



The Noticeboard

The Newsletter of the
Queenstown RSA

Issue No 15
August 2011

from the Editor — **Welcome to The Noticeboard**

My, how the months fly by! Here we are in October already and I am just trying to get the August newsletter written! Late again, sorry about that, but I do have an excuse, which I will come to later in the newsletter. October of course sees us well into spring and the promise of longer days, warmer weather and the hope of balmy summer days. Well, we can live in hope can't we!

Spring is about the promise of better things, of new life, renewed vigour, bright colours and happy times. I like to compare the Queenstown RSA with gardening in spring time, as we have a lot in common and there are some lessons to be learnt. The time the Queenstown RSA spent in recess killed off much of the vigour and enthusiasm of the old RSA and so it was a bit much to expect things to grow quickly for the new RSA without the required preparation being put in to ensure the sort of growth necessary to sustain our long-term viability. We were probably a bit impatient for things to happen, we wanted to harvest the crop before the roots were even established, and we expected others to share the enthusiasm and commitment of our small band of helpers. In reality of course these things did not happen as we had hoped. It took a long time to prepare the ground, to plant the ideas and for the ideas to grow to fruition. One by one though the ideas have become projects and in some cases the projects have now become reality, and we are pretty happy about that. It feels like summer has arrived and we can sit back and enjoy the fruits of our work. Well, lets get back to the gardening theme! After summer comes autumn, things slow down and eventually stop growing, the bright colours turn drab, the new life becomes old life and before we know it winter is with us again. And that is what could happen to the RSA again unless we are prepared to put in the hard yards to prevent it from happening. If we sit back and do nothing we will wither and die. If we foster and encourage we will grow and survive. Clearly, there is only one option if the Queenstown RSA is to have a long term future. For me that involves a number of things. We must encourage greater involvement of our members in everything we do and we must provide our members with the opportunities to do this. We need to come up with fresh ideas and encourage growth in the things we do. We must continue to increase our membership and share the work load among the wider membership, and not just within the committee. We must make the Queenstown RSA a community organisation of choice, one which members of the wider community want to belong to.

These are major challenges, but based on what I can see I have every confidence that we are up to the challenge. Indeed, in some areas we are part way there. Back to the gardening theme again—we are probably at the spring stage right now, with lots of things happening and lots of promise for what lies ahead. But there is also a lot more work needed if we want a summer harvest we can all be proud of. And one other thing—it is much easier to keep things growing if you have a fertile and healthy garden rather than having to start from scratch again, when the climb for survival can sometimes get to great. So let's keep things moving. Our future is in our hands, it is up to us, all of us.

A good starting point along this path to our future is by getting involved in our social activities over the summer months. See you there!

Dave Geddes, President

***** **Friday Social Nights** *****

A reminder that the Gallipoli Room is open every Friday evening from 5 –7pm. A hardy band of regulars kept the flag flying during the winter months but with warmer days now upon us our numbers are on the increase again. Over the summer months we plan to have one Friday in each month (the second Friday in the month) where we can invite specific groups along to share some convivial company in a friendly and relaxed environment. Check out the Social Happenings (below) for these nights and mark them on your calendar. Remember, this is your facility, we look forward to seeing you there!

*** **Social Happenings**

Mark these dates on your calendar or social diary!

Friday 14 October - welcome summer, farewell Ray and Colleen. **Bring along a friend or two!**
Friday drinks from 5pm - 7pm, followed by a meal in the Gallipoli Room.

Friday 11 November - Armistice Day Function, 5pm—7pm in the Gallipoli Room. We hope to be joined by our Arrowtown RSA colleagues.

Friday 9 December - TGIF (Thank Goodness It's Friday!). Join the team as we celebrate the end of another week with our invited guests (Queenstown Rotary, to be confirmed)

Sunday 16 December - Christmas Party, 3pm in the Gallipoli Room. Who knows, even Santa might make an appearance! A meal will be provided later in the day.

More to come in the New Year!

My excuse for lateness.....

As noted earlier this newsletter is rather late hitting the letterbox (or computer screen) and I do apologise for that. But I do have an excuse of sorts! Maryann and I spent most of the winter in Europe and part of the trip was aimed at visiting the Western Front of World War 1 to try and find the resting place of a couple of Maryann's relatives who were killed there within 3 months of each other in 1917. We spent the first week of our trip visiting places that have become household names to most New Zealanders—Passchendaele, Messines, the Somme— and what an amazing experience it was. After Flanders and the Western Front we headed further west to the Normandy area of France and visited the World War 2 landing beaches in this region. Attached to this newsletter is my account of our journey of remembrance in search of long lost, but never forgotten, family members. I hope you enjoy it.

In the next newsletter I will give my impressions of the other areas visited.

I have also been asked if I would give a talk at some stage on my experiences visiting these important and historic sites. Maryann and I are quite happy to share our experiences so will look at finding a suitable time to do this. We will let you know when that is.

*** **Fact File** ***

On 12 October 1917, in just two hours, more than 2800 New Zealand soldiers were killed, wounded or listed as missing in action at Passchendaele—the most disastrous day in New Zealand military history. A week earlier, before dawn on 4 October, a further 1707 casualties were sustained during an attack on the Gravenstafel Spur at Passchendaele. Looking back on these events today it is almost impossible to imagine the impact this must have had on the soldiers of the day and on the country as a whole. Lest we forget.



**** **Welfare News** ****

Lynn Still, the Dunedin RSA Welfare Officer, recently visited Queenstown to catch up with a few of our members to review their welfare and pension needs. Regular reviews of pensions are important in ensuring that those entitled to them receive the appropriate rates, so if anything has changed in your life that you think might have an affect on your pension please let us know so we can arrange a meeting with Lynn. Remember, your pension will not change all by itself, we need to go through the various processes with Lynn to make it happen. If you would like to see Lynn, or know of anyone who would , please give our Queenstown Welfare Officer, Ross Owens, a call on 442 3395 to make an appointment.

Dunedin RSA Update

Some of you will be aware that the Dunedin United Services and Community Club closed it's doors back in May and as a result the Dunedin RSA no longer has a social venue or facility. While this is sad news for Dunedin it was hardly surprising as for some time there had been dwindling support for the club—and we are all familiar with the old saying—”use it or lose it”. Well, Dunedin has lost it, but it is not the end of the world.

Investigations are under way to determine if a replacement facility or joining with some other organisation is possible.

All other Dunedin RSA activities continue as normal from their offices at the Montecillo Home in South Dunedin.

Project Updates

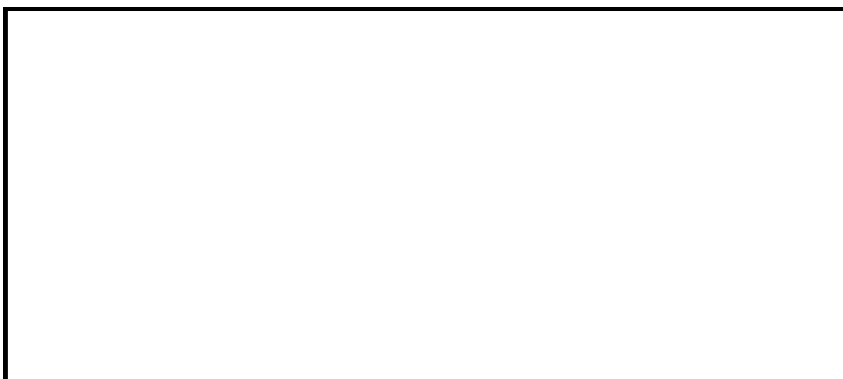
Memorial Gates and Wall — this project is making slow progress due to a lack of Council funding to strengthen and refurbish the existing walls on either side of the Memorial Gates on Marine Parade. All other work on this project, including resurfacing of the paths and grass area in both sides of the gate, new lighting for the area, and installation of a new flag pole, has been completed. We are continuing to work with Council on the best (and quickest) way forward with the walls and exploring other avenues of funding to make it happen. We are still working to have the project finished before ANZAC Day 2012—but are not holding our breathe!

Memorial Hall and Gallipoli Room — a lot of work is going on behind the scenes in this area and an exciting (for the Queenstown RSA) announcement can be expected within the next few weeks once details and arrangements with other parties are in place. Keep your eyes and ears open!!

We now have a billiard table.....

The Gallipoli Room now has a half-size slate-base billiard table (complete with balls, cues, scorer, etc), thanks to the generosity of a long-established local family. The late Eric Salter was a Lt Cdr in the Navy and captained various minesweepers during WW2. Eric's widow, Myra Salter, passed away earlier this year and the family, all of whom are based overseas but visit Queenstown frequently, asked us if we would be interested in having the table for the Gallipoli Room. With a little help from member Simon Hayes (and friends) and some other muscle bearing members we have managed to install the table in it's new home and it is now ready to be used by members and their guests. This is a very welcome addition to the Gallipoli Room, where it looks like it belongs! We hope to have at least some of the Salter family present in the New Year to thank them for their wonderful gesture and to dedicate the table to the memory of Eric and Myra. In the meantime, a very big thank you to the Salter family—and does anyone have a set of pool balls they don't want??

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*****News on our Members*****

Last Post.

Alex Arnott served in the New Zealand Army for over 4 years during the Second World War and saw action in the Egyptian and Italian campaigns. Over the years Alex was a keen RSA member and his contributions were much valued. Our sympathy and thoughts are with his family in their sad loss.

Welcome

A very warm welcome to the following new members who have joined us since the last newsletter:

Michael & Sussan Turner (from Auckland but with a strong Queenstown and RSA connection)

Brian Tall

We look forward to welcoming you in person and seeing you from time to time at our functions and activities.

Farewell.

It is with much regret that we say farewell to Ray Dunne and Colleen Bearsley, who are shortly heading for warmer climes at the top of the North Island. Ray is a WW2 veteran who joined us from Australia a few years ago, while Colleen joined us within the last year. We are absolutely delighted that they have found happiness together but sad that they are leaving us so soon. Ray has been a great supporter of any activity we have had since he joined us and he and Colleen have been staunch supporters of our Friday evenings in the Gallipoli Room. We will miss their jovial company and conversation but hope to see them back from time to time. We wish them every happiness together.

New Zealand Defence Service Medal—another update

Quite a few of our members have now received this medal in recognition of their military service. Applications have now been called for from those aged 60 years and over, as well as any terminally ill servicepeople/ex servicepeople who qualify for the award of the medal. Applications from younger groups will be called for in coming months. The medal is for those who have served in the military for three years or more since the end of the Second World War, including those who did Compulsory Military Training (CMT) or national military service. Any member who qualifies or is a descendant of one who qualified may apply for award of the medal. If you wish to obtain more information contact New Zealand Defence Medals on their web site medals.nzdf.mil.nz. Applications can be made on line through this web site or by obtaining application forms from our Secretary, Mike Skudder (442 2002).