

## 2023 Surrey Hills ANZAC Day Dawn Service Speeches

***The first speaker is from ASHWOOD SCHOOL, who will speak about the Shrine.***

We stand this morning in front of The Shrine in Surrey Hills. The Shrine has stood in Surrey Gardens now for more than a century as a place of remembrance and contemplation for the local community to give thought to those who fought in World Wars 1 and 2, some never to return to Australia's shores.

It was dedicated on 7 April 1918. The local newspaper, the *Box Hill Reporter*, recorded that over 1,000 people attended the dedication despite the bad weather. The paper further noted that the Shrine was "*the first of its kind in the Commonwealth and was constructed at the instigation of the Surrey Hills Progress Association, which raised funds in the district for that purpose*".

The centrepiece of the Shrine is an ornately carved Honour Board. The board includes 16 plaques listing the names of 526 young people from the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert districts who volunteered and served in the Great War between 1915 and 1918.

Originally only eight central plaques were inscribed with names listed in alphabetical order. Because the war was still in progress, room was left for eight additional plaques in case they were needed. Four plaques were added in the early 1920s. These included additional names and corrections to mistakes made on the original plaques. In 2018, to mark 100 years since the end of the Great War, a further four plaques were added. These included an additional 61 names not previously listed in The Shrine.

***The next speaker is from ASHWOOD SCHOOL, who will speak about John Kendrick Blogg, the creator of the Shrine honour board.***

The Shrine was designed by architects Gawler and Drummond and constructed by Mr T F Crabb of Caulfield. The Honour Board itself was created by a local resident, John Kendrick Blogg, a local Artisan. Blogg was originally a Chemist who took up woodcarving and poetry as hobbies after the death of his wife in 1893. He had a prolific career in woodcarving, creating a number of significant carvings throughout Australia. Some local examples of his work are the carved pulpit that can be seen at St Stephen's Church, Surrey Hills and the World War One Honour Boards at Surrey Hills Primary School and the Surrey Hills Bowling Club, which is kept at the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre.

The idea for the Shrine was initially suggested by Mrs Sarah Margaret Steele. She was the President of the local Patriotic League. Mrs Steele managed to persuade John Blogg to create a monument that would in the words of the *Box Hill Reporter*, be "worthy of the sacrifice made by the boys who had risked their all to win freedom from the terrors of 'The Hun'".

John Blogg was a humble man. When he made a speech at the opening of the Shrine in 1918, he said that "*he stood before them that day very proud indeed, but the men whose names appeared on the Honour Roll were those who should be honoured, not the one who had put them there*".

***Our next speaker is from CHATHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL, and will speak about John Campbell Blogg, the son of the creator of the Shrine's honour board and soldier in the First World War.***

At the time the Shrine was dedicated, the war in Europe was still raging, and many whose names were listed were still involved in some of the heaviest and fiercest fighting of the World War 1.

One of the soldiers fighting at the time the Shrine was opened was John Campbell Blogg, the son of the honour board's creator, John Kendrick Blogg.

John Campbell Blogg was 18 when he enlisted in May 1917. At the time he was living with his father in Albany Crescent, Surrey Hills. His job was listed as a 'Clerk'. Following his training, John travelled to Britain in August 1917 and then to France in February 1918. In France, he joined his Army unit, the 3rd Pioneer Battalion, which was part of the Australian Third Division.

This battalion was responsible for supporting its Division by building and maintaining trenches, dugouts, gun emplacements, roads, bridges, and other such things required for the fighting. Much of this work was carried out within range of German guns being fired by the enemy.

John Campbell Blogg served with the battalion when it was involved in some of the heaviest fighting of the war. This included during the German offensive of March 1918, and the Allied offensive in the Somme Valley in August 1918.

***Our next speaker from CHATHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL will continue the story of John Campbell Blogg.***

In August 1918, during the fighting, John Campbell Blogg contracted Spanish Influenza. This was a deadly pandemic that affected soldiers fighting during the last year of the war.

He was sent to England to recover and was eventually discharged in January 1919 to return to Australia. His record noted that he was also suffering from 'Effort Syndrome'. This is something we refer to today as 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder' or PTSD.

Having fought and survived the First World War, John again enlisted to serve during the Second World War. He served with the RAAF in its campaigns against the Japanese army in Papua New Guinea.

He survived that conflict as well and lived in Melbourne until the age of 75. He is buried in Springvale Cemetery.

John Campbell Blogg's name is listed on Plaque 1 of The Shrine, which is third plaque from the left in the top row.

***The next speaker from OUR HOLY REDEEMER SCHOOL will speak about efforts to update and maintain the Shrine.***

The year of 2018 saw the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. In the lead-up to this date, a group of dedicated locals, led by Sandra Dexter, undertook research to restore and update the Shrine. This was made possible with the support of the City of Boroondara. Central to this work was research into the young people from the area who had served in the Great War, but whose names had not been included on the honour board or had been incorrectly included.

As a result of this project, four new plaques were added to the Shrine's honour board. These plaques identified 64 corrections to the names on the original 12 plaques and listed an additional 61 new names. The new names can be seen in the bottom two left plaques. The corrections seen in the bottom two right plaques.

Each of the men and women whose names are listed can now be properly remembered, and each

has a story to tell. Of the 61 additional names identified, we would like to share the stories of four of them this morning.

***The next speaker from OUR HOLY REDEEMER SCHOOL will tell us about the Mawson sisters, army nurses who served in the First World War.***

The Mawson Sisters, Beatrice, Harriet and Muriel, lived in Bona Vista Avenue, Surrey Hills. All three sisters volunteered as nurses in the Great War.

Beatrice was the eldest and was known as Bea. She travelled to Egypt in 1915 and served with the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in Alexandria, where she cared for casualties from the Gallipoli front. She received two stripes for distinguished service. Once the fighting ended at Gallipoli, she travelled to Europe where she undertook troop transport duty between France and England. In all she made 23 trips across the Channel, at great risk. During one trip hers was the only ship out of seven to make it across the English Channel.

In 1917 Bea was allowed to return to Australia following the death of her father. But the ship she was sailing on hit a mine when it was near India. She and the other survivors took to lifeboats and eventually reached land near Bombay (modern day Mumbai).

After the war, she continued to care for servicemen at the Caulfield Military Hospital.

Harriett and Muriel both joined the nursing services in May 1917. They travelled to Europe where they cared for the wounded in England and France.

The names of the Mawson Sisters are with the new names included on Plaque 15, which is the first plaque on the left in the bottom row.

***We will now hear from SURREY HILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL, who speak about the Hurst brothers, soldiers who fought, and died, in the First World War.***

Ambrose Sydney Hurst and Fred Hurst were brothers. They lived with their parents, Henry and Annie Lee, at the family home in what was then known as Howard Rd, Mont Albert (but now renamed Hotham Street).

Ambrose was known as 'Syd'. He was 24 when he enlisted in October 1916. He served with the 22nd Infantry Battalion, part of the Australian Army's Second Division. Syd was killed by German machine-gun fire on 18 August 1918 during a morning attack near the town of Herleville. He was taking part in the great Allied offensive in the Somme Valley in France which eventually led to the Armistice and the end of the war.

It was reported that Syd was buried by German soldiers along with other fallen Australian soldiers. However, the location of his grave is unknown. Syd is commemorated on the Australian Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, in France.

Syd's name is one of the latest to be included and is on Plaque 15 with the Mawson sisters.

***Our final speaker is from SURREY HILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL, who will continue the story of the Hurst brothers.***

Syd's younger brother, Fred, enlisted in April 1917. He served as a gunner with the 6th Medium Trench Mortar Battery, part of the Australian Army's Third Division. In September 1918, he was involved in an attack on the Hindenburg Line, near the town of Bellicourt, France. During the attack, Fred received a head wound from German shellfire. He was evacuated but died of his

wounds a week later. This was only 6 weeks after Syd was killed. Fred was a talented footballer and cricketer. When his Blackburn Cricket Club team learnt of his death, they wore black armbands out of respect for their lost clubmate. Fred is buried in Saint Sever Cemetery in Rouen, France.

Fred's name is included on Plaque 9, which was added in the 1920s, and which is the first plaque on the left in the top row.

Both Syd and Fred are also included in the 52 names listed on the Memorial Stone Cross as having been killed in the Great War.

At the bottom of the Honour Board there is an inscription of a poem. The poem was written by the board's creator, John Kendrick Blogg, who was also a prolific poet. It speaks of the pride which the community felt at the time for the young people who had served and were still serving in World War One.