town; **important buildings**, sculptures and monuments; the **landscape** was beautiful; or simply because I found it **amusing** or entertaining.

With each entry I tried to find out the origins of the town's name, wanted to record which group of First Nation people lived in the area before European settlement, and tried to reach beyond the usual list of "tourist attractions".

Of course, I was always going to fail, BUT I was helped by readers who started adding and correcting. There is so much knowledge out there. And it could never have been written without the internet. It gave me the

space to, in some cases, write up to 10,000 words on a specific town – think of Ballarat.

The end result is that I have had a hugely entertaining seven years – sorry 2,797 days. I have travelled around Australia and fallen hopelessly in love with this remarkable continent in all its diversity and beauty. I have had adventures and experiences so endless that I could become a total boor for hours and hours. And, almost as an afterthought, I think I have written the biggest, longest, most detailed travel guide ever written ... anywhere.

Check it out, but don't try to read it all. That's my job as I try to fine tune and correct this massive tome. So, here I go again ... Abercrombie Caves – a suitable starting point. I'm not sure when I will get to Zeehan.

– Bruce Elder, Aussie Towns

If you're interested in what Bruce has created, be sure to visit the www.aussietowns.com.au website and like the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/aussietowns.

Happy virtual visiting, folks! – Jenny Gates

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That snot a nyfe ...

The 25 Australian films that have sold the most tickets at the box office

[Source: The Age, Garry Maddox, 1 Apr] The top earner for 35 years now is still *Crocodile Dundee*, which took \$47.7 million in 1986. But these types of achievements always ignore the impact of inflation. They raise the question: what would be the most successful Australian films in today's dollars?

This masthead took Numero's box office statistics for more than 1100 Australian films released in the past 50 years and adjusted them for inflation.

The result is a new top 25 that reveals how remarkably successful *Crocodile Dundee* was all those years ago. It took the equivalent of \$129.3 million today - twice as much as any other Australian film. Check out the list online [Link].



But is it Australian owned?

[Source: ABC News, 18 Jan 2017]

Arnott's: (TimTam, Shapes, Jatz) From its humble beginnings in a Newcastle bakery, the biscuit and cracker maker became one of the largest food companies in the Asia-Pacific region.

But while the product is still manufactured in Australia, it is owned by US food giant Campbell Soup Company. Despite this, its Australian ties are not something Arnott's is looking to shake, the company even referring to themselves as an "Australian icon" on its website.

Golden Circle began as a grower cooperative in the 1940's with the pineapple can-

nery commencing production in Northgate in 1947. ... Golden Circle was acquired by Heinz Australia in 2008, allowing for additional investment in new product development and marketing.

Rosella, founded in the late 1800s, has had a number of owners since, including a 40-year period where it was owned by multinational Unilever. The current owner is Sabrands Australia, which acquired the brand in April 2013.

Uncle Toby's: The company was sold off in 2006 to Cereal Partners Worldwide (CPW), a joint venture between Nestle and General Mills. CPW headquarters is in Switzerland.

However, Uncle Tobys Oats are sourced from Australian Farmers and manufactured on home soil too.

Bushells: The brand many Australians associate with tea o'clock and driver-reviver stops is actually owned by British-Dutch company Unilever.

But for more than a century it was Australian owned. It was founded by Alfred Bushell in 1883 when he opened a tea shop in Queensland after the death of his wife Agnes, whose family was in the tea business.

Bega Cheese Limited: The VEGEMITE brand has a history spanning over 97 years and is now proudly owned by a great Aussie food company - Bega Cheese Limited. Bega Cheese Limited purchased the VEGEMITE brand in 2017, bringing it under Australian ownership for the first time in over 90 years. [Link]



Gumnut Patisserie wins at prestigious Royal Easter Show

[ABC Rural, April 7, 2021] A country patisserie that designed some of its own equipment, produces near-zero waste, and invests heavily in apprentices has won the President's Medal at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Gumnut Patisserie from the Southern Highlands of New South Wales beat 5,000

entries judged by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW to win Australia's premier food award.

Owner Tracy Nickl is proud of his company's win. "Here we make classical pastries, the best you'll ever try," he said.

Gumnut had the best tasking product in their category, and were acknowledged for investing a lot of time in training apprentices. According to Judge Michael Bullen, "Their wall of champion apprentices really underpins their commitment to supporting their staff and growing the business ... across Australia."

The medal is considered Australia's premier food award due to the rigour of the judging process and the spread of entries across Australia.

newszealand

various sources, see web links in online edition



WWII mascots: Borax and mates

[Source: National Army Museum - Te Mata Toa]

Animals have long been 'recruited' into the armed forces as military mascots and have served their masters with loyalty and distinction. Many of the mascots have been kept for ceremonial purposes, as emblems of particular units or simply for companionship, often bringing moments of peace and normality during the hardships and brutality of war. For many of the New Zealand military units, especially during the First World War and the Second World War, mascots were acquired through various means. Whereas dogs have been the most common animals to serve the Kiwi troops, cats, rabbits, donkeys, monkeys, lizards, pigs, goats and birds were also adopted as mascots.

In some cases, the animals went to war with their owners while other mascots, mostly strays, were picked up in far flung places like Sri Lanka, Turkey, North Africa, Borneo, Vietnam and Afghanistan. Many were only temporary companions, but some served through entire campaigns. A few, such as the First World War Red Cross dog Caesar, combined their mascot roles with other duties. Dogs were especially useful for helping stretcher-bearers find wounded soldiers in

no man's land at night, a role Caesar performed during the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

Another famous four-legged mascot was Freda who, in the latter stages of World War I, became the 'official' mascot of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade. Surprisingly no official photo exists of Freda and over the years she was wrongly identified as a Dalmatian, when in fact, she was a Harlequin Great Dane.



Another much-loved World War I 'mutt' was Floss, who became the New Zealand Army rugby team's mascot when they were touring England in 1917.

In World War II, the most famous of Army mascots was Major Major, a Bull Terrier who was the No. 1 Dog of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF) and the regimental mascot of the 19 Battalion and Armoured Regiment. Another four-legged friend was Colonel Ben, who was the mascot of A Squadron, New Zealand Divisional Cavalry.

In more recent times, during an overseas deployment in Afghanistan, Major Syd Dewes, befriended the huge dog Gunner, who soon became the mascot of Kiwi troops serving in the Bamian Province. Link: A Man's Best Friend | National Army Museum

Kiwi becomes first to solo kayak the Tasman Sea

[Outside Online, Jul 24, 2018] The Tasman Sea, which stretches 1,400 miles between Australia and New Zealand, is one of the most unforgiving stretches of nautical terrain in the world. Kayakers have been trying to cross the sea alone since the 1980s, but a solo kayak crossing of the Tasman remained out of reach, seemingly beyond the limits of human strength and ingenuity.

At 8:30 p.m. on July 2, 2018, in the darkness of a southern hemisphere winter, a 48-year-old sports coach from New Zealand named Scott Donaldson scraped onto a beach in New Plymouth, New Zealand. Exactly two months earlier, he'd set off from Coffs Harbour, Australia, in a custom-built, carbon-fiber, 20-foot-long kayak. After being helped ashore—his legs wobbly, beard grizzled with salt, looking not unlike Tom Hanks in Cast-

away—Donaldson admitted with classic Kiwi understatement that it was "kind of epic."

"It was bloody hard work," he added later. "I'm knackered."

Donaldson said crossing the Tasman was like paddling in a washing machine, with waves coming from three directions at once. A lifelong competitive swimmer and triathlete, he decided to solo the Tasman to raise money for research on asthma, which he and his eight-year-old son both suffered from. But he was also drawn to the challenge—not just of tackling harrowing seas in a two-foot-wide boat, but of figuring out the logistics and gear and navigation needed to achieve one of the world's last great feats of paddling.

His first attempt, in 2013, was aborted after just a few days. He tried again in 2014, and after nearly three months at sea, was rescued by helicopter just 50 miles off the coast of New Zealand, his boat battered and satellite phone soaked from a brutal storm.

Donaldson set out for a third go in May 2018, choosing to paddle at the start of winter to avoid summer cyclones. On good days, he paddled for 16 hours straight, averaging

more than 20 miles a day. On bad days, when the wind was too strong to make forward progress, he paddled in circles or was blown backward. Other times he was forced to take shelter in a tiny covered cockpit, "basically trapped," he says, until the weather turned.

By the end, Donaldson's boat was patched with duct tape. An eight-foot shark had chomped on his rudder. He'd gobbled antibiotics to ward off skin infections caused by the constant wetness, and had lost 35 pounds from his already athletic frame. Yet as much as he wanted to see his wife and son, Donaldson took his time covering the last 50 or so miles to New Zealand. In its own way, life at sea was "pure." There was a simplicity to it that he wanted to relish for just a bit longer.

As he paddled the final stretch in darkness, a flotilla of kayakers appeared to lead him ashore. Fireworks exploded overhead. For a brief moment, they illuminated the first sight Donaldson had seen in 62 days that wasn't sky, water or his own boat: some 2,000 people who had turned out in the rain to welcome him home.



Chaplain Major William Grant, 1859 – 28 August 1915

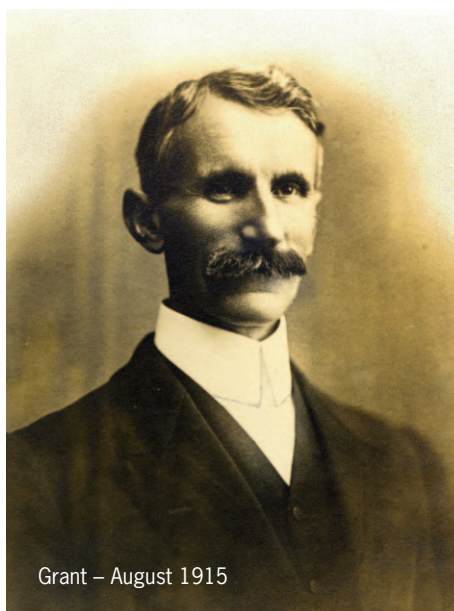
[Source: New Zealand WW100]

The early August offensive to take and hold Chunuk Bair had failed and the fight for Hill 60 (Kaiajik Aghala), General Hamilton's last attempt to break the stalemate on Gallipoli, had ebbed and flowed from 21 August 1915. A week's intense fighting had only reached the stage where Allied troops and the Ottoman defenders 'shared' trenches in places with only sandbags and corpses separating the two sides.

At midday on Saturday 28 August 1915, a very hot summer's day, two chaplains wearing distinctive Red Cross arm bands and focused on finding and assisting wounded soldiers were inexplicably allowed to advance into the position by the troops who had captured the maze of trenches at Hill 60. Sadly for one of these two non-combatants, death was literally around the corner of a 'shared' trench. A shot rang out and one of the two men, the taller and older of the two, crumpled and the other man seeing two oncoming Ottomans beat a hasty retreat.

The man who fell was Chaplain Major William Grant (Presbyterian), No.11/86, and his companion on this humanitarian mission was Chaplain Captain Charles Dobson (Church of England), No.9/633 who in a letter sent to his cousin in New Zealand shortly afterwards explains what happened:

Major Grant was killed. He and I were dressing wounded and walked right into the Turks. They were pretty rattled and their fire was wild. He was shot through the throat and died at once. I fell behind a corner and some bodies and was only splashed with earth. I made a bolt for it and got back to our own lines. We got his body out on the night of the next day after the Light Horse had driven the enemy out. His boots were gone and also a number of discs we had taken from the dead. It was very tragic. ...We were dressing a Turk with a badly shattered thigh and shoulder. We were in a bad position and the fire was pretty hot. The Turk was a decent old sort and we



Grant – August 1915

had to lie flat to dress him and he kept pulling me down. Grant gave him a sip of wine and said to me "sort of Good Samaritan picture this" I said "I don't think the priest and Levite have come this road." He said "Well we joke but we are in the shadow of death and may get it any moment."We wanted to find a N.Z. boy. We agreed to go a bit further but ran into the Turks around the next corner. I fell behind the corner and the dead. The Turks fired a lot but weren't game to reach the corner for a minute or two. It was two [sic too] long to crawl back, I found I wasn't hit and then stood up and bolted. I must have hurt the Turk we dressed scrambling over him. I got back to our guard.

Dobson continues:

Colonel Meldrum would not send a covering party going back to find Grant. Five Light Horse men offered to come back but it was stopped. ...Next morning Blamires and I went in and found Grant. Death must have been immediate. It was impossible to bring him out in daylight.

Chaplain Captain Henry Blamires (Methodist), No.11/685, picks up the story and wrote in his diary on 28 August that "We thought Grant wounded & prisoner. It gave us a great shock" and, on Sunday 29 August, he wrote:

After breakfast, Major Whyte (WMR) asked Dobson to show the way to where Grant was & I went also. We went over the bodies of dead men till we ... we found him lying as he fell shot through the neck. Death must have been instantaneous. He died as a hero & a Christian. We brought the body a few yards along the trench but had to leave it there till night, as the trench was shallow & snipers were trying to get us. We got back safely and at night a party of five brought the body in ...

... Such a Sunday may I never put in again.

On Monday 30 August at 7pm with a large number of men present Dobson and Blamires conducted Grant's funeral.

Rumours about Grant's death soon spread. These ranged from the wounded Grant having had his throat slit by the Turks to get his boots to the fanciful notion that after Grant had been bayoneted in the heat of battle the Turks hoisted a white flag, and sent Dobson back with their apologies for their mistake. Clearly Dobson's account as the only eyewitness must be relied on to be correct.

May – August 1915

William Grant landed on Gallipoli with the Wellington Mounted Rifles on 12 May 1915. In his time under fire William held church parades, performed burials, tended the wounded, acted as a censor on men's letters and postcards and was always found with the men. He wrote numerous condolence letters to family members and he took every opportunity to relay his experiences of the war to New Zealanders. On 26 May 1915 he met up with his son Willie who had landed with the 3rd Reinforcements on 9 May 1915. However, like a lot of the men, William Grant became sick and spent most of June on Lemnos and did not return to Gallipoli until the end of the month.

The following extract from a soldier's letter reveals the heroism Grant displayed throughout his service at Gallipoli:

Chaplain-Major Grant wanders up and down the beach all day long, helping the wounded, and with a cheery word for everybody. He takes absolutely no notice of the shrapnel and bullets. He seems to have a charmed life, as I have seen shrapnel dropping all around him and he only smiles. He told me he had no orderly and no dug-out of his own to sleep in and was living on bully beef and biscuits. I asked him, 'But where do you sleep?' He said, just where he dropped – he didn't care as long as he was with the boys. He deserves more than the V.C. and I sincerely hope that God will spare him that he may return safely. I have the highest respect for him, and so has everyone on the beach.

Impact of William Grant's death

The news of William Grant's death on 28 August was a great shock to all New Zealanders, not just to his family and the Gisborne community. This was the death of a non-combatant not a soldier, a man who was tending aid to both Allied and Ottoman soldiers; unarmed and clearly wearing Red Cross armbands. Principal Chaplain Major

John Luxford, Methodist, who had been sniped on Chunuk Bair on 9 August and lost his leg as a result, wrote that William Grant “was one of heaven’s peers.”

Two significant events followed Grant’s death. One was the October 1915 publication of a book containing copies of Grant’s letters, some photographs and other documents about him. The whole of the first edition of 1000 copies was sold within a fortnight of its appearance from the printers, and a second edition quickly followed suit.

The second event was even more memorable. On 9 June 1916, Rev William Shirer, Convener General Assembly’s Chaplains Committee of the Presbyterian Church, wrote to Colonel R W Tate, Adjutant General, in Wellington, stating:

As you are aware Chaplain Major Grant was killed on Gallipoli in the discharge of his duty and in an endeavour to succour the wounded. Others who rendered similar service have received special mention and awards of honours. Many have enquired and are still enquiring why my friend received no special mention and in every respect to his memory and to his family I respectfully bring the subject under your notice.

Grant had been posthumously mentioned in General Sir Ian Hamilton’s last despatch dated 11 December 1915. However, it was the honour of a higher award for Grant’s work that was being sought. Tate’s reply, dated 6 July 1917, over a year later, wrote: “I beg to advise you that it is not possible to take action as you suggest. The London Gazettes have been carefully checked, but there has been no notice therein of any honour or award having been granted the deceased Chaplain. [Written in hand] “Honours” are granted by the King and we cannot dictate to the King.”

Legacy

Grant’s death brought home to New Zealanders the hardships and the dangers non-combatants faced in war. Grant was the first of a number of chaplains who would either lose their lives or who would be disabled for life as a result of practising their faith at the battle front.

Lieutenant-Colonel J H Moir, the speaker at the tablet unveiling at St Andrews on 19 April 1917, representing the Gallipoli campaigners, summed up his experience regarding the value of chaplains:

A chaplain shared the same dangers common to every man. He was required to move from post to post along the trenches and gullies, and whenever moving from one place to another he knew he carried his life in his

hands, and that before he reached his destination a straggling shell or bullet might bring his earthly career to a close. A chaplain was always where his services were required, and always bringing blessing to men. Close up to the firing line the chaplain was to be found. In the dressing stations they saw the padre comforting the wounded and cheering the dying, and many badly wounded men struggling to the rear had had to thank the quiet man for helping him over rough scrub back to the trenches.

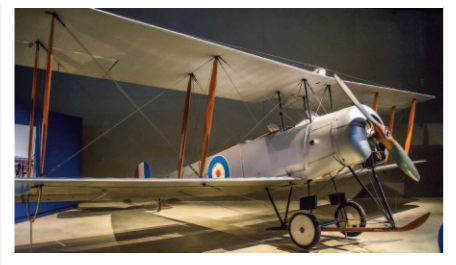
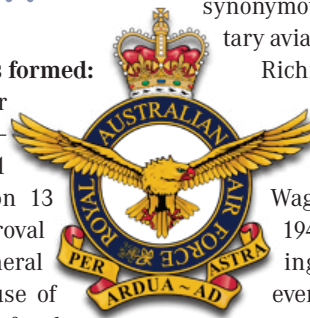
William Grant was such a man. A quiet hero deserving recognition for his beliefs, bravery, and valuable contributions in a world of war. [Link]

100yearsAgo...

history of note

The Australian Air Force (AAF) is formed:

The formation of the Australian Air Force was announced in the Australian Government Gazette on 31 March 1921. Later in the year on 13 August, following receipt of approval from the King, the Governor General signed an order authorising the use of ‘Royal’ making this the start date for the use of the Royal Australian Air Force name.

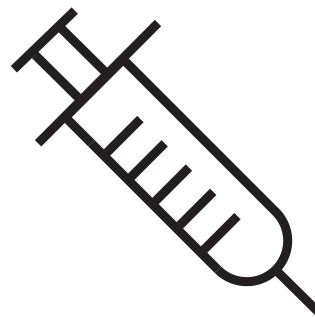


The Avro 504K trainer became the first aircraft built in Australia for the RAAF. Australian National War Memorial, Canberra.

Establishment of Point Cook: RAAF Point Cook is located on the shores of Port Phillip Bay, 20 kilometres south west of the Melbourne central business district, near the township of Werribee, Victoria and is synonymous with the birth of military aviation in Australia.

Richmond RAAF Base was established 1 July 1925, Laverton 1926, Pearce 1938, Darwin, Amberley, Wagga Wagga and Townsville 1940. And much more, including historical dates and events online. [Link]

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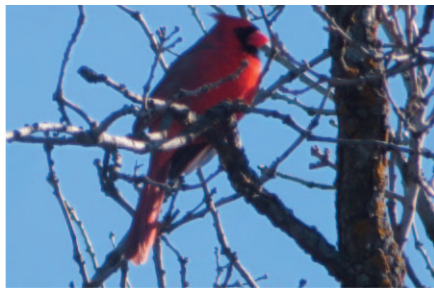


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Manitoba 



Cardinals

Another species that is gradually expanding its range more and more into southern Canada is the northern cardinal. We were fortunate to hear and then see a male in the Bunn's Creek area (NE Wpg) in mid-March. Luckily their "song" is quite distinctive, so it was just a matter of following the call and looking up. They occupy their territory year-round. Popular on Christmas cards in N. America, the male is bright red with a prominent crest, black face and stout red bill – hence their being named after the red robes worn by Roman Catholic cardinals. The female is buff-brown tinged with red on the crest, wings and tail. As with most others of the finch family, their diet is mainly seeds, supplemented with insects during breeding season. We've seen photos on Facebook of them at feeders during the winter.

The Cardinal Bird by William Davis Gallagher

A day and then a week passed by:

The redbird hanging from the sill
Sang not; and all were wondering why
It was so still—
When one bright morning, loud and clear,
Its whistle smote my drowsy ear,
Ten times repeated, till the sound
Filled every echoing niche around;
And all things earliest loved by me,—
The bird, the brook, the flower, the tree,—
Came back again, as thus I heard
The cardinal bird.

When maple orchards towered aloft,

And spicewood bushes spread below,
Where skies were blue, and winds were soft,
I could but go—
For, opening through a wildering haze,
Appeared my restless childhood's days;
And truant feet and loitering mood
Soon found me in the same old wood
(Illusion's hour but seldom brings
So much the very form of things)
Where first I sought, and saw, and heard
The cardinal bird.

Then came green meadows, broad and bright,
Where dandelions, with wealth untold,
Gleamed on the young and eager sight

birds*i*view...

by Charlie Powell

Like stars of gold;
And on the very meadow's edge,
Beneath the ragged blackberry hedge,
Mid mosses golden, gray and green,
The fresh young buttercups were seen,
And small spring-beauties, sent to be
The heralds of anemone:
All just as when I earliest heard
The cardinal bird.

Upon the gray old forest's rim

I snuffed the crab-tree's sweet perfume;
And farther, where the light was dim,
I saw the bloom
Of May-apples, beneath the tent
Of umbrel leaves above them bent;
Where oft was shifting light and shade
The blue-eyed ivy wildly strayed;
And Solomon's-seal, in graceful play,
Swung where the straggling sunlight lay:
The same as when I earliest heard
The cardinal bird.

And on the slope, above the rill

That wound among the sugar-trees,
I heard them at their labors still,
The murmuring bees:
Bold foragers! that come and go
Without permit of friend or foe;
In the tall tulip-trees o'erhead
On pollen greedily they fed,
And from low purple phlox, that grew
About my feet, sipped honey-dew:—
How like the scenes when first I heard
The cardinal bird.

How like!—and yet . . . The spell grows weak:—

Ah, but I miss the sunny brow—
The sparkling eye—the ruddy cheek!
Where, where are now
The three who then beside me stood
Like sunbeams in the dusky wood?
Alas, I am alone! Since then,
They've trod the weary ways of men:
One on the eve of manhood died;
Two in its flush of power and pride.
Their graves are green, where first we heard
The cardinal bird.

The redbird, from the window hung,

Not long my fancies thus beguiled:
Again in maple-groves it sung
Its wood-notes wild;
For, rousing with a tearful eye,
I gave it to the trees and sky!
I missed so much those brothers three,
Who walked youth's flowery ways with me,
I could not, dared not but believe
It too had brothers, that would grieve
Till in old haunts again 't was heard,—
The cardinal bird.

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THE DOWN UNDER
CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

Station Main, PO Box 1655,
Winnipeg Manitoba Canada R3C 2Z6

info@downunderclub.mb.ca

www.downunderclub.mb.ca

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