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***“Remembering” within the Avondale Returned  
and Services’ Association (Incorporated):***

Gossip; Social Dramas; Women’s Roles; Ritual and  
Commemoration within a Voluntary Association.

A thesis submitted for the degree  
of Master of Philosophy in Social Anthropology  
at  
Massey University, Albany

Margaret Caroline Johnson  
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# Abstract

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“A war has many lives”, appropriate words written by an Avondale Returned Serviceman. The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association was created in 1916 by World War I veterans serving as a place to gather and support each other post-war, giving those who joined a sanctuary of peace, the battlefields of war. These men created a space ready for the next group of men and women to return from World War II. Avondale Returned and Services Association (Incorporated) began in 1933, serving the Avondale community and Avondale returned personnel. Through the years the clubrooms have been a place where service personnel receive support, can relax and enjoy the company of like minded people, family and friends. The clubrooms have seen many changes and milestones; namely allowing women into what began as a “men only” club and creating their own Women’s Sections. With the introduction of membership to family members of war veterans, membership numbers increased dramatically. More recently however, membership was afforded to members of the community. This was necessary because of the decreasing numbers of returned service personnel.

The changes have allowed a wide age group of people to experience the R.S.A., ranging in age from teenagers through to some now in their 90’s. This has allowed for a diverse club culture to be established, with many ethnicities mixing in a historic, sacred space, created to remember the wars and honour the dead. There is an eclectic mix of rituals and traditions taking place within the one space, the clubrooms. I have likened these clubrooms to Erving Goffman’s theory of a theatre, with daily performances by many of the actors, taking their entrances and exits on cue. Others will only make a cameo appearance every now and then. Many actors perform solely for the audience, putting on their masks for their performance and removing it on exit, replacing it with another for the next performance in their life.

In this thesis it is my aim to give my perspective on the many aspects of what one particular Returned Services Association, situated in a particular place and time is about. My research methods were primarily the anthropological, that of participant/observation, with some interviews and archival research to help make sense of the history behind the Association. Many of the war veterans I interviewed and spoke to informally were happy to share their memories with me, of the Association and also their time at war, adding another dimension to the research, giving a positive feel to the overall benefits of having an Association such as this in the community.

# Acknowledgements

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Firstly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members of the Avondale Returned and Services Association (Incorporated) who shared their lives and memories with me. Especially to the returned service men, who freely gave their time allowing me to talk to them about their experiences of war, life as an Avondale R.S.A. member and in the course of the interview, often shared memories of other aspects of their life during, and post-war. Also to the women of the Women's Section, especially Claire Emberson for allowing me the privilege of serving on the Women's Section, albeit for a short time.

For me, this has been an extremely challenging piece of research and thesis writing experience. Through this time I have experienced life at its most difficult. Without the love and support received from many people this thesis would remain uncompleted.

To my Supervisors, Dr Eleanor Rimoldi and Assoc. Prof. Peter Lineham, a sincere thank-you for your time and encouragement. For your invaluable feedback and guidance, but most of all I thank you for your support and patience. I can never thank you both enough, especially Eleanor, and Peter throughout, as well as giving me that final push.

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# For the Fallen

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*The “Ode” comprises the fourth stanza of the Poem “For the Fallen” written by Laurence Binyon. It was first published in “The Times” in London on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1914. The “Ode” was written by Binyon as a tribute to those who served their country in war times and in particular to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The complete poem, with the “Ode” highlighted is as follows:*

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted:  
They fell with this faces to the foe.

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.**

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;  
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known  
As the stars are known to the night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;  
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,  
To the end, to the end they remain.

***By Laurence Binyon***

# Introduction

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“A war has many lives. It is present reality, sometimes the only reality, to the men and armies and nations that are fighting it. It ends (or at least wars always have), and it takes on many new lives in the memories of those who endured and survived it – the victors and the defeated, the wounded and the unmarked. The memories sharpen or fade, inspire or embitter, among those who were there; the young begin to encounter the stories and presently, something that has taken on the dignity of history” (Standfast, 1967).

## Aims and objectives

It is my aim through this research to put forward an anthropological discussion of the role that the Returned Services Association plays within the wider community; how war signified the beginning of this Association. Also, how men's and women's roles are defined inside this association; it could be seen as a juxtaposition of the roles played outside within the wider community. The voluntary association at the core of this research is the Avondale Returned and Services' Association Inc., established post World War I in 1933. At this time the Returned Soldiers' Association as it was known then, along with its affiliated Clubs were androcentric.

Where names have been used in this thesis they are with the individual person's permission. Some people named are now deceased, these people are generally attached to humorous stories told by other surviving members. When sensitive issues are discussed or, specific events such as a fire that caused the clubrooms to burn down, no names have been used.

It is also my aim to discuss here the significance of Anzac Day and what led to this day becoming one filled with symbolism and sacredness; “remembering” an event that occurred over 90 years ago. Anzac Day is the 25<sup>th</sup> day of April, commemorating the landing at Gallipoli of the Australian and New Zealand troops. That is how the acronym of ANZAC came to be, standing for, “Australian and New Zealand Army Corps”.

Women have always played an important role on Anzac Day even at a time when their presence in the clubrooms was only for special occasions and a dance once every six weeks. Their role has been increased over the years and now there are women on the Executive Committee of the club and women are represented on the National Council at R.S.A. Headquarters, unheard of in the early days of the R.S.A.

The role of women in wartime was significant from preparing against invasion, taking over men’s work, to becoming involved in the war effort as a whole. Army Nurses worked in the Middle East and the Pacific. The first women’s auxiliary unit was established by the Air Force in January 1941, with 3,800 Women’s Auxiliary Airforce members (known as W.A.A.F.’s), performing highly technical and specialized duties. The Women’s Royal Naval Service (W.R.N.S., better known as “Wrens”), were formed next with duties including map-plotting and technical work of various kinds. Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps, (known as W.A.A.C.), were established in World War I. This was the strongest in numbers and the last women’s auxiliary group to be formed, serving in the Middle East and Pacific. Women replaced men on the farms and in October 1944 the “Women’s Land Service” was established with more than 2,000 members (Pau 1946:42).

### **Avondale Returned and Services' Association Inc.**

The Avondale R.S.A., as is the case in most other R.S.A. clubs, is a place where friendships have been nurtured over the years. One of the aims of preserving the clubs is for remembrance and one way of achieving this is by the performing of rituals such as the "Ode". Until recently, women were not allowed to recite the Ode, only a returned service man could perform this duty. With the relaxing of the rules due to declining attendance and availability of returned men, it became a necessity to allow Associate Members and women, who are on the Executive Committee, to perform this duty at 9.00 p.m. each night. My research field was not circumscribed. As a member of the Avondale Returned and Services' Association Inc. and with the permission of the Secretary/Manager and Executive Committee (see Appendix C), I have been able to move in and out of the field as I please.

Goffman (1974:1) argues that "...all the world is not a stage...", in contrast to the words of Shakespeare. However, I liken the clubrooms to a "theatre" with performances continually being acted out. In using the metaphor of "theatre" to describe the sacred and profane space of the Avondale R.S.A. clubrooms, I do not mean to imply that events are artificial. On the contrary, this theatre facilitates some very special performances by the "members"; during my research time it was real life drama unfolding before my eyes. These performances can be of dramatic or comedic nature. In this space and time there are no rehearsals; the stage is set and the members begin acting out their once-in-a-lifetime roles.

However, there were times when events were "set-up" for the entertainment of the audience. For example couples that are good dancers, may put a few extra moves into their dancing if they know people are watching, or a couple that are in a new relationship may display their affection to let everyone know they are now together. Some may do it

deliberately if an ex-partner is in the same room, which is quite a common occurrence within the theatre of the R.S.A.

Freedom to come and go as they please, going from club to club is not so easy for people who are not a member of an R.S.A. and have to be signed in by a financial member. This is because of specific rulings put down by the Association. While the rules are not legislation drawn up by the State, they are rules that endeavour to ensure the continuing sacredness of the clubrooms, along with the memory of the past, for the present and the future.

While there is a need to remember the past, there is also a need to move forward, to look to the future. There is a constant to-and-fro in this voluntary association; moving backwards and forwards, experiencing the present and creating a new history, while at the same time, stepping back to remember the past, the people and their culture that created this space where social capital continues to be created. Individual and collective remembering is of particular importance in creating this social capital, situating the theatre and the members in a particular time and space.

Acts of commemoration and rituals such as Anzac Day are poignant reminders of the significance of this need for collective remembering and keeping the memory alive of the original purpose for the creation of the “Royal New Zealand Returned and Services’ Association”. I see these rituals and commemorative acts as “...contrived structuring of time and space...that establishes a...mental geography in which the past is mapped in our minds according to its most unforgettable place...” (Hutton, cited in Osborne 2002:1903).

Throughout this thesis, symbols and symbolic behaviour are significant. Anzac Day commemorations recall a time of anxiety and disorder, but the ritual process brings some order to the chaos that was experienced in

war. This can be applied to the members of the Avondale R.S.A. and community who visit the clubrooms where they are exposed to models wearing uniforms that were actually worn by service personnel in the war. These models represent each of the services. There are flags, guns, photographs, medals and through these, people are drawn into an illusion of the experience of what it would be like to be involved in war.

There are also symbolic memorabilia that hang on the walls and are placed in every available corner of the clubrooms. These symbols of war and the sacrifices made during those wars by the men and women who served, make the clubrooms a sacred place, so the visitor cannot forget the purpose of the Association. But more importantly it is necessary to keep the spirit and memories alive for the future, to educate future generations of the involvement of New Zealand in both historical and current wars.

### **Researching and observing**

Methodologically, participant-observation as the backbone of anthropological research is vital in enabling generation of “...relevant questions for historical research...” which “...can bring us to a clearer understanding of the relationship between the ideal and the actual, as well as of the idealization of the past” (Brettell, 1998:531-532). Mixing and mingling with the members was vital to gathering the richest data possible for my research, because they would often refer to past events, comparing and contrasting it to events that were happening in the present.

As regards ethical approval, my application was accepted and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix B) and as previously stated permission was gained from the Secretary/Manager of the Avondale R.S.A. (see Appendix C). Verbal permission was gained from the five returned servicemen I formally interviewed, along with the seven women

members of the Women's Section. I also gained verbal consent from the servicemen; along with men and women who are members, but not returned members, that I have informally gathered information from during the course of my participant/observation research in the field. Further formal tape recorded interviews was considered inappropriate due to the ages of some of the people that had the most valuable information. These men were in their eighties and I found that they did not want to be recorded. When approached for a formal interview, I initially met with resistance, so decided it was in my best interests to have conversations with the people and take notes straight away for future analysis. They preferred to talk informally, telling me what came to their mind as and when it did; what they thought I needed to know.

Ways of keeping the memories of the past alive are as many and varied as the characters that started the club and held it in trust for the future generations to enjoy. An example of this is a club character whose responsibility it was for some of the photographic memorabilia. His name was Geoff Ashforth, whom Norm Harrison described "*as a man with a sense of humour and a unique philosophy*". Both these Avondale R.S.A. members have passed away now and I was lucky to secure an interview with Norm before his passing. Geoff had a great admiration for the Merchant Navy in which his brother served. This led him to donate a collection of photos of New Zealand vessels, namely "Aorangi", "Awateo", "Maunganui", and "Monowai" which are on the walls over the entrance door inside the clubrooms. Geoff also donated photos of the R.A.F. fighter planes and the Lancaster Bomber, four in the set, which represent that era.

To enable the continuation of this collective remembering, the sharing of memories and experiences between the servicemen and members of the clubs, their families and friends, the R.S.A. in the 1960's began altering their

clubrooms to try and eliminate the image that society had of the R.S.A. clubrooms as being a place where old soldiers go to talk about the war. The clubrooms began to take on a more social atmosphere with the introduction of lounges, billiard tables, darts, bowls, golf and dances. All of these activities are still in existence and vital to the club's members today. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the clubs are attempting to portray themselves as a place for young and old, war veterans as well as those who have never experienced war to gather, share and create new experiences and memories.

Not all the returned service personnel joined the R.S.A.; many turned to the church for solace in the post-war period. After a time a lot of the men married and began raising families, so their focus turned to earning a living, spending time with their families, instead of the R.S.A. However, a number of the men managed to do both and, from the stories I have been told, there was a full social life, mostly between the men, but also included activities for the family, which comprised of games nights, along with annual picnics which are still a feature of the club calendar today. Members and wives nights, along with Anzac Day were other occasions for the men and women to gather socially.

### **Questions to be answered**

The questions I hoped to find answers for by undertaking this research were:

- (1) Where do women stand in this voluntary association today, compared to their role when the R.S.A. began in 1916?
- (2) The meaning of “gossip” within a voluntary association; is it moral control, or merely a means of transferring knowledge?

- (3) How friendships and social capital are created within the Avondale R.S.A.?
- (4) What is the significance of the rituals and symbols that create the feeling of the clubrooms being a sacred space and how this space is constantly changing from the sacred to the profane?
- (5) How important is the preservation of the history of the Avondale R.S.A., its stories and its characters?
- (6) The significance and importance of Anzac Day, its symbolism, ritual and meaning created by the Avondale R.S.A. around this day, has this changed over the many years of commemorations?

I have included a significant amount of historical information primarily to give the reader a background into the “Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association”. It was verbally agreed with the Avondale R.S.A. that on completion of my thesis, a copy would be presented to them for inclusion in their library.

### **Contents of chapters**

This thesis is set out in the following chapters:<sup>1</sup>

The introduction explains a brief outline of the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association itself, as well as Avondale R.S.A. It also briefly explains the methodology used, along with the questions I hope to answer, as well as my standpoint for this research. I have also explained that ethical approval has been received from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> I have abbreviated the Returned and Services Association to “R.S.A.” throughout this thesis.

Chapter One will give the reader an overview of the R.N.Z.R.S.A., how it began in 1916, its policies and beliefs, along with some stories surrounding these beliefs. Also how the women became involved in a male dominated association. There is a brief discussion on the part played by the Maori Battalion, serving alongside their Pakeha compatriots.

Chapter Two outlines the methodology used for this thesis. My main method was the traditional anthropological method of participant-observation. However archival research was necessary for the historical component. How I became involved in this research is discussed here also. I explain my method of interviewing, and the reasons for the way it was undertaken.

Chapter Three is the Structure and Organisation of the Avondale R.S.A. - how they came to be on the site they currently occupy, who the original owners were and the process of change over the years. It also includes some stories of past members and the memories that have transcended time.

Chapter Four looks at the role of women in war and the R.S.A. I discuss how their roles have changed and been defined over the years. From Ladies' Committees to the Women's Sections, women are now able to take over the roles once only permitted by the returned service men.

Chapter Five discusses symbols and rituals, predominantly that of Anzac Day, which is the most significant day of the year for the R.S.A. Some of the symbols discussed are unique to the Avondale R.S.A.

The final chapter will be the Conclusion, a summing up of all that has come before. It is hoped by this point that the reader has an understanding of the importance of the Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association within the New Zealand culture, what it stands for and its role in society

today. As well as this it is hoped that the significant contribution of women to the Association over the years, will be recognised.

Like a phoenix rises from the ashes, many lifelong friendships have risen from the ashes of war. Many a battle has been won and lost on the dance floor, stories told and re-told over a beer or two.

# Chapter One

## Overview

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### How the R.S.A. came to be

On 15 July 1915 the first number of wounded soldiers returned to New Zealand aboard the “S.S. Willochra”. The initial number of wounded soldiers returning from Gallipoli was 284. A further six ships in 1915 and 28 in 1916, brought the total number of wounded to 8,093. During 1917, the number of wounded and invalided continued to return in increasing numbers, from 1,918 to some 28,182 having returned by the end of December 1918. How to incorporate these men back into a civilian life after their discharge from the Forces was a question raised early in the war. These World War I veterans recognised there was a need for an organisation to care for returned service men and their families and began forming local Returned Soldiers’ Associations (Mayhew 1943; Melling 1952; Patterson 1973).

The “New Zealand Returned Soldiers’ Association” was founded on 28 April 1916 at a conference in Wellington called by Captain Donald Simson, who was subsequently elected President. It was originally known as the “New Zealand Returned Soldiers’ Association”, but later changed to “New Zealand Returned Services’ Association” so that it would be seen as an association for all returned service personnel, not just army. The welfare of the returned men was the priority and the R.S.A. set itself up as a non-sectarian and non-party-political lobby group (see Appendix D & E). It was to fight for the rights of the returned men, allow them to gain employment, have access to housing, deal with any problems they may encounter and

initially the Government established a Discharged Soldiers Information Department (Mayhew 1943:10-11).

A magazine called “Quick March” published quarterly, was established to attract attention to the voice of the N.Z.R.S.A and it served its purpose very well. In 1943 the Council changed the name of the magazine to “Review” and it became a more frequent publication. “The work of the Association is attaining such a high degree of national importance that it has become desirable that the Association’s official journal should be published more frequently...” according to the Editor of the August 1943 edition of Review (Mayhew 1943:32).

Welfare is still one of the primary roles of the Association and every club has a Welfare Officer available to assist returned service men and women in areas of pension advice, advising on assistance available from Work and Income New Zealand, as well as friendship and support. In the early days of the association, a member would come to the R.S.A. first for assistance. But today the Welfare Officer will advise the member to seek help from W.I.N.Z. or their family, with limited financial assistance being available through the association in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There is a strong allegiance to the Queen and the Crown, the Nation and the Community with the Association describing itself as a service organisation, non-sectarian and non-party-political, with a responsibility to all the men and women who fought for this country. Entering any R.S.A. clubrooms, including Avondale, one always sees pictures of the Royal Family gracing the walls, generally of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip; some R.S.A.s also have a portrait of the late Queen Mother. A veteran I interviewed told me that it is a rule of the Association that politics and religion should not be discussed within the clubrooms. But there are times

when heated discussions have erupted between members, maybe after a few too many beers!

On 28<sup>th</sup> April 2006 the “Royal New Zealand Returned Services’ Association” celebrated their 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in combination with the New Zealand Government, declaring 2006 as “The Year of the Veteran”. The different clubs have celebrated this milestone in their own unique ways.

### **R.S.A. Policies and Beliefs**

An example of the strong voice that the R.S.A. had in its early days after formation in 1916 was on the issue of a “white New Zealand” and the anti-Asian, Assyrian and Japanese feeling. The “white New Zealand” policy came about through legislation in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s by the Government of the day, starting in 1895 with W.P. Reeves and R.J. Seddon (O’Connor 1968:42). The perceived racial superiority of the white people that was sweeping New Zealand at the time, led to protests when it was reported that white returned soldiers were being employed by Auckland Chinese, often in market gardens and used as cheap labour (Quick March, 10 July 1920; Auckland Star, 26 May 1920; Evening Star, 21 July 1920, cited in O’Connor 1968:53).

According to Quick March (10 July 1920, cited in O’Connor 1968:54) the Returned Soldiers’ Association protested with stridency, consistency and almost vulgarity. They kept up an unrelenting scream of horror at the Asian migration policy. The Association believed that the man who fought for his country did not do so with the idea of making it a happy hunting ground for Asiatic labour and believed that it was the business of Parliament to preserve the country for the men who created its prosperity. It was of great importance to the R.S.A. when the economic interests of one of its members were involved.

The R.S.A. in the 1920's was very much for the white New Zealand Returned Servicemen and their families. When a third Chinese - owned fruit shop opened in Timaru, close to a shop owned by a returned soldier, the local R.S.A. was so concerned that it tried to organise a boycott of the Chinese shops. It was suggested that the ladies of Timaru form a committee and picket the shop. Anyone who persisted in buying cabbages cheaply would have their names published in the local press under the heading "We fought not for Chinese but for a white New Zealand" (Quick March, 10 May 1920, cited in O'Connor 1968:55).

Chinese fruiterers were underselling the returned soldiers and on Saturday 17 April 1920 in Timaru a man in annoyance upset a box of onions outside one of the Chinese shops. When the Chinese man came out to pick up the onions he was knocked into the gutter, then the annoyed man entered the shop and upturned all the fruit and vegetables. Further, he created havoc and smashed all the windows with the upturned fruit and vegetables. The police arrived and the crowd moved on, only to repeat the procedure at all three of the Chinese owned fruit and vegetable shops. While the Timaru R.S.A. denied all knowledge of the incidents, they appealed to business people not to rent premises to Chinese. Questions were asked as to why the returned soldiers and citizens of Timaru deplored what they saw as "hooliganism" but did not go to the aid of the Chinese. The simple reply was that they did not want Chinese in Timaru (Melling 1952:120-122).

The racist comments continued over the years, as did the prosperity of Chinese owned fruit shops. With the introduction of more legislation, the R.S.A. finally had to accept that racial discrimination was no longer an acceptable stance, they had to take a step back and admit that the Chinese in New Zealand were not that many really. In fact Asian and Indian people

represented only 0.45% of the population of 1.2 million people overall, in 1920 (O'Connor 1968).

From time to time there remains an overtone of the old policies of the early R.S.A., the desire for a "white New Zealand". Along with this policy the Association put in place a "colour bar", barring certain "coloured" people from membership of the Association. The "white New Zealand" policy was applied to other cultures, more specifically migrants from any Asian country (O'Connor 1968).

### **Comrades Remember the Allies and Enemies**

From talking with some World War II veterans I have discovered that during the 1930's and early 1940's the clubrooms became a place for aging World War I soldiers to find comradeship, along with a need at the time of the Depression for a group to lobby for the welfare of the returned servicemen and their families. The returned men from World War I, who were not eligible to serve in World War II, kept the clubs going while the next group of servicemen were away at World War II.

The Association wished to be known as a pressure group that lobbied the Government of the day, for better welfare and assistance for returned service personnel. These service clubs served an essential part in providing help to the needy in the community and in many cases the state was not there to help. "In a country where political policy significantly reflected the exertions of pressure groups, many associations play a prominent political role" (Pitt 1973:160).

The N.Z.R.S.A. was particularly vocal by lobbying for returned service personnel from the two world wars and again during the Vietnam War. In 1965 the New Zealand Press Association (N.Z.P.A) received a huge number of messages from pressure groups, the N.Z.R.S.A was no exception. In one

day the N.Z.P.A received four messages from the N.Z.R.S.A. regarding their views on defence, defence expenditure, military training, and to reconsider Anzac Day activities. In this light the N.Z.R.S.A. was seen as one of the more active pressure groups in New Zealand (Cleveland 1972:116).

Even though the N.Z.R.S.A claimed to be non-political, or apolitical and they were very vocal on issues that were seen as of importance to their members and their cause. It has been suggested that "...members of such groups get politicized through acquaintance diversity, network size, association activity, holding office, helping with administrative work, or discussing politics with fellow members" (Erickson & Nosanchuk 1990:206).

An editorial article written by Brian Mahon appeared in the 1969 edition of the annual Avondale Returned Services Club Inc. magazine "Standfast", giving a view of how society embraced the purpose of the Returned Services Association at that time:

"Some outsiders regard it as the Serviceman's Trade Union. Critics of the need to go to war, regard it as militant, aggressive; but we in the movement claim that none have a greater interest in preserving peace.

Some ex-Servicemen regard it as a friendly sort of benevolent society; others as a cornerstone for implementing their resolve that New Zealand will not have to go to war again – and if it does it will not go unprepared. It is unique in that its future depends on recruits from more wars. And if there are no more major wars for decades then it must disperse its facilities and assets.

Overall membership is fairly static these days, but there still remains a fairly active membership – still 90,000-odd throughout New Zealand. The R.S.A. has proved to be a large flourishing and

influential organisation which has developed mightily since its fledgling days of early 1916, when a handful of soldiers from Gallipoli and Egypt decided some form of association was needed to protect the rights and interests of returned men. They also say on a population basis the N.Z.R.S.A. has the highest membership of any Commonwealth – or possible world ex-service organisation.

Often blokes pay their subscription from a sense of duty and gratitude for the efforts it has made in the past, and is still making today for needy ex-Servicemen” (Standfast 1969:5).

Upon their return from war, most men it appears joined such clubs as the R.S.A. to have companionship and male friendship that they were used during war times. An escape from the family was often sought, for some men had difficulty settling down to the responsibilities of family life and communicating with their wives. An example of this is a quote from Lt. Cdr. Patrick Kettle (Bilton & Kosminsky 1990, cited in Morgan 1994:165).

“I found it very difficult to speak to my wife about my experiences. The only way that I could ever let her know how I felt was actually to tell the story to other people but to make sure that she was within earshot, and I consciously did this on several occasions. This conflict has been working on inside me for some time, but I’m glad to say I’ve managed to get it out and tell her exactly how I felt, and I feel better for it. I was left with the feeling of the absurdity of war. It’s a message that has been said many times before. War is hell, believe me”.

Claire talks about the men who were members of the “Over 60’s Club” at Avondale R.S.A., how they would never discuss the war until they got to know someone well and then there was no stopping them. This is an

example of “trust” that is a result of the accumulation of “social capital”. A group situation such as the Over 60’s Club is one of social networks and from this comes reciprocity and trustworthiness. This form of social capital can be described as “bonding social capital” where the groups of people interacting are like oneself (Putnam 2000; Hooghe & Stolle 2003:5). Social trust is not a constant; it varies through all societies and organisations and changes over time. This is clear when gossip becomes involved as part of this trust, where a person passes on a piece of gossip to someone they think they can trust and then the person lets them down by passing on the information. In this case the bond has been broken and the trust now gone.

Men, like the women, find their friendships gained through membership, are ones of support. It may be that the philosophy of the R.S.A. is different to other associations, one being based on support, friendship, camaraderie and a place for friends and kin to be together under one umbrella. Trust is also an important element involved in these relationships, probably more important in this association than in other clubs or associations. Within these friendships a lot of personal problems are discussed, people’s feelings, emotions, and particularly experiences from the war years are shared.

### **Maori Battalion take their place in history**

During both World Wars, but more so in World War II, the Maori Battalion fought alongside the Pakeha soldiers. The most famous Battalion was the “28 Battalion”, their antics and heroics on the battlefield earned them a place in history. Today the Maori Battalion remain highly respected and remembered, with a number of Maori Battalion members joining the Avondale R.S.A.

In World War I a number of Maori tribes were eager to shoulder arms and serve alongside their Pakeha compatriots as citizens of the British Empire. Telegrams volunteering their assistance were sent by tribes throughout the country to the Government. Initially policy denied Maori from being involved in hostilities between European races but the British Government finally accepted their offer. As a result of this the Pioneer Battalion – “Hokowhitu a Tu” or “The Seventy twice-told Warriors of the War God” sailed for the Suez in February 1915.

Upon the declaration of World War II on 3 September 1939, the New Zealand Government decided to raise a division-size expeditionary force. The Maori community again showed a desire to be involved as a Maori military unit. They had recruited volunteers from every tribe by the end of September, including from the Waikato who had refused to serve overseas in World War I.

Only Maori could serve in the Maori Battalion, they were also free to join other units if they wished. The 28 (Maori) Battalion<sup>1</sup> first assembled at the Palmerston North showgrounds on 26 January 1940, under the command of Colonel George Dittmer, MBE, MC with Major George Bertrand as second-in-command. The battalion embarked on the Aquitania as part of the Second Echelon on 1 May 1940 and sailed for Britain the next day (McQuaid 1995:25; Orange 2000).

It appears that the Maori were fierce fighters in the face of battle. An example of the fear the Maori Battalion instilled on their enemy was when the Germans launched a full-scale attack to the west of Mount Olympus. The enemy infantry advanced through the wire to face Maori soldiers chanting an ancient tribal “haka”; they then charged the enemy with fixed bayonets and

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<sup>1</sup> They are known as the 28 (Maori) Battalion, not 28<sup>th</sup> (Maori) Battalion.

drove the attackers back. “I have never seen anything so terrific in my life”, said an Australian soldier who witnessed the charge (Paui 1946 38-39). “The Germans went down like ninepins, and their shrieks as the Maoris went into them with cold steel were the most frightening thing I have ever heard. The Maoris fought like tigers. They asked for no mercy and they gave none” (Paui 1946:38-39). Military service was not compulsory for Maori but they volunteered at a steady pace and the Maori Battalion was always at full strength (Paui 1946). The famous “Maori Battalion Marching Song” can be read in Appendix N.

### **Women in Wartime**

It was not only the men who were suffering through the times of war. The wives and families of the men away at war suffered their own lonely times. Deborah Montgomerie in her book entitled *“Love in time of War”* discusses how the women and families experienced times of not knowing whether their loved ones were safe or not. An example of this was a woman called Gay Gray whose husband ended up in a Prisoner of War camp, the location of which was also unknown. However, when she was finally able to discover the location, she was only allowed to write one single-sided letter and send parcels with an official Red Cross label, four times a year (Montgomerie 2006:50).

The New Zealand Listener interviewed a Prisoner of War (P.O.W.) in July 1943 who had recently been released. He thanked the Red Cross for their weekly parcels. Also he commented that, “Parcels sustained them physically. Letters sustained them emotionally” (Montgomerie 2006:50). With the knowledge that their letters were so important to their loved ones, knowing they could only send them every few months, created “...a special kind of hell for the families of P.O.W.’s” (Montgomerie 2006:50). These letters show how people’s lives are transformed by “big events” in history,

they also showed "...how people struggled to hold on to intimacy, humour and compassion in trying times" (Montgomerie 2006:50).

Prior to and during the period of World War I and II there have been many associations devoted to women and helping them in their domestic roles. Some prominent ones were the Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.); Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) which was founded in 1885; the National Council of Women of New Zealand which was constituted in 1896; a large association formed in 1924 was the Pan-Pacific Women's Association which was made up of representatives of ten associations of women, including Women's Institutes, W.C.T.U. and the Y.W.C.A. (Simpson 1940).

Many other women took on roles as volunteers for the war effort. One of these women was Ettie Annie Rout (1877-1936) who in July 1915 set up the New Zealand Volunteer Sisterhood during the Gallipoli campaign. She invited women between the ages of 30 and 50 to go to Egypt to care for New Zealand soldiers. Her first 12 volunteers went to Cairo in October 1915 against the wishes of the government.

Ettie herself arrived in Egypt, February 1916 and straight away noticed the soldiers' high venereal disease rate. She saw this as a medical problem instead of a moral one and set about trying methods of prevention. Believing that the army was not looking after the men properly she opened the Tel El Kebab Soldiers' Club and later a canteen at El Qantara in an endeavour to provide better rest and recreation facilities, as well as better food. She produced a kit containing calomel ointment, condoms and Condyl's crystals (potassium permanganate). Ettie Rout received no credit for her role in the development and adoption of the kit and she was banned from New Zealand newspapers under the War Regulations. Mention of her name bought a possible £100 fine and women's groups accused her of trying to make her

“vice” safe, an example of the attitudes to morality that existed around this time (<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>).

Evelyn Gertrude Brooke (1879-1962) was appointed matron on the hospital ship “Maheno” on its way to Turkey in July 1915. As matron on a ship she was responsible for all nursing arrangements. Nurses were commissioned officers but many of the male officers refused to recognise this and the women were subjected to a great deal of unpleasantness. During August and September 1915 the Maheno made five visits to Anzac Cove at Gallipoli where the horrors of war could not be avoided. In the extreme heat the nurses worked with torn and mangled men amid the horrible sickly odour of dysentery, disease and decay. Brooke became matron of the military hospital at Trentham after returning to New Zealand in January 1916 (<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>).

Women’s organisations in New Zealand have continued to grow since women won the vote in 1893. “Women’s organisations” can be defined as voluntary organisations formed of women, by women, for women. Some earlier organisations especially those working for suffrage included men. Because of women’s civil disabilities, lack of access to resources, socially restricted mobility at that time, meant they were limited to the extent they could act on their own (Else 1993:vii).

In 1916, the same year as the Returned Services Association was formed, a women’s peace organisation was formed. It was called the “Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom”. In the same year, the Government first introduced conscription the “Women’s Anti-Conscription League” began. Prior to the World War II, the role of women in New Zealand society was rarely questioned. A woman’s role was that of homemaker, caring for their husbands and children, maintaining the home and family. For a woman to do anything different such as entering university,

or remaining unmarried was deemed unusual. However this all changed at the outbreak of World War II when New Zealand men, both Maori and Pakeha found themselves overseas fighting a war to defend the British Empire (Montgomerie 2001).

In 1942 women were conscripted to work in occupations previously undertaken by men,<sup>2</sup> challenging the time-honoured notion that women's place was in the home (Montgomerie 2001:9; McQuaid 1995:10). Industrial conscription introduced in 1942 brought with it regulations decreeing that in certain essential industries workers could not be dismissed; men and women were required to register at Manpower offices and go to work where they were directed. A Women's War Service Auxiliary (WWSA) was established in 1940 to co-ordinate women's work (McQuaid 1995:10). This also brought into question the gendered division of labour, as well as socially constructed roles of men and women, both in the public and private sectors.

Many people believed that this was the beginning of dramatic changes in women's lives and breaks with the traditional past. These changes for women in wartime were also seen as standing for the emancipation of women. The problem was that women were still expected to carry on their domestic duties of the home and family, as well as taking on employment. While the war brought some new opportunities for women, it did not privilege women or feminist ideas. Some saw the war as a threat to the balance of power between the sexes and the change was not always welcomed. Women seemed to have had their role recast by war and it was suggested, to keep the balance that if their roles changed, then so should that of the men, "...gender roles were interlocked and complementary" (Montgomerie 2001:11).

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<sup>2</sup> This was known as "industrial conscription" as opposed to "military conscription". Military conscription began in June 1940 which called for volunteers of pace men aged 16-45 to register for a national reserve force. By 15 August 1945, 194,000 men, well over half the male population aged 18-45 had been inducted into the armed forces (Montgomerie 2001:43).

Women in wartime were not free to participate as they wished. They were still expected to be seen as feminine, as well as patriotic without being militaristic; represent peace and normalcy and contribute to national production by taking on men's work, while remaining still home-loving, child-centred and private. "Women were expected to replace men, but not displace them" (Montgomerie 2001:18). If women had been seen as being equal to men there would have been less debate about the differences of the social construction of female and male roles. Many New Zealanders believed that men and women were naturally different, and women's response to the war was often interpreted as a source of social problems (Montgomerie 2001:18-19). There were some women who were unable to take on paid employment in the roles of men for varying reasons, such as disabilities or distance from suitable work. These women often worked on the land as "land girls". In 1941 a Land Corps, later renamed "Women's Land Service" was created to provide farm labour (McQuaid 1995:10).

But the women were still expected to be there, waiting patiently as was their war-time role, waiting for their sons, husbands, brothers or lovers to return to them; they waited for news from the trenches as well, powerless and suffering while the men battled each other in senseless and bloody conflict.

A pertinent recognition of women's wartime role was a poem called "The women's share", which appeared in a best-selling volume of verse in 1915:

"Ours but the waiting part, and ours to give  
To patiently endure without a word  
And if our dearest die, 'tis ours to live,  
Though death may be a thousand fold preferred.  
The history of our times won't mention us  
'Tis so indeed that we would have it be..." (Shute 1995:31).

During World War II the situation was different with women leaving the home and taking over the jobs of the men who had gone to war. Australia's participation in World War II, as in New Zealand led to a conscription of women into industrial labour. In doing men's jobs women were able to demystify them, and it gave an insight to and acknowledgement of the women's capabilities. Judge Foster of the Women's Employment Board (WEB) in Australia stated in 1942 that:

“To all of us it was an amazing revelation to see women who were yesterday working in beauty salons or who had not previously worked outside their own homes or who had come from the counters of retail stores or a dozen other industries rendered superfluous by war, who now stood behind mighty machines operating them with a skill and mastery that was little short of marvellous!” (Lake 1995:62).

This was the beginning of a new type of feminism and equal rights for women, leading into the late 1960's with women's liberation and sexual freedom. Women's lives were beginning to change (Lake 1995:75). Even with a strong focus on feminism and women's liberation through outspoken feminists such as Germaine Greer, there were still associations where women had their place and this was reinforced strongly by the rules of the New Zealand Returned Services' Association, namely the Women's Sections of the R.N.Z.R.S.A.

The association women have with the R.S.A. dates back to as early as 1916, the beginning of the R.S.A. These were known as “The Patriotic Associations” and were mostly run by women who assisted with R.S.A. functions initially, then went on to raise funds for the early R.S.A. clubrooms. During the 1920's and 1930's the “Ladies' Committees” as they were then known, catered for R.S.A. functions, raised funds (specifically on Poppy

Day), as well as organised annual Christmas parties for children.<sup>3</sup> The name “Ladies’ Committee” was changed to “Women’s Sections” when it was decided by Dominion Headquarters that they should have more formalised bodies and this was officially sanctioned at the N.Z.R.S.A. Dominion Council meeting in 1942 ([http://www.rsa.org.nz/remem/rsa\\_hist\\_women.html](http://www.rsa.org.nz/remem/rsa_hist_women.html); Dalley 1993:317-318).

The role of the members of the Women’s Sections within the R.S.A., is that of fundraising, friendship and support for the members and their families. Sometimes a member prefers a visit from a woman, rather than a man. If a member is in hospital or needs a meal, the Welfare Officer will arrange to visit the hospital, or deliver a meal to the person in need. At the post World War II peak the R.S.A. had 57,000 members, up from 4,029 in 1917. In 1920, Anzac Day was established as a statutory holiday (Clarke 1994; Mayhew 1943; Melling 1952; Patterson 1973; Sharpe 1981).

These women of the Women’s Sections have shown their strength and ability to adapt successfully to changing circumstances. The women are no longer banished to the kitchens on Anzac Day, in Avondale R.S.A. at least, they still play an important role behind the scenes.

The first Poppy Day was held on 24 April 1922. Poppy Day and other fundraising activities are the traditional functions for the women (Dalley 1993:318). These poppies represent the Flander’s poppies and were initially sold in aid of the widows and orphans of France and unemployed ex-soldiers in New Zealand. They are a significant symbol of Anzac Day. These

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<sup>3</sup> Along with other women’s organisations the members of the Ladies’ Committee visited hospitals, knitted and sewed clothes. They also quilted blankets and on a recent news item I saw, one of these quilted blankets has been returned to Dunedin, after being held in France by a relation of one of the hospital nurses from World War I. It was 90 years old but looked brand new with all the names of the women’s group who had made the quilt, embroidered onto it.

poppies were in flower at Flander's Fields when the great battle at Anzac Cove occurred in 1915. Thousands of soldiers lost their lives and these poppies symbolise the blood spilt on the battlefields (Sharpe 1981:109).

Today, the returned men do go out and collect money on Poppy Day if they are able, but ultimately the Women's Section's are responsible for the collection by making sure the poppies are ordered, distributing the collection boxes and poppies to collectors and counting the money on return to the clubrooms at the end of the day. The Women's Section is also involved with caring for the returned men and women on the most significant day of the year, Anzac Day a day that belongs solely to these returned service people.

### **Social Groups and Gossip within the Avondale R.S.A.**

The Avondale R.S.A. has many different social groups. The Women's Section is probably the most prominent. There are different groups such as Darts, Fishing, Pool, Over 60's Club, who are all separate groups within the umbrella of the Avondale R.S.A. The darts and pool groups have competitions with other R.S.A.'s, allowing for the creation of social capital within this social group. Often, after too much alcohol this can lead to social dramas occurring, with these becoming "a piece of the action" as Goffman would say. In amongst all this, gossip will more than like have played a part and be responsible for creating some of these dramas.

Gluckman's three forms of social groups are considered here, "...the more exclusive the group, the greater will be the amount of gossip in it" (Gluckman 1963:309). First there is the professional group, with tight technical discussions that tend to exclude any outsider, who then has no way of breaking into this group.

The second highly exclusive group feels it has high social status and wishes to exclude parvenus. These groups tend to become hereditary, for the

group comprises not only current members, but also past deceased members. This could describe the social groups of the R.S.A. in general terms, in which each generation is introduced to the R.S.A. through a connection with a past member.

Membership of an R.S.A. traditionally was only available to ex-service personnel and more recently family members of Returned Service people. Some of these service people were killed at war, so their family gained membership through heredity, or past ancestors. To gossip properly, members must know about both the past and present membership. This allows great scope to use gossip as a “social weapon” (Gluckman 1963:309). Members can attack each other through their ancestors and if a member is ignorant of the position their ancestor held in the social group then, Gluckman believes, they are in a weak position. Each time a member refers to a scandal of their ancestor he or she is gently rubbing in the fact that the member with no ancestors does not properly belong to the group and is a parvenu (Gluckman 1963:309).

This second type of group is applicable to the R.S.A. because the Association was set up so that returned service men and women, along with their families would have a supportive environment through the years of war, and after. It is also a place to remember the service people who did not return from the war and past members, through various rituals specific to an R.S.A. or military establishment. This remembrance can be seen in rituals such as the Anzac Day commemorations, remembering the Australians and New Zealanders who fought and died at Anzac Cove in World War I. During these rituals another ritual is taking place and that is “conversation”.

Goffman believes conversation is a ritual. “The result of this conversational ritual is to create a little temporary cult, a shared reality consisting of whatever is being talked about...Goffman points out that once

the conversational ritual is in full swing, it builds up its own pressures which control its participants. The topic has to be respected...for ever so short a time, a sacred object to be worshipped...a conversation has a life of its own and makes demands on its own behalf. It is a little social system with its own boundary-maintaining tendencies.” (Collins 1994:72-73).

Gossip is a significant part of these gatherings. Conversation often turns to past members and comrades from wartime and the mischief that these men and women took part in, along with the horrors of the conflict in which they were involved. I would not class the more horrific stories of war as gossip. These sorts of stories would be viewed more along the line of oral history. However, the stories of who did what with whom while on leave, and who got caught would better be viewed as gossip. This also poses the question of where the line is drawn as to what is perceived as gossip and what could be called an oral history.

“The analysis of gossip passing into scandal brings out some of the general characteristics of gossip as a culturally controlled game with important social functions. It also shows that in different kinds of groups the role and function of gossip will vary with their specific histories and their situation in the larger society” (Gluckman 1963:312).

A third type of exclusive group is that where exclusiveness is thrust upon it by being a minority, isolated from any other distinguishing criterion from which the members cannot change. Elizabeth Colson’s study of the Makah Indians is one such example. Like other Native American tribes there was an attempt to assimilate the Makah Indians into American culture. Through this process a class system became established in the Makah society. Colson discussed the fact that criticising others, gossiping and back-biting was a way of reasserting a set of values which operate within a group and

governs the behaviour of the members, "...specific and restricted gossip within a group marks it off from other groups, both like and unlike. The gossip and scandal which are so biting in Makah life unite them into a group outside of general American society" (Gluckman, 1963:311). The criticism and gossip maintains the values of the Makah society, maintaining also Indians against whites and Makah against other Indians. "To be a Makah you must be able to scandalise skilfully" (Gluckman 1963:311).

It is argued by Orrego (1991) that people who are engaging in the gossip are carrying out judgemental activity on the behaviour of others, namely the people who are being talked about. The participants in the gossip have shared assumptions on which social behaviour is appropriate.

"The set of values, against which the "victim" of gossip is assessed, must represent an indication of what the community feels things must be. This indication may be sometimes clear, sometimes ambiguous, but it always reflects a collective attempt to negotiate the application of shared norms or to clarify and assert its meanings" (Orrego 1991:11).

Another suggestion regarding the functionality of gossip is the argument of Harold Garfinkel that social order is more at a cultural level and that knowledge is "...shared and tacit" (cited in Gouldner 1971:390). For Garfinkel the social world is held together by tacit understandings "...what men know and know others know" (cited in Gouldner 1971:390), offering an alternative to the notion of gossip as a form of moral and social control.

I discovered early on in my research that the Avondale R.S.A. also operates with many unwritten rules, and if they are unknown to the people then often through "gossip", the person is soon enlightened to this knowledge.

Orrego, in her 1991 M.A. Thesis suggests that in Anthropology the debate about gossip has been divided into two theoretical schools. The most appropriate one is where...“this group sees gossip as a spontaneous collective sanction, as public opinion enforcing conformity to community norms” (Orrego 1991:5). To Gluckman, “...gossip is a group-binding, boundary maintaining mechanism: an informal device for social control” (cited in Orrego 1991:6).

From his own perspective, Gluckman (1963:308) argues that for most people, gossip is a large part of their day and in some instances gossiping comes second only to work. Gossip is more often than not seen as something that happens by chance, is haphazard and treated with disapproval. “...among relatively small groups, gossip, in all its very many varieties, is a culturally determined process, which has its own customary rules, trespass beyond which is heavily sanctioned” (Gluckman 1963:308).

Further, Gluckman (1963) suggests that gossip, and even scandal can have positive virtues in maintaining “...the unity morals and values of social groups. Beyond this they enable these groups to control the competing cliques and aspiring individuals of which all groups are composed” (Gluckman 1963:308). In other words Gluckman is suggesting that “gossip” and even “scandal” are a form of moral and social control over the members within the situation of the theatre. I would also suggest that this form of gossip and scandal mongering went on in wartime. Possibly this contributed to some of the battles that were started during war time, with rumour and gossip being passed around the camps, over the radios. As tends to happen, the story gets changed along the way.

The second school that Orrego (1991) suggests, sees people doing things as individuals for personal ends, the group is composed of individuals. They believe that gossip is not a means of social control, instead a form of

individual information exchange (Orrego 1991:6). It could be argued that this school exchanges individual information in order to maximise their own individual advantage.

### **Gossip as Social Control**

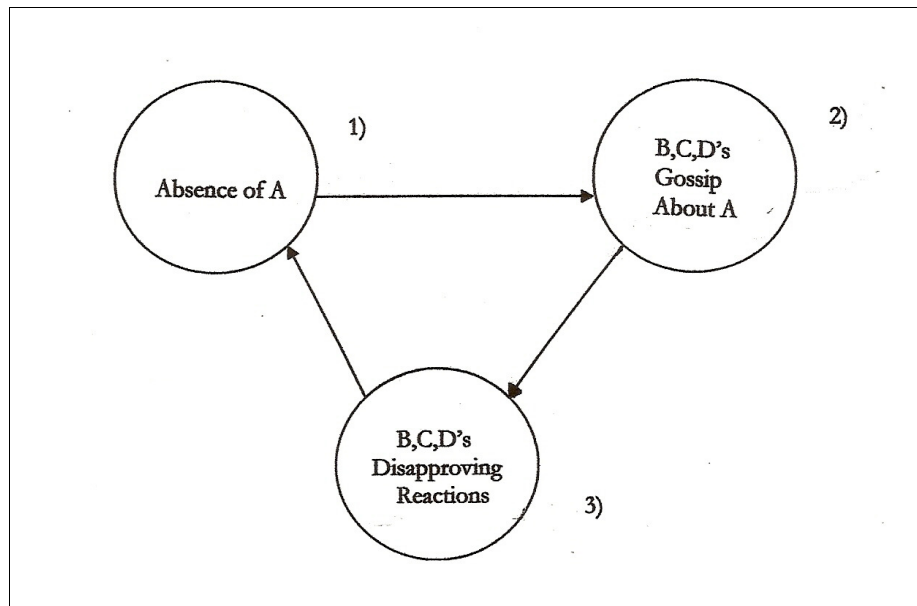
The drinking and driving escapades of a past Avondale member, Bert Thorburn caused gossip within the club at the time. Because his behaviour was socially acceptable at the time and he was viewed as somewhat of a club “clown”, but today it is frowned upon and therefore this story has become remembered as part of the club’s oral history. Drinking and driving is frowned upon by the club, but of course there are always those members who still see themselves as invincible and continue to have one too many beers and get behind the wheel of their car, as they probably have done for years.

Young (2001:3) argues that, “Gossip involves a commentary on the characteristics of one’s social identity (i.e. reputation) within a group, and how one’s action reflect upon his or her reputation or standing in the group”. This would modify the behaviour of some people as they would not want their reputation tarnished and therefore is gossip being used as a form of moral and/or social control.

“Thus, a definition of gossip must incorporate the notion of gossip as a form of social control through the shaping of reputations...There appears to be a general consensus that gossip is a form of social control...” Arno, 1980; Barkow, 1992; Cox, 1970; de Sousa, 1994; Dunbar, 1996; Eder & Enke, 1991; Gelles, 1989; Gluckman, 1963; Hannerz, 1967; Haviland, 1977; Laing, 1993; Leven & Kimmel, 1977; Merry, 1984; Post, 1994; Rosnow, 1977, 2000; Stirling, 1956, cited in Young (2001:7). “...By transmitting

information about the reputations of members of a group to other members of the group, the norms of the group become established and reinforced and the boundaries of the group become clearer” Young (2001:6-7).

Bergmann (1993:142) describes gossip as “...a kind of transfer station for a larger process of social control...” and he shows its circular structure in the following way:



Bergmann 1993:142

Overwhelmingly the literature shows evidence that gossip has both positive and negative connotations, as well as being difficult to define. Young (2001) argues that gossip carries strong negative connotations and suggests that one ambiguity regarding the literature on gossip is whether or not gossip can contain positive information as claimed. Also Young (2001) suggests that an ambiguity about gossip focuses on how specific the content of the information being transmitted should be in order for it to be considered gossip.

Often gossip is positive in content and can be about exemplary behaviour of a member of the group and exemplifies group expectations. Normally however gossip is a way to “shepherd social deviates or isolates them back into the group” (Rosnow, 2000:218, cited in Young 2001:7). Gossip often identifies and stigmatizes certain members of a group, those with questionable reputations. These are the controversial members of the group. On the other hand, gossip can identify social exemplars also. “...having possession of exclusive knowledge of about other group members elevates the status of the person who has the knowledge” (Ben-Ze’ev, 1994, cited Young 2001:9).

Another area of confusion regarding gossip is that it is often referred to as “idle talk” and lacking purpose. Numerous cultures around the world including West Indies, Fiji, the Central Pacific, Africa to name but a few consider “gossip” to be vital, serving specific purposes (Cox 1970; Gluckman 1963, Paine 1967, cited in Young 2001:4).

If gossip were merely idle talk then it is argued that there would be no harm in including the target of the gossip in the conversation, but this does not happen and the target is generally absent, offering the gossipers a sense of privacy in the situation. There would be no harm to anyone in sharing the information and no need for privacy or secrecy. Even if the target of the gossip receives the information and confronts the gossipers, the gossipers can claim that they were misunderstood or deny any knowledge of having transmitted any information to save their own reputation (Young 2001).

To summarise, an explanation given for gossip’s “two faces”, both positive and negative, is its liminal position between public and private.

# Chapter Two

## Research Methods

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“What makes a good ethnography ‘work’ is the ‘suspension of disbelief’ in which you do not assume that you know everything in advance and thereby permit yourself to experience the reframing of the ‘really real’”(Shweder 1997:152).

Ethnography is about discovering the unknown, using a creative imagination and a disciplined intuition. It is about entering the field without a totally predetermined interest, presumption of the outcome, and/or that the processes in the community of research are universal. Researchers who do not enter into this process of discovery and do not get involved in the flow of life of the community in which they are studying can get themselves into trouble (Shweder 1997).

In 2001 I was asked by the Avondale R.S.A. to research, compile and write a history of the Avondale R.S.A. from 1933 to 2002. In return, the President and Secretary/Manager verbally allowed me to use the information gathered, with the permission of the interviewees, as part of my thesis research. Since completing this project there have been changes of President and Secretary/Manager, but written permission obtained from the Secretary/Manager at the time has allowed me to continue using the information gathered for the purposes of my research. A copy of this can be seen in Appendix C at the end of this thesis.

It took me one year to complete the history whereupon I finally produced a 147 page document, written chronologically and including many

photographs and anecdotes from the years gone by. Unfortunately this document has not yet been published, with the most recent discussions revealing that money appears to be the problem. It seems that the club cannot afford to publish it at this time.

While the document has not been published, it has been consulted for ideas to include in the monthly newsletter and ideas for “theme nights” for the Saturday night dance. A number have been repeated such as the “Hawaiian” night; new themed dances have been added such as the “Mash 4077”, based on the T.V. series which was supposed to be a comedic depiction of the Vietnam War.

### **Doing research at home**

Unlike traditional anthropology, my research is “At Home”. This is becoming a more common place for anthropologists to conduct research and is popular for a variety of reasons. I would argue that globalization is one reason for this trend, with most cities and western countries becoming more multi-cultural as people move around the world, allowing anthropologists to study other cultures in a “home” environment.

Cheater (1987:164-165) gives various reasons for anthropologists preferring to work at home such as the rapid change in the world; research money becoming harder and harder to attain; governments introducing policies to make it more difficult for foreigners to enter the countries for research purposes; with war and civil unrest, it is inadvisable and sometimes undesirable to leave home.

Jacobs-Huey (2002:792) suggests how anthropology has been changing and that the move by some anthropologists to conduct their fieldwork “at home” is a fundamental break from classic anthropology and the “...tradition of what Rosaldo (1989) characterizes as the “Lone Ethnographer” riding off

into the sunset in search of the native”. Sarsby (1984:129) discusses how anthropologists are able to study different cultures without leaving their own society, where the researcher becomes both an insider and outsider. Sarsby (1984:130) gives the example of anthropologists from middle-class urban environments going to villages and slums to undertake research without the expense of travelling overseas. The anthropologist in his or her own society can still experience culture shock.

According to Srinivas, “...the experience of another segment of one’s own society can create sociological awareness, or anthropological detachment; it is then one becomes an “outsider” in one’s own place of origin” (cited in Sarsby 1984:130). Unlike Srinivas, I am an outsider in my own place of origin but it is not from anthropological detachment, it is more an awareness that has led me to a greater understanding of what the R.S.A. symbolizes to the war veterans and the wider community. I place myself within this research as both an insider and an outsider, because while I am a member of the R.S.A. as an insider, I am an outsider because I have not experienced war, either as a serving member of the forces, or a civilian living through the experience of world war. Nor do I have any family members still alive to share their experiences. I have spoken with a few World War II veterans, some who were in the front line and do not wish to speak about their experience. Another was not on the front line, or involved with any fighting and he told me about the wonderful time he had travelling throughout Europe and Egypt and showed me the photos. He was in one of the last expeditions that reached Europe just before the end of the war was declared.

There are many veterans who did not join the R.S.A. Instead they chose to marry and get on with their life, trying to forget that the war had ever happened. A lot of knowledge of the experience of war would be

unavailable to researchers such as myself unless they were a family member of the researcher, or a friend.

My first memory of war was the Vietnam War. As a teenager I had other issues concerning me at the time and the war seemed too far away and a sense of detachment was felt because of my age and distance from the conflict, having no comprehension of the consequences of this war. It seemed to be America's problem, for although New Zealand was involved, there was a different impact on New Zealand society than there had been during World War I and II.

While I attempt to identify with the philosophy of the R.S.A., it has been a culture shock for me to see photographs of war and listen to the emotion in the voices of those reliving their memories of what it was like to be forced to go to war. This sacrifice is remembered nightly in the R.S.A., and at all military establishments with the reciting of the "Ode".<sup>4</sup> More significantly and accessible to the wider community is the ritual of Anzac Day, commemorating the landing of Anzac troops at Anzac Cove in Gallipoli on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915.

Sarsby (1984:132) suggests the ethnographer can never be a true insider, because of personal biases and the belief by the informants that because he or she is an insider then they should already have a lot of knowledge about the area of research. The members were then and still are only too willing to give me any information I require and there seems to have developed reciprocity between the club and me which is a vital part of

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<sup>4</sup> The "Ode" is the fourth stanza of a poem written by Laurence Binyon called "For the Fallen" (a copy of this poem is in the front of this thesis). It was first published in "The Times" in London on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1914, written by Laurence Binyon as a tribute to those who served their country in war times and in particular to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The words that are recited each night as 'The Ode' are as follows: *'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them.'* (Johnson 2002:146).

anthropological research, to be able to give something back to the people whose time you have taken for your own purposes. There are as many difficulties studying one's own culture as there are in studying another culture and the ethnographer will always be somewhere in the middle between "...empathy and repulsion, home and strangeness, and seeing and not-seeing" (Sarsby 1984:132).

The ongoing changes taking place within anthropology see informants increasingly recognised as research participants who influence ethnographic texts and the ethnographer now includes their own voice in any published reports. "Amid this continuing reconfiguration of social thought and practice (Geertz 1983; Tedlock 1991)...scholars have been vigorously gazing and talking back, attempting (by way of critical reflexivity in writing, self-positioning, and other politically engaged orientations) to redress exotic representations of their communities" (Jacobs-Huey 2002:799).

### **Turning to the archives**

A significant method of data collection was archival research, both for the Avondale R.S.A. history project, as well as this thesis. This method has many advantages according to Rodriguez & Baber (2002), one being the enhancement of qualitative research. The use of archival material and secondary sources according to Rodriguez & Baber (2002:65), "...can also enhance the comprehensiveness of data collection by allowing for cross-cultural and cross-national comparability and generalizability".

I discovered from my reading how contemporary anthropologists used archival methods in historical anthropology; the archives served as an invaluable source of information. Brettell (1998) gives the example of anthropologist Bernard Cohn (1987, 1996) doing a lifetime of fieldwork in the archives for his research on the nature of colonial society in India. This

method, as a secondary source of data gathering has been of particular importance to me to gain a much broader understanding of my research topic and to give more substance to the historical content of the dissertation.

However, historical anthropologists still bring their own questions to the document, just as if they were using interviews as a method of data gathering. Archival research is described by Kellehear (1993:6) as an unobtrusive method. An important advantage of this method is that the information can be rechecked and it allows any questions of validity and reliability to be assessed by other people. For me, while this is an unobtrusive method of data gathering, it is sometimes difficult to check a particular event that I have sourced through the archives, because there are very few members left who could validate this information and as discussed before some of them have fading memories. I soon discovered as well that each of the members can have their own version of events. There were many versions of the “truth” with each believing their version was the correct one.

An example of this is the fire in which the clubrooms burnt down on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1958. A written version of events provided by the Avondale History Group (1994:114) says that a spark from the open fire caused the rooms to be burnt down. All club records, as well as fittings and stock were destroyed in the fire.

When I discussed this fire with some of the members there were conflicting dates and also conflicting reasons for the fire. Some members believed the fire to be arson, because the club was in financial trouble. The police were called in to assess the possibility of arson but it was deemed to be an accident. Another member believed that the policeman concerned took a bribe to keep quiet so that the insurance could be claimed and the building rebuilt. The “official” cause was said to be a spark from the open fire which had fallen onto the carpet and caught alight. All these sorts of “gossip and

rumour” surrounded the event, but only a few people knew the “truth” and have taken it with them to their graves.

One way in which historical anthropology is different to history is that the ethnographer is constantly linking the past to the present, constantly moving from the archives to the field. Brettell (1998:531-532) suggests,

“...the method of participant-observation can generate relevant questions for historical research and that patterns of social relations that the anthropologist sees on the ground can be suggestive in formulating hypotheses about social interaction in the past...historical research can bring us to a clearer understanding of the relationship between the ideal and the actual, as well as of the idealization of the past”.

This is particularly poignant for my study of the R.S.A. where the clubrooms are constant reminders of the past, rituals are performed remembering the past, but they are performed to enable remembrance in the present. The clubroom walls bear reminders of war with pieces of aircraft, guns, photographs and members’ photographs with their respective medals that have been donated by family when the member has passed on.

I have the medals of my late grandfather who served in World War I, together with a photograph of him and his family, nicely framed hanging on the wall of the clubrooms along with the medals of past Avondale members. Even though my grandfather was a member of the Invercargill R.S.A. any living relatives were unknown to me. Therefore I thought it appropriate to place the medals within this R.S.A., giving me as ethnographer a symbolic representation of my own.

Within cabinets there are reminders of the early days of the club, cannon shells, uniforms and helmets, giving the effect of a museum as well as

a tribute to the past. In these cabinets are symbols of war donated to the club by my mother-in-law after the passing of my father-in-law. Grenades, mortar shells, along with his army uniform are further significant symbolic reminders for me. There is a constant to and fro from the present to the past and back again, an ebb and flow that I am sure will continue into the future.

On the down side of archival data collection, data cannot always be seen as factual or non-biased, so it is up to the researcher to choose what material they wish to use and judge the validity of such material. Archival material was certainly beneficial in my area of study and a necessary method of data gathering, as my ethnographic position could be classified as historical anthropology. I needed to understand the experiences of the past to make sense of the present.

This was also a necessary method for the historical aspect of this research with regard to the past events and people of the Avondale R.S.A. as there are none of the original members alive. Yet by looking through archival data that the club has, such as Minutes of Meetings, Annual Reports, old magazines and newsletters, I found a rich source of information. Because of the fire, the records only began from 1958; there were notes written from the memories of the original members and I was lucky to gain photographs and information from members who I had interviewed. This information had been kept in their homes and some had been donated to the club when a member passed away. The Avondale History Group also had some photos and information they passed on to me.

From undertaking this archival research, for both the Executive Committee and the Women's Section (originally known as the Ladies Committee), I began to discover a familiar pattern with regard to the role of women. That is, that they have been there to support the men from day one. I found this aspect of the club interesting and in order to become more

involved with the club, apart from just being a member, in February 2003 I put myself up for election as a committee member on the Women's Section and was elected onto the Committee. I believed this opportunity would allow me to become a participant/observer from yet another perspective, aside from a members' perspective. It allowed me to get an inside perspective on the women's past, present and future role in what was previously an androcentric association.

My first task in beginning to understand the people I was working with was to sell raffle tickets, once a month on a Friday night to raise money for the Women's Section, this money going towards purchasing items such as curtains for the clubrooms. I was then called upon to stand outside the Avondale Post Office and sell poppies for Anzac Day.

On Anzac Day itself the women of the Women's Section paraded from the clubrooms through Avondale to the Memorial Gardens. Surprisingly the women were in front of the men in the parade. I soon realised that the possible reason for this was that the women arrived ahead of the men in order to assist them to seats or to their appropriate place in the crowd, upon their arrival. A traditional service was held with the laying of wreaths and poppies to remember the Australians and New Zealanders who lost their lives. On their returning to the clubrooms the men were offered a meal and drinks were served at the tables of the Returned Men by the women of the Women's Section Committee.

Unfortunately in the middle of my one-year election to the Committee my marriage broke up and I felt it was necessary to relinquish my involvement with the Committee, due to lack of time and issues that needed to be resolved.

## **Rejecting the formal methods of data gathering**

I started to put a Questionnaire together for the participants so that I could undertake formal interviews, but decided against this in the end. I preferred to spend my time talking informally with the members and asking questions from the conversation that arose at the time, making notes later on anything particularly relevant to my research. I felt that by undertaking the research in this manner, the participants would be more relaxed and not feel pressured to answer questions in a certain way. Therefore their version of the truth would be revealed rather than giving me information they think I would want to know.

Jacobs-Huey (2002) suggests that scholars working in their own communities have often abandoned academic jargon and various methods of research that might be intrusive or alienating to the participant, including tape recorders and written surveys. “In such ways, anthropologists working at home embrace some of the major tenets of postcolonial and post-modern scholarship” (Jacobs-Huey 2002:792).

During the interviews I undertook for the club project I made a list of questions that I specifically needed to know for the records and was told that each of the people I interviewed should know the answers, but still we managed to get side tracked. However, out of this natural conversation a lot more information was revealed, in my opinion because the participants were not feeling pressured. Most of the people I have spoken to are older, some World War II veterans and so their memories are failing, or tended to get confused if they felt they had to answer a specific question. Therefore, I felt that an informal conversation method of gathering my data was more appropriate under these circumstances. I found it also a successful way to gain the trust of the participants. If they see that I am one of them, sit down

have a drink with them, find a common discussion topic then it is amazing what people will tell.

Russell (1999:408) discusses how interviewing older people with a method such as I have used above is more like a "...conversation with a friend". The assumption by Russell is that the "friend" role is usually non-hierarchical, and so with this assumed equality and implied mutuality people are more likely to open up and disclose information they possibly would not in a rigid interview or questionnaire setting. In Russell's research she discovered that the respondents contrasted the interview situation with other kinds of social encounters, with the interview setting facilitating disclosure of personal information that the interviewee may not feel comfortable even telling to their family.

The qualitative research I am undertaking consists of participant observation fieldwork, along with "informal conversational interviews" with "open ended questions" (Fetterman 1989:54) allowing the participants more scope for a broader answer to the questions asked. By using this method where appropriate, it was my goal that informal conversations allowed for more information to be given and enabled the conversations to be more holistic, with the interviews having a natural flow and questions arising spontaneously. I asked the person an initial question to determine a direction in the interview and then asked another question from the response I was given, continuing in this manner until I felt I had all the information I required, or the interviewee felt they had told me all they knew. It was often the case that the conversation strayed from the initial direction I had intended to go, but in these instances I gathered more information than I had originally imagined I would get.

Another worthwhile method of interviewing that I have used is "retrospective interviews", although as Fetterman (1989:50) suggests,

retrospective interviews do not always give accurate data because of people's faulting memories or they filter the information they pass on to the ethnographer. In my research I have found it still to be a valuable way to gather information. This has been a necessary method for me to use while interviewing the war veterans and other members I have interviewed, because I am asking them to tell me any memories they have of people, significant occasions, funny stories of the people and/or the club for as long as they have been members. Some of the memories of the interviewees were clear enough that they could remember events like they were yesterday and this was confirmed by the same story being told to me by another member, for others it was difficult to recall certain events, dates, or peoples' names.

I had an occasion where one member would tell me over the telephone, about a person and an incident that occurred, but he would not repeat it in a face-to-face interview because he felt it was "too rude" to be put in print. Yet upon asking another member to tell me the same story, he did and said it should be put in print, because it actually happened and was a talking point of the club for quite a while. I actually did print a toned down version of the same event in the history of the club, because as the member said it was an event that was part of the club's history.

The difference of opinions, Fetterman (1989:50) suggests, is because individuals shape the past by values and their own personal worldview. Another member I interviewed told me how much he enjoyed recalling these memories, including many happy occasions that he had put to the back of his mind for all these years.

### **Participant/observation within the "theatre"**

I soon discovered that the clubroom resembled a "theatre", with dramas and plays being acted out on a daily basis, sometimes several

occurring at once. The members and visitors played out their dramas within this theatre, re-enacting their lives in front of a live audience. These performances are real and become the lived experience of the people within this “theatre”.

Often the dramas that the members perform and carry out for the audience are performances that they may not carry out in another time or place. Part of the mystery of these performances is whether or not they are solely for the benefit of the audience in the public arena, or whether they are carried out in the private arena as well. For example, a couple of members once danced in a rather provocative manner and this behaviour was deemed inappropriate by many, to the point where one night this couple were asked by the Duty Manager to leave if they did not modify their behaviour. So the couple left, but were back a couple of weeks later, still carrying on as if nothing had happened. This could be argued to be a way in which gossip keeps the moral order within a group. It is also an example of Garfinkel’s suggestion that the social world is being held together by tacit understandings (cited in Gouldner 1971:390). There are many of these unwritten rules within the club which will be discussed within this thesis.

It has been interesting for me to realise that the people in the club know I am undertaking research and writing a thesis about gossip, yet they go out of their way to give me information. A number of people often ask if I am still doing my research as they have a bit of gossip for me and proceed to fill me in on the latest shenanigans of a few of the well-known identities. I have had no-one object to me speaking to them or sitting with them, sometimes someone will say, “*okay put that in your book!*” Most of the people I know better than the others keep telling me to hurry up and write it as they want to see what I have said about them!

This seems to be the opposite of what Wilson (1974) writes about Colson who studied the Makah. He felt unsure that she had their complete confidence. The Makah said that "...either everything to be known was already written or those who knew anything worth recording were dead" (Wilson 1974:94). In his opinion they had doubts about having an anthropologist in their midst and possibly just gossiped to her and about her. I am sure there was some gossip going on in the R.S.A. about me, but as with gossip, I will probably never be told.

As protection for the privacy of the people I have spoken to, and participants in this research, I have not used any real names unless they have agreed to it. Other names such as those of "club characters" are people who have passed away and I do not believe that any material I have attached their name to is detrimental to their character. I will mostly identify people if I must as a man or woman, give a rough age if appropriate, or refer to them as young, middle-aged, or older as age is often hard to judge. Most of the participants have heard about my research through gossip anyway, or the "Bush Telegraph" as I call it.

As this research, situated within the Avondale R.S.A. is from an anthropological perspective, my main method of data collection is from the traditional anthropological method of "participant-observation". I have been a member and participated in the various activities of the Club for approximately twelve years, although watching, listening and observing from a different perspective for the purpose of my research, over the last few years.

Observation is described by Kellehear (1993) as an unobtrusive method of research and has the advantage of seeing people behaving naturally, rather than how they would report their own behaviour. It also allows the researcher to see peoples' behaviour for themselves and it is

generally a harmless, often discreet, non-disturbing method of undertaking research (Kellehear 1993:6).

“Participant-observation has a very important feature...That is, sometimes dormant or unknown emotional and cognitive structures within oneself are activated through participation. When they are activated, all of a sudden understanding occurs in a far more profound way...People have within themselves an enormous complexity of cognitive and emotional structures. Understanding others is a process by which you will find something within yourself that will be the bridge to understanding difference. It seems to me that without fieldwork it is impossible to reach that depth” (Shweder 1997:162).

Tierney gives an example of the humility he learned quickly through participant-observation in an anthropological project. He says:

“Before I entered the field...I really did not appreciate the importance of interacting with and getting along with people who, it turned out, would be active participants in my project...I had to learn through experience that people from other cultures are not pliable puppets performing for me as a researcher; they are living human beings...” (Tierney 2002:12).

This was a lesson I continued to learn while immersing myself in the field; to understand what the club means to its members, to learn more about war and reaffirm respect for the sacrifices the people made. In my case unlike Tierney, I was not learning from other cultures, but learning to respect and treat with humility those within an aspect of my own culture.

I would also argue here that the method of participant-observation is far more important than just a tool for consciously gathering data for research purposes. There is an element of subliminal data-gathering going on

also, some of which may never reach the conscious mind, but has an effect on the direction of the research being undertaken. I have noticed that while not consciously aware, I have adopted attitudes and beliefs of the people that I have been interacting with and been influenced by the rituals performed in the clubrooms. This has made an impact on me as a person.

A difficulty in the method of participant/observation is the note taking, which has to be done discreetly and quickly, for accurate recording. Spacks (1985:48) explains,

“A participant-observer could not take notes; and memory does not preserve the evanescence of such talk – partly because its substance often has less importance than its complex, hard-to-define tone. Ever shifting in mood and subject, dependent on an atmosphere of confidentiality and secrecy for its very existence, playful and anarchic in impulse although it may serve the interests of the community, gossip would instantly change shape under the microscope, curbing itself toward decorum. Even anthropologists hear what people say *about* gossip far more often than what they say *in* it; and if those people gossip with the anthropologist, the observer could yet never know how they gossip among themselves”.

### **Experiencing the “observation of participation”**

Tedlock (1991:69) introduces an alternative methodology to participant-observation and that is observation of participation, where she explains that,

“In the observation of participation, ethnographers both experience and observe their own and others’ co-participation within the ethnographic encounter. The shift from the one methodology to the other entails a representational transformation in which, instead of

a choice between writing an ethnographic memoir centering on the Self or a standard monograph centering on the Other, both the Self and other are presented together within a single narrative ethnography, focused on the character and process of the ethnographic dialogue”.

Tedlock (1991:69) suggests at the beginning of her discussion on observation of participation that the “mythic” history of anthropology can be placed into four archetypes: “the amateur observer”, “the armchair anthropologist”, “the professional ethnographer”, and the “gone native fieldworker”. Tedlock describes the new ethnographers who are part of this change in anthropology as being interested in co-production of ethnographic knowledge. These new ethnographers cannot be pigeonholed into any of the four historical archetypes.

Rather they/we combine elements of all four categories and “...embrace the designation “amateur”, since it derives from the Latin *amatus*, the past participle of *amare*, “to love”, and we are passionately engaged with our endeavour” (Tedlock 1991:82). The new ethnographer accepts the “armchair” title because reading and critiquing is a serious part of the work we are doing; they/we are “professional” because our field preparation and work is taken seriously; that fieldwork is the centre of our intellectual and emotional lives, we are coming to an understanding of other parts of our culture or other cultures (Tedlock 1991:82).

### **Using photographs as a way of visualising the ethnography**

I have used many photographs as I feel that just merely describing some parts of this interaction would be inadequate. A photograph can communicate what sometimes cannot be put into words. Some of the symbols used within this association cannot be described; whereas a

photograph representing what has been described can communicate a more powerful understanding.

The photographs I have used are a mixture of photos taken from books, archives of the Avondale R.S.A, along with current photos given to me by the Avondale R.S.A. as well as photographs I have taken myself of various events, with the permission of the Avondale R.S.A. It is my intention to create a thesis that is not only pleasing to read but made more interesting with the visual aspect to communicate the words on another level and be pleasing to the eye as well.

### **Concluding the Methodology**

However, the most beneficial method of data gathering has come from “hanging out” and talking to the members who know that I am researching and are prepared to volunteer pieces of information. My experience in this regard is like that of Tierney (2002) who began his Fourth Avenue research by using participant-observation as a tool and just “hanging out” with his participants, gaining their trust and entering into conversations with them, allowing him to begin hearing the views of his informants. He was able to develop a relationship with them before he began formally interviewing them about a particular aspect of their lives. His method is used by me in my research.

The people I interact with know that I am researching the Avondale R.S.A., but I do not push the fact. I let them know and then carry on with socializing and interacting as if I was not a researcher in the field. Recently one of my main informants introduced me to another member and told them about the history of the club that I had written. I am constantly observing, but I have undertaken my research as Tierney has done and he sums this up in these words: “We developed a relationship based on mutual respect and

trust. Being a participant in as well as an observer of the lives of people means that one has a responsibility to protect the integrity of those with whom one interacts” (Tierney 2002:11).

I envisaged that my research findings would show many differences and similarities in the beliefs of primarily war veterans, their reasons for being members of the Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association, more specifically the Avondale R.S.A., and how they viewed the future of the clubs, with these findings being discussed further on in this thesis. There were many differing opinions on the future of the clubs. For example some of the members believe the clubs will eventually become hotels, losing their significance and purpose, others believe that the clubs will stand strong and remain for many years to come, even when the last remaining veterans from World War I and II have passed on.

While I have discussed all these different methods I have used to undertake this research, I would like to conclude with what I would argue is one of the more important methods in anthropological research. That is “the personal dimension in our research” which Malinowski described in his diary as being the most valuable tool for research, which is the researchers self-knowledge and the researcher being part of the research situation (Crick 1982:20). Gullick (1977), Du Bois (1960:231) argued that the anthropologist is not the same person at the end of their research as they were at the beginning and ethnographic fieldwork and research is a “...deeply personal learning experience in which one learns a lot about oneself” (cited in Crick 1982:20).

Nash & Wintrob (1972:528-9, cited in Crick 1982:21) argued that the individuality of the anthropologist does not contaminate the field situation; instead is a fundamental aspect of it. Neither does the lying informant

because “...the anthropologist’s temperament and the informant’s motives are what make up the meaning of the encounter” (Crick 1982:25).

Many of the people I have interviewed and researched sacrificed their youth to enable us to enjoy our freedom today, with many more sacrificing their lives. It is a humbling experience to listen to the stories of the men who fought, were held prisoner of war by the Germans or the Japanese. One man who was prisoner of war in Germany filled in his day by making different items out of empty tin cans and wire from the prison perimeter fence. Interestingly, after the war this man worked all his life in the aluminium industry.

I understand that I could never ever know what they went through and at the risk of making a generalisation I would say that the men and women who saw war have suffered some form of battle scars for their entire lives, either physical or psychological, with some suffering both. While this is a self-learning experience, it is hoped that others can also learn some of what I have been fortunate enough to learn, enabling many more lives to be enriched by others’ experiences in the future.

## Chapter Three

### Structure and Organisation of the Avondale R.S.A.

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“When life is looked upon as a drama, the focus must be given over to necessarily restricted situations and personnel. The story can be told only under the spotlight and while the curtain is raised; each drama is an entity independent of the others...In effect, then, the dramaturgical model invites us to live situationally; it invites us to carve a slice out of time, history and society, rather than to attempt to organize and make manageable the larger whole...Rather than offering a world view, the model offers us ‘a piece of the action’.” (Gouldner 1971:385).

#### The New R.S.A. Club Rooms

According to the Land Deed, the land that the Avondale R.S.A. stands on today was originally purchased on 23 August 1922 for £166, purchased by Mrs Annie Brereton and Mr Charles Weston Prince from brothers living in Hamilton, Frank William Hampshire and Frederick Ivo Hampshire. Mrs Brereton was the eldest daughter of Mr Charles Weston Prince, who arrived in New Zealand in 1922, with the Land Deed showing them as tenants in common. Mr Prince was a farmer when he first arrived in New Zealand.

Prior to this he was a soldier, and had served many years in India with the Royal Northern Regiment (Lancashire), mainly in the Khyber and Bolan Passes. He was also on the ZOB Valley Expedition and was one of the forces that stopped the Russians from building a railway into Afghanistan. Mr Charles Weston Prince is the grandfather of Avondale R.S.A. member Mr John Blundell, who has fond memories of living in the Layard Street building as a child, which until March 2002 was part of the clubrooms.

The original building consisted of two bedrooms upstairs, the main bedroom overlooked the Avondale Railway Station and the back bedroom, which was Mr Blundell's bedroom, overlooked the Avondale Racecourse. In later years the back bedroom was used as the old R.S.A. library and meeting room. Many members have fond memories of climbing the "Golden Stairs", being called to order in front of the committee for a misdemeanour that they may have committed in the clubrooms. Such offences that resulted in notification to appear in the club and ultimately a trip up the Golden Stairs (later on, down the Golden Stairs) were for incidents such as swearing, arguing or fighting.<sup>1</sup>

Originally, in the downstairs area at the front was the shop, and at the rear of the shop was a living room and dining room; a large kitchen/scullery with a large closed in glass veranda. There was also a toilet at one end of the building and a bathroom at the other. This area was later used by the R.S.A. as the library and meeting room. The shop sold confectionery, with some of this confectionery being homemade sweets and lollies. There was ice cream on one side of the shop, and school stationery, papers, magazines, cigarettes and tobacco on the other side. Also available for school lunches were homemade meat pies and apple pies; as well as chips and potato fritters. Another service available from this shop was that of a small lending library.

When Mrs Amanda Prince died on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1936 aged 70 years the shop was rented out for a while, but when that was unsuccessful due to tenants not paying their rent, the premises were sold and it is thought they were sold to a Mr Crum of New Lynn. The premises were later bought for

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Kevin Emberson recalls being called up on one occasion, "I told one of the committee men, he was quite a big chap. Look that guy you are picking on is smaller than you, I said why don't you pick on somebody your own size, then you will be a little man too. He took it to offence because I called him a little man. He put in a complaint so I went up the Golden Stairs and he got laughed at".

the purposes of the Avondale R.S.A. in 1937/1938. Mr Charles Weston Prince died on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1943, aged 83 years.



Illustration 1.

I was able to secure a copy of the Title for this property when undertaking the research for the club and these can be seen in Appendix H.

### **World War I was the beginning**



Illustration 2.

Since 1933 the “Avondale Returned Services’ Association (INCORPORATED)”<sup>2</sup> has been an integral part of the Avondale community. It has been offering both support and friendship to returned service men and women and their families, as well as the people of the wider Avondale community. Through various fundraising activities, money has been raised for the welfare and benefit of the Avondale R.S.A. returned service personnel and members. The wives and friends of members played a vital support role in the early days of the club and it is with thanks to these people that the Avondale R.S.A. is known still today, as the “Friendliest Club in the West” (Johnson 2002).

“Voluntary organisations can be seen as resulting from a combination of altruism and the spirit of self-help (Butler and Wilson 1990:1, cited in Cull (1992:214). They do not “...result from statute but from people coming together because they want to. The members govern themselves, making decisions about service provision...(welfare)...and policy” Cull (1992:214).

On returning from World War I service men first joined the “Auckland Returned Soldiers’ Association”, later joining the newly formed “Avondale Returned Soldiers’ Association”.<sup>3</sup> The first meeting place for the World War I Avondale Branch members was in the Avondale Public hall. There was a £1 a night charge for the use of the building and any beer left over was for the caretaker. In anticipation of a large number of returning servicemen from World War II the Avondale branch members purchased the Layard Street building, where the club still stands today (Johnson 2002).

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<sup>2</sup> The word “INCORPORATED” is in capitals because that is how it was worded when the club became registered as an Incorporated club.

<sup>3</sup> It was compulsory in those early days to be members of both Associations as the Avondale club was a sub-branch of the Auckland branch. Later on Avondale became known as the “Avondale Returned Soldiers’ Club”, and became incorporated in 1936. There was one returned service woman member at Avondale, Mrs Musseau, a member in the 1960’s (Johnson 2002).

### **A taste of life as a member of the Avondale R.S.A.**

In the early days the Avondale R.S.A., as well as the N.Z.R.S.A. was on the whole an androcentric, essentially a “men only” club. The R.S.A. was known at this time as a “restrictive association”, because it was based on membership through war service only. They were an important conservative pressure group on both the local and national scene (Pitt 1973). As was the case in Avondale, with their only woman returned service member, Mrs Moseaus, women who had served overseas or in any other service capacity were entitled to join a “Women’s Section”, as well as being eligible for Returned or Service membership of an R.S.A. ([http://www.rsa.org.nz/remem/rsa\\_hist\\_women.html](http://www.rsa.org.nz/remem/rsa_hist_women.html)).

“In all New Zealand towns the R.S.A. is a centre where rapidly aging comrades in arms drink away the never ending afternoons” (Pitt 1973:158). While this is a rapidly declining scene in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century because of the number of returned service personnel left in New Zealand, the clubrooms was once buzzing with chatter, laughter and times of happiness and sadness.

### **Men’s Friendships : A Bottle of Beer and a good story**

“Whereas men once sat in the kitchen and talked over their tea, the automobile and truck have tended to alter this pattern to the point where one now sees cars along the road in which the driver and his friends are drinking commercial beer by the case full. “It gets you away from the women awhile...besides, they don’t like you to spend your money on beer”...Men in cars and trucks invariably carry a case in the trunk, or at least several bottles in the glove compartment for the same purpose. Beer is never far away” (Szwed 1966:437).

Szwed must have been discussing Bert Thorburn as the year the above quote was written would have been about the same time that this story relates to, as told to me by Kevin:

*“Avondale R.S.A. member Bert Thorburn was a truck driver, had his own truck and used to drink a dozen bottles of beer a day. He used to have half in the cab of his truck and leave half a dozen in the Kiwi Hotel because he was carting stuff down to Blanford Park and then down to the motorway. At lunchtime he would go and pick up the half dozen from the Kiwi Hotel in Symonds Street, which was cold and he used to drink out of a thermos cap. If the traffic cop came along side, he’d say “giddy officer, having a good day?” and old Bert was drinking his beer from the thermos. He got away with it for years. He was also a very generous man and was President at one time” (Kevin).*

Kevin explained to me that Bert was known as “Paradise Duck” because they reckoned he was protected, drinking all the time in his truck and not getting caught. “Fairy Legs” and also “Sorbones” were other names, because Bert had spindly legs.

He and Brian Kelsell were always making bets with each other. Another one of Bert’s nicknames was the “Pipi Inspector”. He used to have a batch at Stillwater and one day he’d had a few beers and decided he had better sober up before he went home. So he went down to the jetty, looked out and saw his son in the water. So he ran along to the wharf ready to dive in the water and his son said “No Dad, don’t”, but he dived in anyway, thinking his son was standing up. But his son was actually sitting down. Bert hit the bottom, face first and when he came up he was scratched all over his chest and face from the pipi shells.

Since World War I until the mid-sixties hotels and clubs had to close at 6p.m. and this was seen as an extension of a man’s working role, because he would go straight from work to the club. Often the men would call into the club at lunchtime or any time they just happened to be passing by. These closing hours were often conveniently ignored and other events occurred behind locked doors.

During these shortened drinking hours, the men enjoyed some well renowned evenings and nights in the club called “smokos”. These were occasions it seems where the men left home, or went straight from work, arriving at the club in the evening and their wives did not see them again until the next day, often not until after work the next day. These “smokos” were a locked door affair and once you were in, you were in for the duration. What actually went on behind those closed doors will forever remain a mystery because the stories of these occasions are as varied as the characters that attended them. There were reports of strippers being brought in, but others were quick to deny these reports.

The consumption of copious amounts of alcohol seemed to be the main feature of these evenings, not bad considering the area was dry until the 1970’s and members were allocated beer under a quota and locker system! (Johnson 2002). The men I interviewed for this research would not elaborate on these occasions either.

Claire recalled to me dropping Kevin at the club one night and awaking the next morning feeling very rested after a good nights sleep. She said:

*“I realised that Kevin hadn’t come home that night. So I phoned the club and the man that answered said there was no-one there. I thought there is somebody there, I’m not stupid, so I put the babies in the pram, it was about 8 o’clock in the morning and walked up to the clubrooms to see what was going on. I knocked on the door, no answer, but the car park was full of cars. Next thing the door opened and I walked inside to see sleeping bodies all over the place. I said that I had rung the police and they would be here in a few minutes. Next thing they were going in all directions all these car engines starting and cars driving off in a hurry. They had all obviously drunk too much and fallen asleep at their smoko” (Claire).*

Drinking is seen as a “subordinate involvement” (Goffman 1963:44) at meetings, because it becomes the dominant activity, a release from situations that could be difficult. Drinking also attempts to put meetings or face-to-face encounters on a friendlier basis and can be blamed for any outburst of hostility if conversations become heated (Goffman 1963).

### **The clubrooms before the fire...**



Illustration 3.

**and...**

**...after**



Illustration 4.

“When two or more men meet to talk, it is a rare occasion when there is no drinking. Beer is viewed very favourable. It is said that it

makes one happier, more friendly, and that it is relaxing” (Szwed 1966:436). In Goffman’s terms, these small face-to-face encounters of men drinking and talking offer an “engaging activity,” one “that acts as a boundary around the participants” (Goffman 1961:25, cited in Szwed 1966:437).

According to Szwed (1966), drink is a symbol of friendship and that food and drink are substitute forms of exchange. Drink also establishes a framework for social relationships, as is the case within the clubrooms of the Avondale R.S.A. Goffman (cited in Szwed, 1966:437) stated that “...these small face-to-face encounters of men drinking and talking offer an “engaging activity”, one “that acts as a boundary around the participants” (Goffman 1961:25).

“Drink then establishes a framework for a social relationship and, yet, at the same time, because of the behavioural concomitants of drinking activity, e.g., levity and depression of inhibitions, it increases the range of relationships between individuals and alters their sober social behaviour. Drink then is a symbol of friendship and the occasion for its expression...drink and food are easily substitutable forms of exchange. Alcohol has in this sense liberated men from women and from the kitchen to the point where a woman as cook-provider is no longer necessary to a man’s social relations with other men” (Szwed 1966:437).

A table with people sitting at it is never without a drink or some form of food, if only water and a bag of potato chips. Glasses are usually clinked at the beginning of the drinking session, with the common phrase of “cheers” or something similar in anticipation of a happy and social evening ahead.

Major changes that occurred within the clubrooms were many and varied; from the original meetings held in the Avondale hall, to the purchase

of the old tuck shop. Avondale Returned Services Club purchased a Quonset hut used as a hospital by the American forces during World War II. They had it transported from the Auckland Domain to the site of the proposed new clubrooms and became the clubrooms before the shop was renovated. After transportation to the Layard Street site it was re-erected by the members and their families (Johnson 2002).

Along with the secrets of the “smokos” came the mystery of who was involved in burning down the clubrooms. On the 26<sup>th</sup> February 1958 the Quonset Hut was burnt to the ground and all records of the club were lost. For insurance purposes it was determined that coal and embers from the fires used to heat the clubrooms were to blame, but some members have other stories. Another version of events is that the club was in financial trouble and certain member’s poured kerosene around the edges of the hut and set it alight, but this event again is one that will remain a secret and a mystery to all, except those who have taken the truth to their graves (Johnson 2002).

### **Men enforce their own moral control**

An event that occurred in the club on a regular basis was the “Golden Stairs”, where members went after they had misbehaved in the clubrooms. The idea behind this was explained to me as follows by Kevin who is one of the longer serving members of the Avondale R.S.A:

*“The Golden Stairs, you used to go up the stairs in the old building, later it changed to the library down below, places where meetings of the Executive were held. The Golden Stairs was where anybody who made a misdemeanour were called to order and got a notification to appear in the club. So we nicknamed the stairs the Golden Stairs. You’d be sitting in the club and they’d say “ah you going up the golden Stairs tonight are you”. I got pulled up a couple of times. For things like swearing, arguing, fighting. I got called up there one time I told one of the committee men, he was quite a big chap, look that guy you are picking on is smaller than you, I said why don’t you pick on somebody your own size,*

*then you will be a little man too. He took offence because I called him a little man, he put in a complaint, so I went up the Golden Stairs and he got laughed at. Although we were good mates it was his impression that I had belittled him by calling him a little man. Then the library went downstairs and it wasn't used much after that" (Kevin).*

Story telling is a vital part of the reconstruction of history. Without these stories we would not be able to understand how this club has sustained its role in the Avondale community, or in the bigger picture of New Zealand society.

A story teller that was a member of the "Liar's Table" was Hooss Gow. Here is one of his many stories:

*"Look" he said, "we's up the Kaipara fishing one day and" he said "we ran into a school of Kawai, and" he said "believe it or not, there was that many of them, that thick, they stalled the motor on the boat".*

Kevin explained to me what the Liars Table was:

*"That was a round table in the old room, about six of them used to sit there and old Jim Watts was the leader of the gang, never told lies only stretched the truth. Jim Watts, Dinky Di, Les Stone, Angus Taylor, Ken (Hooss Gow) Nichols and myself (Kevin Emberson)...About six of us they used to call us the Liar's Table we used to have raffles and that 1/2 crown for a dozen of beer 5/5's, five bottles a draw, and they used to go crook cause we had all the beer underneath our table, when it was bottled" (Kevin).*

According to Kevin, Jim Watts presided over the Liars Table. Everyone in the Club knew genial Jim Watts who was seen any night presiding over his pals at the "Liars Table". He was always ready with a "factual" story to stretch the imagination and raise eyebrows until they were over your head. Over the years Jim has increased his prestige and incredulity of his stories. Other members of the "Liars Table" were Dinky Di, Angus Taylor, Hooss Gow who had been in the lock up, his name for jail.

Examples of the stories that Jim (or Jimmy) Watts told go as follows:

*“He was down the bush, and went out pig hunting and he said, “at night time, he saw these two eyes” and he said “I had a shot at it and it disappeared. I looked the next day, looked for the pig and the pig wasn’t there”. He said, “here’s this tree got the bullet hole in it, the bloody pig was standing behind it looking around it””.*

Another time somebody came to borrow Jimmy’s chainsaw. He said, “I can’t give it to you at present, I’ve got it stuck in a pumpkin”.



This is a photo of the “S.S. Trophy” (Illustration 5), with the S.S. standing for “Stirrer’s Spoon”. In the *Standfast* magazine of 1969 this is described as the “S.S. Trophy 1968”. It is competed for each year by a number of members. There is much skill, scheming and espionage needed to be one of the six selected to compete for this trophy!

While this trophy came into being in 1968, the story below regarding the origins of it and its discoverer were still being told some forty years later, an example of how these stories never die, even if the person has. It is this continuation to pass on these sorts of stories both orally and in written form, that keep memories alive. Without them these unique historical features that contribute to the holistic environment that is the Avondale R.S.A. would be lost.

The “Stirrer’s Spoon” was found by Jack Newton, another “club character” who is described in *Standfast* (1972:28) as “...an inveterate fossicker of recoverable metals”. He found the spoon on a rubbish tip and it was in such a terrible state that it should have been left to decompose with all the other rubbish. However, Jack rescued it because of the delicate design and elegant handle, putting it in his metal sack as a future item of value.

Upon returning to the clubrooms and sitting with a certain table of critics, Jack remembered about the spoon. He decided to restore the item to its former beauty and perfection and it became the most sort-after trophy in the club. Recipients of this “trophy” are engraved on the spoon each year. Some past recipients of the trophy are still alive and stirring up a storm today (Standfast 1971:28).

A story remembered by Kevin about Jack Newton is as follows:

*“This day he came into the club. He said, “I am going to have Jack Gullen on”. He said, “I am going to go around and ask for two bob and I am going to raffle off a dozen eggs”. So anyhow Jack Gullen came in, so he said “who wants to be in an egg raffle?” Eggs were very short at this time. Jack said “I’ll be in”, so he gives Jack N. two bob, and we all gave him two bob.*

*Eventually Jack N. drew the raffle and said “Hello, Jack Gullen you’ve won one dozen eggs in one of these cartons”. So anyhow Jack G. gets the eggs, puts them on the table and then runs over to the phone and he rings his wife Moira, and he said “look dear when you go up to the shop don’t buy any eggs because I’ve just won a dozen”, “oh yeh”, “Moira wants to know what eggs they are”. “Black Orpington”, said Jack N. “Black Orpington eggs mother, yeh I’ll be home shortly”. That was alright he finished his beer, and he had a black Citroen car that he always parked at the side of the building in the front.*

*Anyhow he goes out and Jack N. has got a big grin on his face and he’s going round giving us our money back. He was gone for about ½ an hour next minute we here this car coming up screaming, and Jack Gullen comes running into the club, “Newton you bastard where are you I’m going to break your bloody neck”. What it was, the dozen Black Orpington eggs was a dozen carbonettes.*

*But Jack G. was always tight with his money, and he used to do a bit of part time work carting the flour into Tip Top bakehouse in Newton there. He was a likeable character, but Jack Newton was always going around the club with a threepenny bit. He’d*

say, *“you got threepence on you, yeh I’ll toss you who shouts double or nothing”*. He always drank gin, he didn’t lose many” (Kevin).

Jack Gullen, also known as “Two Bob Gullen” had been a prominent member of the Club for many years since World War II. He held the position of Secretary on two occasions some years ago when a club such as the Avondale R.S.C. was not so easy to run because of the alcohol ban in the area. A small number of members, along with various other members contributing to the running of any club, causing conflict and confusion from time to time, at times, made it difficult for Jack to run the club successfully. Even at this time and in spite of short memories it is agreed that generally, he ran a good honest club.

When Jack retired he regularly attended the club, to be found mostly at the old dig’s table. In 1970 his name was engraved on the clubs most important trophy, the “S.S. Trophy 1968”, and in acknowledging the award gave the best speech of the year (Standfast 1970:11).

Claire describes the R.S.A. clubrooms as being like a home where respect for each other is an important value. She says, *“It’s involving your community as well. Plus the R.S.A becomes like your family after a while, you either want to work R.S.A. and work together as a group, or your don’t. If you do it is very rewarding. If you give respect you get it back”* (Claire).

Knoke and Thompson (1977:48) suggest that:

“An individual’s position in the family life cycle affects his or her involvement in voluntary associations. Family role obligations at each life cycle stage can be conceptualized as promoting or inhibiting extra-familial activities...participation in voluntary associations should decrease during those life cycle stages with the heaviest demand for members’ time and energy within the family unit...involvement in

voluntary associations, particularly those with family-oriented activities, should then increase as internal family demands lessen”.

This was not the case for some of the characters, who spent more time at the club than with their families. Joe Hall was another character who did share the clubrooms with his wife at least. *“If you wanted to buy anything, Joe had it or could get it for you – if you wanted a watch he would say, “here you are, I’ve got one here”. So if you sold him a tote ticket, he would put his hand in his pocket and pull out some and sell you one back. Joe and Jessie Hall sang in the Hut one New Years Eve, before the fire. They used to sing “Over the Bridge”, it was most enjoyable and added to a great night” (Kevin).*

(Kapchan 1995:479) uses the ideas of Goffman (1974) to describe performances which I apply to the Avondale R.S.A. whereby “...performances provide an intricate counterpoint to the unconscious practices of everyday life insofar as they are stylistically marked expressions of otherness, lifting the level of habitual behaviour and entering an alternate, often ritualized or ludic, interpretive “frame” wherein different rules apply”. An example of this would be whereby the generally older members of the Avondale R.S.A. ritually sit at the same tables. I asked a member why they sat at the same table. She replied it was because friends would know where to find them, as they had been sitting at the same table for so many years. Goffman (1971:40) would call this a “conversational preserve”. This being, “The right of an individual to exert some control over who can summon him into talk and when he can be summoned; and the right of a set of individuals once engaged in talk to have their circle protected from entrance and overhearing by others”. The claim to a preserve has a “marker”. The most common one in an R.S.A. is a “central marker”, where objects are placed “...that announce a territorial claim, the territory radiating outward from it” (Goffman 1971:41). Such markers would be a drink on the table or a cardigan over the back of a chair.

The members get very upset and annoyed if someone else gets to their table first. I have experienced the table being uplifted in front of me by a lady who claimed it “was her table” and she appropriately placed it only a few feet away from me. She then proceeded to tell each of her friends about it as they joined her at the table and then gave me indignant looks all evening. Interestingly enough after a while, I found myself doing exactly that, looking for these people at their usual tables and if they were not there my first thought was to wonder where they were tonight.

However, the club was an association that did have family activities at important times of the year, such as Christmas. Now the older members are able to devote their time to the club and the association as a whole because their families have all left home. The newer members are joining for social reasons after marriage breakdowns, or the death of a partner, as well as some who have familial ties to the club. Avondale R.S.A. in particular promotes family values and Sunday night is family night. The annual picnic and children’s Christmas party are still part of the social calendar for this club.

These voluntary associations which combine networks of family members and outside members are important in the creation of “social capital”, along with the attitudinal aspects of the association such as “trust” and “norms of reciprocity” Hooghe & Stolle (2003:10). Social capital, “refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trust worthiness arise from them” Putnam (2000:19); Hooghe & Stolle (2003:4).

### **Changes within the R.S.A.**

In more recent years the R.N.Z.R.S.A. as an association, as well as the Avondale R.S.A. as an individual club has seen many changes, with increasing membership despite the passing away of all World War I veterans and a

significant number of World War II veterans. While a number of the Vietnam Veterans are members, the increasing membership is due to the relaxing of the rules, opening up membership and allowing members of the community to join.

Knoke and Thompson (1977:60) in their research suggest that, “Fraternal-service groups are most popular among older parents and couples...Such organizations may fulfil the need for instrumental activity in the community and possibly act as substitutes for diminishing family responsibilities at this stage of the life cycle”. For people in the middle-age to retired age group who wish to dance and not be around loud music, the R.S.A. is one of the few places to go with the decline of dance halls and ballrooms over the years. It seems also that once members are lost from a club, it is very difficult to get them back. Hopefully the Avondale R.S.A. will see the light before this happens and bring back their members.

Over the years the Avondale R.S.A. has been fortunate with good management and a commitment from its members to ensure the survival of the club. In light of its success, the club has been able to purchase land surrounding the clubrooms for future development, a new memorial garden being the most recent use of the land and symbolic of the continuation of remembering the purpose of the R.S.A.

In 2005 it was the 90<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the landing by the troops of New Zealand and Australia at Anzac Cove in Gallipoli. Because of the huge number of people young and old who attended describing it as a pilgrimage, I suggest that this could be seen as a significant annual ritual shrouded with respect, honour and dignity passed down through the generations. The aim of the R.S.A. is to become a place for the younger generations to gain an understanding of New Zealand’s participation in mainly World War I and II, but also other wars such as Vietnam, Korea and Borneo.

## Chapter Four

### Women's roles in war and the R.S.A.

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#### Early years of the R.S.A. Women's Section

##### First Ladies Committee of Avondale R.S.A.



Illustration 6.

Left to Right: **Mrs Stronach, Mrs Button, Mrs Wenham, Mrs Coleman Snr.**

Date unknown, photo courtesy of Mrs Joy Blundell.

Ladies' Committees began to be established shortly after the formation of the R.S.A. itself with the first one to be officially recognised was Hokitika in 1919 (Dalley 1993:317). The date of the Avondale Ladies' Committee is unknown due to loss of information through fires and members' fading memories. Women were mostly in the Patriotic Associations and they assisted initially with R.S.A. functions and later on were responsible for raising large amounts of money for the early R.S.A. clubrooms.

The growing activity of women within the R.S.A. was first recognised in 1930 when the R.S.A. magazine "Review" included a special section for

women's issues, giving them an opportunity to send in their favourite recipes! "During the 1920's and 1930's the Ladies' Committees had three main functions: organising annual Christmas parties for the children, fundraising and taking responsibility for Poppy Day" (Dalley 1993:317-318).

On 19<sup>th</sup> December 1936 a Christmas tree was erected in the grounds of the Avondale Convent, by the Avondale R.S.C. Social Club committee. The wives and children of members attended. While the children were given ice-creams and participated in lolly scrambles, the wives were served with afternoon tea and presented by the President of the R.S.A. with a shopping kit to assist them with the Christmas purchases. The members' wives were also asked to support the R.S.A. movement by encouraging their husbands to attend all meetings and give active support where possible (Fernleaf 1937:34, cited in Johnson 2002:15).

The main objective of the Ladies' Committees was initially to assist in any way possible when called upon, primarily with Anzac Day activities. During World War II the activities of the Ladies' Committees changed dramatically, very quickly adding a broad welfare role within the R.S.A. and community to their usual responsibilities. As well there was a name change to Women's Sections. The revised work is explained as follows:

"They organised a range of entertainments for men about to depart for the war, and ensured that holidays and accommodation were available for their families. Members also took a very active role in visiting and providing for those women whose relatives were killed in action or held as prisoners of war. The committees worked in close conjunction with other women's organisations in the community, visiting hospitals and organising sewing and knitting for those serving overseas" (Dalley (1993:318).

An increase in responsibilities of the Ladies' Committees led to more formalised "Women's Sections" which were validated by the R.S.A. Dominion Council in 1942. This new section became involved in a wide field of useful activities on behalf of service people and their families. They also arranged accommodation for both Maori and Pakehā servicemen who were on leave.

### Newly defined "Women's Sections"

#### Avondale R.S.C. Women's Section – About 1945



Illustration 7.

Back Row – left to right

**Mrs Cole; Mrs McCoy; Not known; Mrs Dickens; Mrs Hollier; Miss Hollinger; Mrs Hollinger; Not known; Mrs Prestige; Mrs Talmage; Mrs Morland; Mrs Hayward; Mrs Double; Mrs Blundell; grandchild.**

Front Sitting – left to right

Treasurer: **Mrs Lawson; Mrs Bell; Wayne Dickens;** President: **Mrs Button;** Secretary: **Mrs Stronach;** Missing Vice President, Patroness and six members (Johnson 2002:105).

The number of Women's Sections increased to fifteen by the end of World War II and the numbers increased steadily in the immediate post-war years and through the 1960s. Women's Sections continue to provide welfare

services to ex-servicewomen, ex-servicemen and their families, in addition to their traditional functions. They have also become more active in the community with fundraising for hospitals<sup>4</sup> or schools (Dalley 1993:319).

There was a degree of hesitancy on the part of the women as they were attempting to define the role they would play. The women assured the men that they would undertake a traditional support role, not alter the structure or culture of the R.S.A; this was a relief to the men.

Claire describes how the Women's Section at Avondale R.S.A. came into being after many years:

*"...we sort of got round them and we said you men really need us, you can't really function and cope properly without us, then they gradually just asked us to do more things like the picnics, then asked if we would like a game of pool or bowls, that was something, and it all just came together. They had housie up here, the ladies had to do that too" (Claire).*

Wives and partners of the men were allowed into the Avondale clubrooms for a Saturday dance once every six weeks at the invitation of their respective partners, and also to prepare the food on Anzac Day. The cultural construction of the role of women being "in the kitchen" was reinforced strongly in these early days, as can be seen when the requirement for the ladies to attend the dances was "ladies a plate". The women had to prepare the evening supper at home and take it along with them for all to share half way through the night (Johnson 2002). Claire describes the other activities of the club as initially providing food for Anzac Day and the "husbands and wives night", the dances described above.

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<sup>4</sup> Avondale R.S.A. has done the same fundraising activity for three years now, raising money for new equipment at the Starship Children's Hospital in Auckland. Each year the amount raised increases as the support grows.

*“We had some funny times, we used to do the husbands and wives night,...because we used to look forward to it, we used to do the food. You used to have to fight to get in because so many people wanted to come, because the wives were actually allowed in, that made us really excited. The men were really nice but we didn’t actually realise for a while that it was only because we were doing the food. If you came in any other day, they looked at you as if you shouldn’t be there, but we just carried on anyway” (Claire).*

## **Women and Food**

On Anzac Day historically, the women were expected to be at the clubrooms somewhere between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. to prepare breakfast, then the meat and vegetables ready for lunch, when the men would return from the dawn parades (Johnson 2002).<sup>5</sup>

*“But when we had Anzac Day we used to have to come up here at 4 o’clock in the morning and peel sacks and sacks and sacks of potatoes and carrots. Then we would do over 300 eggs we cooked for breakfast, I don’t know how much bacon and sausages and stew and that put Betty Rowe’s back out mashing that big pot of potatoes. She was a short little thing but insisted on mashing the potatoes in these huge pots, like army pots. That was the end of her back. That’s what we used to have to do, it took us hours to sit and peel, mash and serve the men and do the dishes” (Claire).*

Herda (1991) suggests that food is used outside the family unit in a culturally specific way, to maintain or make social ties. From research undertaken for the New Zealand Women and Alcohol Project, it became evident “...that New Zealand women, especially Pace women, identify themselves with food. Women spoke of food as an expression of love, nurturing, creativity, hospitality, competence and economic survival...” (Herda 1991:170). This is particularly evident within the Avondale R.S.A.

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<sup>5</sup> An example of a menu for the ANZAC Day lunch in 1978 was: Soup, mixed vegetables, potatoes, curry, rice, bread and butter, followed by scones. Some of the food required for this menu was: 40lbs chuck steak, 20 loaves of bread and 6lbs of butter, 1 sack of potatoes (to be peeled by the women), 1 dozen hocks for soup, 4 dozen eggs (Johnson 2002:113).

where a meal or food of some description is shared on any occasion by the members.

There is always a shared morning tea at the monthly Women's Section meetings, each committee member taking their turn in providing sandwiches, specifically egg sandwiches the President's favourite, cake or some other form of food applicable to a morning tea. On Anzac day breakfast is provided, these days by the club caterers before the Returned Service people and members head off on their march through Avondale to the Memorial Reserve, a lunch is provided upon their return. A meal is shared by members, and provided by the club to those present, on other significant days commemorated within the Avondale R.S.A. such as Digger's Day, Widows' Day or Grandparents Day. On these days there are also complimentary drinks for the first hour, followed by music and dancing for those wishing to dance off their lunch this can be enjoyed until closing time.

The way in which food preparation for, and serving to, the men having been the sole responsibility of the women, calls into question the role of women in voluntary organisations (Cull 1992:215). Women have been and still are relied upon to be the caregivers and this is a common assumption within society in general, as well as within an organisation such as the R.S.A. In the past I would suggest that women were exploited as the association was known to be for returned men only. However times have changed and I would suggest that as far as Avondale R.S.A. is concerned there is some equality developing with women now allowed to sit on the Executive Committee. There are still some inequalities with paid and unpaid workers. The presumption that women predominate as informal carers can be seen as an ideological force determining that women do so (Cull 1992).

Voluntary associations are situated in a social context which defines the place of women in society in the role of carers.

“Women not only define themselves in a context of human relationships, but also judge themselves in terms of their ability to care. Women’s place in man’s life cycle has been that of nurturer, caretaker and helpmate, the weaver of those networks of relationships on which she in turn relies. But, while women have thus taken care of men, men have, in their theories of psychological development, as in their economic arrangements, tended to assume or devalue that care” (Gilligan 1982:17, cited in Cull 1992:216).

This quote illustrates the behaviour of the men, at their “smokos” and their various nightly escapades where the women are at home waiting for the men to arrive home. Often the men were drunk and it was the women who were expected to take care of them.

Over the years the women members and partners of returned servicemen have relinquished their responsibility for food preparation to caterers with fully equipped kitchens to provide the food for daily lunches and dinners available to all at a nominal charge, as well as catering for any special occasions. The women can now sit down and enjoy these occasions as the men do, except on special days when the members of the Women’s Section serve the returned men first, welcome visitors to the restaurant and then serve themselves. Mrs Claire Emberson was the Avondale R.S.A. Women’s Section President at the time of this research, and has been involved with the Women’s Section for over 40 years. She describes the aims and ideals of the Avondale R.S.A. Women’s Section:

*“Our aim is to foster good relationships within the club and in the community, that’s what our purpose is. And to look after our members if they need help in any way at all, that’s really the aim of the Women’s Section”, (Claire).*

More recently in 2005, Claire was elected the President of the National Women’s Section, a new formation of Women’s Sections as a National Body

which took 12 months to come to fruition. This entitles the women to have a direct input to the National Executive Committee. Until now the Executive Committee at each respective club and the National Executive Committee were men-only affairs. Claire has been on the Avondale Executive Committee now for a while and has the role within the club of being a duty officer and continues her belief in the youth of this country. Her continuing encouragement for youth to become involved through the Youth Council, the reciprocal tours to New South Wales, Debutantes Ball and West Auckland Cadet Unit. Claire finds working with the youth most rewarding and suggests people “*Try It!*” (R.S.A. Review 2005:10).

### **Avondale R.S.A. Women’s Section 1973 onwards**

The structure of the Avondale R.S.A. Women’s Section as we know it today began with its Inaugural Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1973, in the Layard Street clubrooms. Their first committee meeting was held at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1973 (Johnson 2002). At the next meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1973 a decision was made on the badges. They would be in line with the men’s club badges, having a white background, black fern and black writing, with Women’s Section written underneath. The Women’s Section of the Avondale R.S.A. Chartered Club wished to be known as a “Social Section” only and this is evident with the variety of social occasions that occurred over the ensuing years (Johnson 2002:106). Over the years Claire says she realised that the men didn’t just go to the club to drink, they did collections and all sorts, “...*I thought they were quite good people*” (Claire).

### Avondale R.S.A. Women's Section 1974



Illustration 8.

Back Row: **Joyce McIntyre, Rae Philson, Sylvia Wells, Doreen Hewitt, Georgie Collins.**

Front Row: **Mary Curran, Isobel Stewart, Emma Herd, Myrtle Frazer, Dot Nesbitt**

**(Photo courtesy of Mrs Sylvia Wells)**

The duties of the Women's Section has grown to a point whereby these days there are many duties they perform that members of the club may not realise they undertake. They collect money for the Braille collection, Stroke Foundation, Heart Foundation and Cancer Society, as well as collecting annually on Poppy Day, the Friday before ANZAC Day. As well as the collections, the assistance they give to the Welfare Officer in welfare duties has become a substantial part of their life. As Claire says, *...sometimes the men will prefer a visit from a woman, rather than a male officer. You can go and pat his leg, or just sit with whoever it is, it boosts them up a bit*" (Claire).

More recently women are now able to help with the running of the club. Claire is on the Executive Committee (originally run by returned servicemen only), and women Executive Committee members are now allowed to recite the Ode (also originally another function not allowed to be carried out by women). The journey for the women has come to fruition with a power and autonomy that once would have been unimaginable.

Unlike in the early years where women's lives were seen in relation to those of men, women I suggest can now be seen as individuals with some measure of control over events within the club. Claire told me that,

*"Women woke up when they realised they were being used for traditional roles of cooking, cleaning and waiting on men. However women still think of the R.S.A. as 'home' and I am known as 'mother'. This is my table where I sit when I come to the club and everyone knows that" (Claire).*

There appears to be, at times a contradiction of the women's feelings of their roles within the club. Often they are confusing their traditional domestic role with the one they have strived to gain within the club, sending confusing messages to the men on the Executive. On one hand the women are asking for autonomy and power within the club and Association, but still conforming to what is seen as a traditional women's role of looking after the welfare of the men and taking on the traditional nurturing roles. I would suggest that there has been a long transition period and the women are still in this transition phase, still setting the rules and the boundaries. However, it could take many years for the old expectations to disappear completely, if ever.

Charles R. Wright and Herbert H. Hyman (1958:284-94), cited in Moore (1961:592) suggests that it was common for urban middle-class women to join at least one voluntary association. Moore (1961:592) argues that "...middle-class woman's activity in the voluntary association depends closely on her familial responsibilities". A generalisation from the data gained on participation in one kind of voluntary association is that associations perform a different function for the middle and upper class women, with the middle class using the association to help them adapt to "...changes in the family life-cycle in a minimally disturbing way; for the upper class it plays a role of significance to the entire class" (Moore 1961:598).

To risk generalising once again, I would describe the Avondale R.S.A. as a club for the working/middle-class, with most of its members coming from West Auckland, traditionally a working class area. Most of the members are friendly, family oriented, down to earth people, creating an environment where people can relax and enjoy themselves.

### **Women and Gossip**

At Women's Section meetings and social occasions "talk" between the women is seen as gossiping and a comment was made to me when I was on the committee was that all the women do at the meeting is "gossip". While that may be perceived as so, "If gossip in its positive aspects indeed reflects moral assumptions different from those of the dominant culture [the men and/or the members], that fact suggests...its special usefulness for subordinated classes [the women]...Gossip's way of telling can project a different understanding of reality from that of society at large, even though gossip may claim to articulate the voice of the community...Women, even now, have more social freedom for such talk than men do – if only because several centuries' stereotyping makes it seem "natural" that they should band together to gossip" (Spacks 1985:46).

However, as with all clubs and groups of people, gossip and rumour can create an unpleasant environment for those who are at the centre of the gossip. Gossip is everywhere and can be beneficial to the people involved in the club. It can also be harmful, malicious rumour that could deeply affect a persons' participation in the club or group. "A rhetoric of inquiry, gossip questions the established. These observations apply on occasion even to malicious gossip, but they particularly concern the exploratory, intimate form of take which need not express itself in malice ...gossip epitomizes a way of knowing as well as of telling" (Spacks 1985:46). Recent research has shown however that not all gossip is damaging, with one suggestion being put

forward that if there are rewards for information then, "...individuals will use gossip as a tool to defend and affirm group-beneficial norms" (Kniffin & Wilson 2005:289).

"Think of gossip as a version of pastoral. Not just any gossip: the kind that involves two people, leisure, intimate revelation and commentary, easy and confidence. It may manifest malice, it may promulgate fiction in the guise of fact, but its participants do not value it for such reasons; they cherish, rather, the opportunity it affords for "emotional speculation". Temporarily isolated from the larger social world, having created for themselves a psychic space...they weave their web of story...Or think of it as drama... speaking the language of shared experience, revealing themselves as they talk of others, constructing a joint narrative – a narrative that conjures up yet other members, offstage, playing out their own private dramas. Or as fiction: fragments of lives transformed into story" Spacks (1985:3).

Collins (1994:71) discusses the idea of Goffman that work and private sociability, the entire structure of society, is held together by rituals. Clarifying this further:

"The basic model, though, is that the self is socially enacted through rituals on front stages, supported by back stages. One's homes...serve as backstage areas for hiding the less impressive aspects of self: getting rid of dirt and garbage (literally), for putting on a front stage self in the form of clothes, makeup, and hair styling. These same places also are psychological back stages, where one can plan, brood and complain about front stage social relationships of past and present, as well as act spontaneously without concern for the proper impression one is making" Collins (1974:71).

There are many ways in which these rituals are translated and the knowledge created is passed on to the relevant members. One of these methods of narrative is through “gossip”. Spacks (1985:4) in her definition of “gossip” argues that gossip means many things to many people, at different times and in different contexts, to one person. As the group gets bigger the level of gossip deteriorates and if an observer comes along, often the whole gossip session shuts down. Spacks (1985:4) describes two typical models of gossip: the first is the gossip that manifests itself as “distilled malice”, playing with people’s reputations.

The other end of the continuum is the gossip Spacks (1985:5) refers to as “...serious, which exists only as a function of intimacy. It takes place in private, at leisure, in a context of trust...its participants use talk about others to reflect about themselves...to express wonder and uncertainty and locate certainties, to enlarge their knowledge of one another”. In this context I put forward that “gossip” in social situations such as the groups of people that frequent the Avondale R.S.A., can be viewed as a “ritual” and takes place in a specific time and space. Gossip is something to be shared within a group and in a way, defines membership.

To support this argument, during my research I observed on most occasions that I visited, the same groups of people sitting at the same tables, on the same days. I was once told that by sitting at the same table, people know where to find them. I would suggest that this would also facilitate the passing on of any important information, gossip, the latest scandals or rumours. It could be seen as one of the many rituals that occur within the R.S.A., people sitting at the same tables each time they visit. This use of space is manipulated intentionally for the purpose of communication between the members, who socialise regularly, together.

Young (2001) argues that linking gossip primarily to women, which has been the premise for thousands of years, is too restrictive and gender-biased; while defining it as informal, idle talk is too inclusive. “Gossip is more than a statement of simple fact...It needs to be defined in a way that acknowledges and embraces its diverse content, but maintains its uniqueness amongst forms of social communication” (Young 2001:3).

Women in the twentieth century became more involved in occupational tasks and education, especially around the times of the two world wars. However gossip would still have been a feature of their lives and further on into the “baby boomer” years where women were expected to stay at home and raise the children, no doubt a good gossip about their respective husbands and who was doing what with whom, was more than likely the highlight of some women’s days. Now in the twenty-first century those women of the baby boomer years are seeking the solace of their friends, with time on their hands once again, to discuss the lives of those around them.

### **The participation of women in Voluntary Associations**

Jerrome (1981:184) discusses the increasing importance of kinship in the lives of older women, as being possibly a product of historical members, namely an Edwardian childhood before the introduction of the welfare state and free education. On the other hand it could be that the importance of kin is concerned merely with ageing and the isolation of the elderly because of lost ties, death of parents and/or spouse, children have made their own lives.

To replace these lost ties and achieve a feeling of satisfaction with life in the years after retirement people seek to acquire new friends in order to achieve this goal. A popular way of doing this is to join a voluntary association. Through joining a club or an association such as the R.S.A., women have exposure to a range of potential friends in a safe and

comfortable environment. It is a popular way for women whether they seek a close relationship or occasional company for a weekly activity.

“Relationships are structured, and there are clear prescriptions for behaviour, which removes the necessity of having to present oneself and make a favourable impression on women of whom one knows very little. Working together in pursuit of a particular goal provides scope for establishing differences and similarities without premature involvement or intimacy” (Jerrome 1981:184).

Jerrome (1981) is approaching club or association membership from a psychological point of view stating that membership appeals most to withdrawn and emotionally needy women. From my observation and the people I have come to know at the R.S.A. there are some emotionally needy women and they find the company of other women comforting in times of trouble. Also, I have met some women who are looking for a man and they will take one, married or not, at any emotional cost to those involved.

It is not productive to generalise about the members of an association, as the Avondale R.S.A. specifically, or associations generally, serve different roles and functions for many different people. The one thing in common most members of the R.S.A. have is an understanding and respect for what an R.S.A. represents in the community.

### **Avondale R.S.A.’s involvement with the West Auckland Cadet Unit**

In regard to the women of the Avondale R.S.A. and returning to the majority of the women of the R.S.A., I would suggest that while women have gained some autonomy and power within a male oriented environment they aspire to the ethnocentric Western assumption of women’s roles, those associated with nurturing, domestic and family issues. This is indicated by the main role of the Women’s Section being that of welfare and raising funds

for the benefit of the club. However, the identification of the women solely with the men of the club is slowly being eradicated and over the coming years with changes to the club in general, it is hoped that the women's roles will take on a new perspective also.

An example of other roles the Avondale R.S.A. Women's Section has become involved in over the years is their Association with the West Auckland Cadet Unit, in Association with the Army. The Avondale R.S.A. support the "West Auckland Cadet Unit" a group of boys and girls who assist in fund raising activities, including selling poppies on Poppy Day. They are also supported and trained by the New Zealand Army, with the unit being equipped by the army for a small price and each member is supplied with army uniforms. This unit is also involved with the Anzac Day parade through Avondale to the Memorial Gardens, marching with the returned service personnel, members and people from the community who form the parade (Johnson 2002).



Illustration 9.

This cadet unit was formed on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1987 after a meeting held at the Avondale R.S.A. clubrooms attended by 31 Cadets and 48 parents and at the time of it's formation had 13 western districts R.S.A.'s involved with the

cadets. The cadets participate in parades on ANZAC Day with the returned men. Upon returning to the clubrooms they assist the Women's Section serving the men drinks and meals. They are also present at any commemorations that are held at the club, such as Digger's Day, where once again they assist the Women's Section in their activities (Johnson 2002:82).

Claire describes the men's initial reaction to the cadets being present in the clubrooms:

*"When we first brought them in the older members of the R.S.A. weren't too sure about young kids coming in. We said to the cadets, don't worry about it, just go in, dress yourself nicely, talk to them, and now they like them. They have more or less adopted them as their Cadet Unit. It's the youth coming up that will take over anyway, if it's engrained in them what happens, what takes place like the Ode, they learn all those things, all aspects of the R.S.A. of course they will be the future R.S.A. It's involving your community as well."*

### **Auckland District Youth Council aims and objectives**

A further involvement for the Avondale R.S.A. Women's Section and selected members of the Avondale R.S.A. is with the Royal New Zealand Returned Services' Association, Auckland District Youth Council.

Auckland District Youth Council has a reciprocal tour each year whereby every second year they will be guests of Lidcome R.S.L. in New South Wales, for ANZAC Day, while the N.S.W. Youth Council visit Auckland the other year. Youth joining this council are related in some way to R.S.A. members. In 1986 Claire and Mona reported that they had attended a Youth Group meeting and all it meant was that they had to entertain and billet young people when they come to Auckland. With developing a youth culture being an aspect of the R.S.A., this was seen as a worthwhile group to sponsor (Johnson 2002:129).

The purpose of the Reciprocal Tours is described in the itinerary each year, as follows:

“The Reciprocal Tour is an Exchange Program between the New Zealand R.S.A. and the Australian (N.S.W.) R.S.L. Youth Council every second year. The two countries are linked together by a common heritage in Anzac Day, whereby they offer each other exchange ideas, views and opinions.

It is the aim of the Tour Program to forge a common bond of heritage, to set ideals and build new and everlasting friendships. It broadens their outlook and strengthens youth and Youth Clubs in each country. They become aware of the ideals of the R.S.A and R.S.L. movements, teaching them to be sympathetic to the needs of the R.S.A. and R.S.L. in the future, as they grow into adulthood.

We look forward to the continued association between our two countries for years to come, with each visit being more beneficial to both groups. We should be mindful of the cultural and educational knowledge the Youth Club members are gaining together with the opportunity that exists for the common good” (Johnson 2002:129).

Another part of the Auckland District Youth Council combines the females from the Council with male Cadets from the Navy, Army and Air Force, performing duties such as escorts, guards of honour or whatever else is asked of them. Together these two groups celebrate the Auckland District Youth Council Debutante Ball. Debutantes are daughters or granddaughters of R.S.A. members and are usually presented to the R.S.A. Dominion President or Vice-President. This ball is held every four years and is usually a successful event, held at different R.S.A's around Auckland.

## **West Auckland Area Returned Services' Associations Homes For the Elderly Trust**

In 1974 a 'Trust' was set up to build a hostel and self-contained units for the elderly of West Auckland. Funds were raised by 11 R.S.A.'s in West Auckland with various companies donating products for the inaugural fundraiser on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1980. The cost of the project was to be \$467,000. As at 1995 the Avondale R.S.A. had contributed \$19,665.53 and the Women's Section had raised \$4,581.00 towards what was now known as the Upham and Freyberg Villages. At the Home's Trust meeting in February 1998 it was stated that all loans had been paid, there were 46 units on the property and the property was valued at \$1,963,029.00. By 2002 the villages were self-sufficient and most fundraising activities had been scaled down.



Illustration 10.

Through the war years and beyond, the comradeship of the women appears to be a vital component to the success of the Avondale R.S.A. and other R.S.A.'s over the years. Claire describes the R.S.A. becoming like a family after a while and you either want to work in the R.S.A. or you don't. She believes that if you do it is very rewarding and the Presidency of the Women's Section has become part of her life. Claire has held the position of President for over 40 years and would not want it any other way.

Because of changes to the administration of the club women have become more involved and in 2002 the Avondale R.S.A. became “one club” meaning that any new women members would automatically be accepted for Associate Membership, originally available only to men. Women had to be members of the Women’s Section. Now the Women’s Section Membership is only available to current members. With this change came the chances for women to have the say on how the club is run. However, Claire did state that she believed that the R.S.A. is a man’s club, even though women were involved in war in a more supportive role.

In keeping with the connection of the club and music, songs are important and are part of any Women’s Section function, be it a birthday party, or an official function that has Women’s Section representation. This song is sung by all R.S.A. Women’s Sections throughout New Zealand. Claire describes the purpose of having a specific song for the women:

*“People were wondering what we were doing, Women’s Sections forming, so we thought a song would be good (see Appendix O). Those were the things we felt we should be doing for the diggers in the R.S.A. All women stand up on mass and sing it for something special, to the tune of the ‘Happy Wanderer’”(Claire).*

The pictures used in Appendix K, illustrate the significance of music and dance for the members of the Club. With the entertainment being patronised four nights a week, along with the sell-out show that the Women’s Section put on each year, music contributes to the creation of human and social capital of the club. It brings together the members and visitors and creates memories, of hopefully pleasurable experiences shared. The Women’s Section Birthday Party is an annual event at the end of September, and the women spend all year rehearsing for this. It could be viewed as another ritual activity, just one of the many rituals experienced within the Avondale R.S.A.

## Chapter Five

### Symbolism, ritual and remembrance

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“Anzac Day is a nostalgic day, full of memories and thoughts, but a day which inspires the hopes of men and nations. No one in his right mind would again want to go through the holocaust of war and the deprivations of the human race. So when the Ode is said and we say ‘WE WILL REMEMBER THEM’, say it with reverence and pride, and be thankful” (David Andrews, Standfast 1974:15).

#### **Some Facts and Figures on ANZAC: A symbolic ritual of remembrance**

Anzac Day in New Zealand and Australia is held on 25 April each year to commemorate and remember Australians and New Zealanders killed in war and to honour returned servicemen and women. The ceremony has been adapted over the years to suit the times but has also acquired extra layers of symbolism and meaning (Sharpe 1981; Clarke 1994).

A.N.Z.A.C is the acronym for “Australia and New Zealand Army Corps”, created by grouping the Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force together in Egypt in December 1914. They came under the command of Lieutenant General William Birdwood. Initially it is believed that the acronym was devised to use on a rubber stamp at Birdwood’s headquarters, some time later it was taken on as the telegraph code word for the corps (Clarke 1994).

The Corps consisted of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division and the New Zealand and Australian Division under Major-General A.J. Godley, making its operational debut at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. The little cove where the

Australian and New Zealand troops landed soon became known as Anzac Cove and the word “ANZAC” was soon being used to describe all Australian and New Zealand soldiers who fought on the peninsula. Eventually any Australian or New Zealand soldier became known as an “ANZAC” (Clarke 1994).

On Anzac Day a half-day holiday was declared for government offices, flags were flown, with patriotic meetings being held around the country. There were descriptions of landings and the casualty lists being eagerly read, with the newspapers enthusiastically reporting on the heroism of the New Zealand soldiers, along with the first public recognition of the landing at Anzac Cove (Clarke 1994).

The Dawn Service commences with a march by returned service personnel before dawn to the local war memorial. A number of returned people, military personnel and members of the community will attend the main dawn service at the city centre, then go on to join the service being held by their local R.S.A. In all instances pride of place goes to the war veterans. A short service follows with a prayer, hymns (including “Recessional” or “Lest We Forget”), and a dedication which concludes with “The Ode”, the fourth stanza of Laurence Binyon’s “For the Fallen” (see page x) , which is as follows:

*“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;*

*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning,*

*WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”* (Johnson 2002:146).

The “Last Post”<sup>6</sup> is then played, followed by a minute’s silence and “Reveille”<sup>7</sup> is then played. Services are concluded with a closing prayer and the singing of the National Anthem. Wreaths are laid and service personnel, along with members of the community remove the poppies from their lapels, laying them on the memorial (Clarke 1994).

By this time in 1916, the returned servicemen had got together and started an organisation that was at that time to be known as the “New Zealand Returned Soldiers’ (later Services’) Association”, working in co-operation with local authorities. Further Anzac Day commemorations, church services, public meetings and processions of servicemen were held for the rest of World War I, generally being organised by the New Zealand Returned Soldiers’ Association. Through these ceremonies there was an opportunity to stimulate patriotism, righteousness of the war and the place of New Zealand as a part of the British Empire. After the war however the service quickly lost its patriotic function and became more for remembering the dead.

The commemorations were gradually standardised after the war with the ceremony becoming a re-enactment of a military funeral. Moving the

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<sup>6</sup> “Last Post” is the call sounded at 10 p.m. each evening to inform the soldiers that they should be inside their quarters for the night. It signifies the end of the day’s activities and ushers in a period of rest and quietness. It is sounded at military funerals and commemorative services to indicate that the soldier has completed his life’s work and has entered into his rest (Standfast, 1970:29). The “...Last Post symbolically represents death as ‘everlasting sleep’. Its sounding at the Dawn Service told those present that this was a funerary rite for the fallen” (Clarke 1994:17).

<sup>7</sup> “Reveille” is the trumpet or bugle call sounded in all military barracks and camps first thing in the morning to awaken the soldiers and tell them to get up and dress. It is also sounded at military funerals and commemorative services to signify the resurrection of the body after death, and the awakening of the soul into a new life (Standfast, 1970:29). It also “...symbolises Resurrection – of the Archangel Gabriel calling on the faithful to rise on Judgement Day. It comforted mourners by emphasising the new arising or awakening the war dead had attained through death” (Clarke 1994:18).

Anzac Day commemorations to public war memorials instead of town halls or churches signified a secularization of the ceremony. It was R.S.A. leaders, servicemen, and local politicians who were now making the speeches, instead of the clergymen. The laying of wreaths became more central to the ceremony, with fewer speeches and fewer hymns being sung. A presence of uniformed members of the armed forces in some places became an accepted part of the march and service, with this still a feature of the parade today. Gradually from the 1920s onwards the Anzac Day service has become less and less akin to a mournful funeral (Clarke 1994).

Anzac Day took on new meaning with the out break of World War II with public interest increasing. Commemorations began focusing on the current war and an appeal to follow the “spirit of Anzac”. In this light, Anzac Day became a day for commemorating all wars in which New Zealanders had taken part, with returned servicemen and women from World War II marching alongside their older comrades (Clarke 1994).

In 1967 Anzac Day became associated with protest when, in Christchurch, two members of the left-wing Progressive Youth Movement laid a wreath protesting against the Vietnam war with further such protests aiming to bring attention to the protestors anti-war cause, occurring at subsequent Anzac Day commemorations (Clarke 1994).

During the 1980's other lobby groups such as feminists, gay groups, anti-nuclear activists, peace activists, Maori radicals, all laid wreaths at Anzac Day ceremonies. As well as a remembrance ceremony for war dead and service people, Anzac Day was fast becoming a time and place for people to make statements about war and society. Anzac Day became regarded as a place to debate defence and war related issues with ex-servicemen and politicians using these platforms to speak about issues of the day (Clarke 1994).

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gallipoli landings in 1990, coinciding with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, saw an official delegation travel to Gallipoli for an emotional Anzac Day dawn service. Many Australians and New Zealanders have since made the journey to Gallipoli, and some see it as a pilgrimage to remember past relatives. Many more attended the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary held in 2005, with a few remaining Second World War veterans attending, but mostly they were dignitaries and relatives of those who fought.

Today, Anzac Day continues to grow in strength of numbers attending, young and old. It could be suggested that today the commemorations celebrate values that many New Zealanders consider distinctive about their nation – “mateship, unity, courage, self-sacrifice, loyalty” - in addition to the commemorative function. Because of the dwindling numbers of World War II veterans, Anzac Day will continue to be redefined by each new generation (<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>).

### **Anzac Day traditions at the Avondale R.S.A.**



Illustration 11.

An Avondale R.S.A. Member, Bruce Phillips is pictured brewing up the Avondale R.S.A. traditional Anzac Day “*Coffee Royale*”. This drink is a mixture of coffee and rum, with the emphasis on the rum! It is drunk by members and guests at breakfast, before the parade begins, and continuously throughout the day until all participants have had sufficient (Johnson 2002:70).

Generally, and traditionally on Anzac Day at Avondale R.S.A., the men will have a drink of the rum “Coffee Royale” before the march and upon their return will drink beer. Navy Rum which has an extremely high alcohol content is the rum of choice and is used only on special occasions such as Anzac Day. Beer was generally the drink of choice for the men, when it was available during the war years; it is seen as a man’s drink and is therefore the drink of choice for the men on Anzac Day.

Also traditionally at the Avondale R.S.A., after the dawn service the returned servicemen and their families meet up at the clubrooms and around 10.00am are joined by the Women’s Section, members of the club, members of the community, the West Auckland Cadet Unit, and, preceded by a Pipe band, march through the streets of Avondale to the Memorial Gardens. By the end of the march people have joined in the parade and quite a strong contingent fit into the gardens (see Appendix L).

Both the flags of Australia and New Zealand are carried by flag bearers and they reside on the stage throughout the ceremony, being lowered at appropriate times. The club Padre leads the ceremony, offering prayers for the dead and future world peace. Poppies are laid on the memorial, by members of the R.S.A. and public, surrounding the wreath that was laid earlier by returned servicemen.

Hunter (2002) argues that war memorials have several meanings. It is a site for mourning for individuals, groups, communities and sometimes nations. It is a place where a nation can mourn itself or a negative view represents acknowledgement that the state is entitled to kill its citizens. Yves Helias (1995), (cited in Hunter 2002) argues that war memorials allow death

to be deconstructed by burying the horror and trauma of war, and allowing death to be reinvested with meaning.<sup>8</sup>

Afterwards all the participants join together at the clubrooms for lunch and drinks, where stories are told and familial gatherings enjoy the commemorations. These face-to-face encounters of men drinking and talking in Goffman's terms "...act as a boundary around the participants" (Goffman 1961:25, cited in Szwed 1966:437). "Drink then is the symbol of friendship and the occasion for its expression" (Szwed 1966:437).

Clarke (1994:48) in his thesis on "Anzac Day in Aotearoa/New Zealand 1946-1990" put forward the suggestion that there was widespread consensus in the post war period of the late 1940's that Anzac Day be observed as a holy day. The solemnity of the day expressed the feelings of the nation about death during war. This day seemed to fulfil the function of a civil religion as defined by Colless and Donovan:

"[Civil religion] refers to the way a state or nation, in its laws and practices and official functions, uses forms of words and rites and ceremonies evoking emotions and expressing commitments very similar to those associated with religious attitudes and behaviour" (cited in Clarke 1994:48).

In the 1980's the concept of "civil religion" began to attract scholarly attention in New Zealand. Hans Mol was an advocate for its existence in New Zealand. He claimed that Anzac Day was a strong example of civil

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<sup>8</sup> The "Poppy is for Sacrifice" and has become the symbol of Anzac Day, more significantly in New Zealand than anywhere else. It has become the symbol of sacrifice because it flowers in Turkey in early spring, as was the case in April 1915 when the ANZAC's landed at Gallipoli. In Australia, single poppies are not usually worn on ANZAC Day – the poppy belongs to Remembrance Day, 11 November. However, the Australians traditionally lay wreathes of poppies at memorials and honour boards on ANZAC Day (<http://www.Anzacday.org.au/education/tff/poppy.html>).

religion because of its prayers, marches and hymns was “...more awe-inspiring and solemn than the average church service. It is the nation as a whole which mourns its dead” (Mol 1982:93, cited in Clarke 1994:24).

Mark Pickering<sup>9</sup>, who wrote his MA thesis about civil religious tradition in New Zealand, declared that if there was a civil religion in New Zealand, Anzac Day is where it would be found. Instead he found “something unusual” about Anzac Day ceremonies:

“Not exactly a Christian service, yet neither is it secular: a ceremony usually held in close physical relation to church buildings yet not in them, and kept distant from the church service that may be “offered” after the Anzac commemoration; a ceremony where God is rarely mentioned and Christ not at all; a ceremony with much symbolism of its own which is deeply meaningful to the participants. It is no wonder that Anzac Day more than any other event is pointed to when the suggestion of a New Zealand civil religion is mentioned...Indeed, Anzac Day and its associated symbols are so obviously important to the concept of civil religion that without them, it would be very much harder to make any convincing argument for a civil religion” (Pickering 1985:52-3, 86, cited in Clarke 1994:24-25).

My observation of a recent Anzac Day service shows a religious theme to the ceremony. At the Avondale R.S.A. Anzac Day service the Padre plays a significant part in the ceremonies, allowing the spiritual and religious tones to flow through the service. The day still fulfils the function of uniting people from many different denominations in one ritual. Recitation of the Anzac Dedication, “The Ode” unionised people in an ecumenical way.

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<sup>9</sup> M. Pickering, “The Insubstantial Pageant: Is there a civil religion tradition in New Zealand”. MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1985, cited in Clarke (1994:24-25).

There were Christian themes throughout the service relating to death, sacrifice and Resurrection (Clarke 1994:25).

However, it seems apparent that in the post-war years Anzac Day was more important than any of the major Christian festivals. The death of friends and family was seen as more important and personal than the death of Christ (Clarke 1994:48). This day was considered the "...holiest day of the year..." because Christmas and Easter had become commercialised and lost their sacred meaning, whereas Anzac Day was free of any commercial exploitation, at that time (Clarke 1994:48).

The church became a focal point for many grieving New Zealanders having trouble dealing with their losses. People became reliant on the church and Christian beliefs to gain some reassurance, to make sense of the turmoil of war that they had survived. This led to a large Christian influence on the Anzac Day proceedings. Throughout the first years of peace Anzac Day helped people feel part of a nation, united in their grief, paying their respects to the dead. After this national mourning ritual was completed, New Zealanders then continued on with their lives, leaving Anzac Day for the purpose of "remembering" (Clarke 1994).

The Dawn Service on Anzac Day conforms to Arnold van Gennep's ideas of rites of passage. "...mourning, like all rites of passage, is a transitional period for survivors, marked at the beginning by rites of separation and, at the end, by rites of re-integration into society. During this transitional or liminal period, participants are neither in one state or the other" (Clarke 1994:17). The Cenotaph symbolises the graves of the dead who are buried in other lands, hymns and prayers are recited. The Anzac Day ceremony concludes with the sounding of the Last Post which "...symbolically represents death as 'everlasting sleep'" (Clarke 1994:17) and symbolises a funerary rite for the fallen.

Also, the lowering of the flag to half-mast, the traditional mourning position, coinciding with the lights going out for one minute's silence; darkness and silence symbolically represents death. The one minute's silence allowed the individual people to reflect on the dead, friends and/or relatives, often too their own mortality. The time also reflected the phase of the ritual where the people were "betwixt and between" life and death (Clarke 1994:17). A song written by a 16 year old girl, whose name is unknown can be seen in Appendix P.

### **Symbols and Rituals: The Torch of Remembrance**

The R.S.A. clubrooms are a plethora of symbols and rituals, which are used on any number of occasions. The "Ode" is the most significant spoken term of remembrance. When the Ode is being recited everyone must face the "torch of remembrance", of which there are usually several throughout the clubrooms, varying in design, but all for the same purpose.

The most significant one in the Avondale R.S.A. clubrooms is pictured below:

Illustration 12.



The "torch of remembrance" is a torch that is constantly lit and is faced each day by members and guests when the Ode is recited in remembrance of those who lost their lives in wars at 9pm. Other clubs recite the Ode at different times. It is their prerogative as long as the Ode is recited. A story told to me by a member was that as long as the torch is burning then the dead will always be alive in people's memories and hearts.

The first time I saw the torch unlit was during a funeral ceremony for one of the club's more colourful members. Everyone knew Jimmy; he had

his friends and his foes but he was a loveable character just the same, always on the dance floor showing off his skills to the young barmaids, or any young lady who fancied a bit of a whirl around the floor. He still had his dancing shoes on just a few days before he died on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2002.

I attended his funeral ceremony at the Avondale R.S.A. clubrooms a few days later and the clubrooms were overflowing with members, friends and staff. As I entered the room and took my seat I noticed that the torch of remembrance was not lit up. I thought that was strange, thinking maybe they turn it out for a funeral service. Once the service was over, Jimmy's body was taken out to the hearse, escorted by Louise who performed a "karanga", followed by family, members and friends.

I spoke to the Secretary/Manager and asked why the torch was not lit up. He said to me that he did not know either, that he noticed it was out and tried to relight it by putting new bulbs in but it just would not light. It was not until some time after the funeral that they were able to get the torch to light up again.<sup>10</sup>

Jimmy wanted to leave his final mark on the clubrooms, keeping the torch unlit, showing everyone present at the funeral that the flame of his bright light had physically been extinguished, but he will always be remembered in the hearts of those who knew him.

I have observed other occasions and witnessed the protocol surrounding the death of a member. On a visit to the Avondale R.S.A. one Saturday night the Duty Officer received word of a Life Member's death, 10

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<sup>10</sup> However on a more recent visit to the club the torch light was also out and there had been no deaths in the club, so one can only assume that the bulb had blown this time, or a faulty connection, or maybe a past member was once again making their presence felt in the club! Throughout the different clubs that I have visited each has its own unique way of keeping the "torch of remembrance" burning bright, with the same meaning behind them all.

minutes after the member had passed away. The music was interrupted for the announcement and everyone was asked to stand up and a few words were said about the late member, then the lights were turned off and a minutes silence was observed in respect of the member and the “Ode” was recited.

When the lights were turned back on again the band began to play and they sang “Wind Beneath My Wings” as a tribute to this member, to aid him in his journey to another life. It was an extremely moving experience. The atmosphere in the room was not sombre, rather there appeared to be a feeling of powerful emotions and deep respect for the past member.

A more recent experience of death in the club was when a member actually passed away within the club rooms. He collapsed at the table and all efforts to revive him were fruitless. An ambulance had been called immediately but he died before the ambulance arrived. The protocol in this instance was for the band to immediately stop playing. Everyone was wondering what was going on because the area had been screened off. After the ambulance arrived an announcement was made that the man had passed away and everyone was asked to vacate the premises. The club is closed down for the night under these circumstances, as a mark of respect for the deceased. I would imagine that it would also allow the authorities to come in and follow the necessary procedure. The body could then be removed with dignity and on this particular occasion some of his family were with him, it also affords the family some privacy in their grief.

An experience like this I would refer to as a “social drama” as defined by Goffman and also the term has also been defined by Turner (1982:86):

“...that the social drama occurs on all levels of social organization from state to family. A social drama is initiated when the peaceful tenor of regular, norm-governed social life is interrupted...This leads swiftly or slowly to a state of *crisis*...To

prevent this, *redressive* means are taken by those who consider themselves or are considered the most legitimate or authoritative representatives of the relevant community”.

Artefacts are also an important part of symbolism and remembrance and within every R.S.A. clubrooms there are artefacts symbolically reminding members of different experiences in their life, or to evoke in others representations of war. (Kavanagh 1989, cited in Radley 1990:52) “...that social remembering – the collective recounting of a shared past and the commemoration of events which may be prior to each individual’s own experience, is not only sustained by the world of objects and artefacts, but is, in part shaped through the ways in which the word of things is ordered”. These artefacts become the material aspect of narratives which reconstructed the past. “...no account of social remembering can ignore that everyday life involves the fabrication of the past through a construction of the material world...” (Radley 1990:53).

### **Maori Symbolism: a representation of war**

Mr Hemi Mei-Edwards carved the Maori Carvings adorning the doorways in the foyer of the Avondale R.S.A. The meaning and story belonging to each of the carvings is as follows:

This is the first part of the carving above the entrance to the clubrooms.



Illustration 13 (a).

In Maori, the whole carving is:

***“Ka tuwhera te Tawahaute Riri, Kaore e titiro te ao marama”.***

The English translation is:

***“When the gates of war have been flung open, man no longer takes notice of light and reason.***

***This carved panel commemorates those service men and women who entered upon and served with so much distinction in the two great wars.***

***Their achievements to which so many tributes have so justly been paid have been well chronicled and written in praise”.***



Illustration 13(b).

The carving above is the end panel of the carving above the entrance door to the clubrooms.

Another carving has been placed above the entrance to the office.

The Maori meaning of this carving is:

***“Kia mau, Kia mau Ki te Kawau maro, mo te atakura o tumatauenga”.***

In English this carving is described as follows:

***“The motifs, designs and figures depict Tumatauenga, God of War, accompanied by Warriors whom are embraced by Guardian Angels.***

***The Carving Panel commemorates those service men and women, who entered upon and served in Vietnam from 1965 to 1972.***

*Their achievements were not recognised by the New Zealand Government until now, 1998”.*

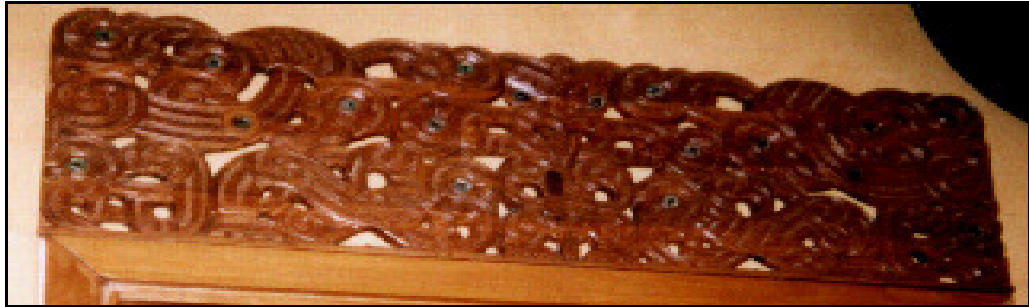


Illustration 13(c).

These photographs are symbols unique to the Avondale R.S.A., symbolic reminders to R.S.A. members of past wars, world wars, Vietnam War and the many others. The Maori carvings I would suggest are also symbolic of the way in which Maori and Pace fought side by side most significantly in World War II.

### **Memorial Gardens**

I took this photo at the opening ceremony of the Avondale R.S.A. Memorial Gardens, situated at the front of the clubrooms. The 25 Pounder gun has now been placed in front of the memorial. The stone in the middle of the memorial wall names the men of the Avondale community who died serving at both World Wars.<sup>11</sup> My invitation to the opening of these Memorial Gardens can be seen in Appendix G.

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<sup>11</sup> The 25 Pounder Field Piece pictured over in Illustration 14, is fast becoming a reminder of how wars used to be fought, almost like a dinosaur from days gone by. This is now a feature of the new Memorial gardens, a symbol of war in itself and proudly placed within the space remembering those who served.



Illustration 14.

Illustration 15.



The memorial stone was also a feature in a window beside the bricks, as shown in the photograph here. The names of 35 Avondale local men who lost their lives in World War I were engraved on this stone. Another 29 names appeared after World War II. This stone is now displayed in the Memorial Garden. A list of these men can be seen in Appendix F.

The spiritual and patriotic experiences within the Avondale R.S.A. are at times different to those of the battlefield. While the fighting side of this experience is not included in ceremonies, one of the significant people still a vital part of any ceremonious occasion is the “Padre”. The Avondale R.S.A. Padre, Rev. Bob Hornburg, opened the new memorial gardens at the Avondale R.S.A. on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

These gardens and memorial wall were purpose-built to enable the ashes of members to be scattered in the garden and/or a plaque placed on the bricks of the wall. Before the recent renovations the wall of bricks on the

front façade of the old clubrooms (as pictured above beside the memorial stone) was a place where families could buy a brick and place the name of the member who had passed away, all contributions going to the welfare fund. Members can now buy a brick in the new wall and places are available on the wall for plaques to remember the members who have passed away.

In ritual remembering there are so many powerful emotions, whether it is a death, a funny event, or an event that happened 60 years ago, such things as music or symbols can bring to the surface deep set memories, often with their accompanying emotions. Symbols are everywhere within the R.S.A. and often members are not consciously aware of these symbols, they just understand that they are part and parcel of an R.S.A.

## Conclusion

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In bringing this thesis to a conclusion I will endeavour to sum up some of the discoveries made through this research, as well as give some answers to the questions put forward at the beginning.

The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association formed in 1916. It was then known as the Returned Soldiers' Association, later changing its name so that it was not perceived to be Army specific. The men who returned from World War I saw need for a place where they could go and share the camaraderie they experienced while away at war. This place soon became a sacred space to remember those who did not return from war, by the performance of rituals, such as the Ode and annual commemorations on Anzac Day.

Many of the returned men and women had difficulty settling back into civilian life and the newly formed clubs gave them a place to go for support from those who had been through the experience of war. Other returned personnel sought solace in the church and preferred to try and forget that the war ever happened, so severe was the trauma. The Returned Soldiers' Association in those days was for a "white New Zealand", they did not want any other cultures apart from Maori to be in New Zealand. They saw themselves as a pressure group, lobbying the Government of the day for better welfare and assistance for returned men and women. The Maori Battalion featured significantly in World War II,

with a number of the 28 (Maori) Battalion becoming members of the Avondale R.S.A.

Women were an important part of the war effort, both in the battlefields and at home and went on to become a significant part of the R.S.A.'s around the country, with firstly their Ladie's Committees, later to become known as Women's Sections. If women were not serving in the war, they were at home taking care of the family. In World War II they were asked to take over the men's work and the women who were not able to do this were known as Land Girls and they worked on farms. Women who did not have families of their own were conscripted to these jobs. This was seen as the beginning of dramatic changes in women's rights and women in the workforce, challenging the traditional socially constructed roles of women, both in public and in private.

The roles of women within the R.S.A. were initially that of fundraising, specifically on Poppy Day. They prepared and served the food to the men on Anzac Day, as well as organising the children's Christmas party. With the passing of time, the roles and acceptance of the women in what was originally a men-only club has become more prominent and today they have almost the same roles as the men. However, even with the changes over the years, I did discover that it was still a very patriarchal association. With the decline in attendance and participation of returned people in the club, it is now being left to the women and associate members to carry on the tradition. Women are now on the Executive Committee, are Duty Officers and have a place on the National Executive Committee, representing their local R.S.A. Many clubs have women as their Secretary/Manager; Avondale R.S.A. is one of these.

## **The importance of the R.S.A. to its members**

As people age they spend their time at the R.S.A., socialising with friends; sharing memories; celebrating the milestones in their lives; having a social evening and a drink or two. To complete the life cycle a member can hold their funeral service and at the Avondale R.S.A. the ashes of a member may be scattered within the memorial gardens. This cycle exemplifies the meaning behind the Returned Services' Association and typically the Avondale R.S.A.

A letter sent into the R.S.A. Review, October 2008 sums up what typically an R.S.A. represents in New Zealand society. While this is not from an Avondale R.S.A. member, it is however an excellent representation of what an R.S.A. clubrooms represents today.

### **“Club planners would be “well pleased”**

Club planners would be “well pleased”.

I was sitting in my RSA on a Friday evening when I had one of those strong sensations. You know those you get when you have a sudden realisation of the value of something you have previously taken for granted.

I looked around. I first noticed a group of orderly teenagers enjoying what seemed to be some sort of pool tournament in the snooker room. Not far away a group of small children played a game on the dance floor as parents and grandparents looked on. Our regulars, our older members, were sitting in their time-honoured places while all around was the 30-60 age group. All comfortably relaxed, enjoying each other's company and the RSA amenities.

Six pm approached. The hum of conversation abated. People began getting to their feet in preparation for the honouring of The Ode.

All this brought to me the thought I am sharing with you. I thought the vision of those World War I veterans, who planned our present clubrooms in

1940. Their vision then was that it should be, not solely a club for “old soldiers”, but one which would combine the functions of a permanent memorial to those who served and to those who gave their lives for us, with those of a high-quality social centre for their community.

Quite clearly this is what has evolved over the years. I am sure that if those men could see what we have now, nearly 70 years on, they would be well-satisfied.

**Alistair Kerr, Te Awamutu RSA” (R.S.A. Review October 2008:7).**

Gouldner (1971) argues that Goffman’s dramaturgical model is most convincing when it is applied to a part of a social sector, where life is experienced as a drama. Performances are acted out, with the spotlight being the story that unfolds when the curtain is raised. Within the “theatre” there are many different performances that are aesthetic practices, based on repetition through rituals, gestures imitated, or lines learned, “...they are the generic means of tradition making” (Kapchan 1995:479).

Kapchan (1995:479) argues that, “To perform is to carry something into effect - whether it be a story, an identity, an artistic artefact, a historical memory, or an ethnography”. These same performances situate members in time and space; they play a role in the creation of social communities. Some of these communities are created around bonds of nationalism, for example the creation of the Returned Services’ Association.

The need for the last few remaining veterans from World War II to have friendships with each other is still strong today. This can be observed in the clubrooms. While the war was apparently very rarely discussed by

the men, they still shared a common bond and had been through similar experiences, with some of the men even having been in the same battalion or Prisoner of War Camp.

I have been told that a number of the returned men had trouble being alone. If they had no family to return to they often found the loneliness unbearable. During war they were together in their battalions or camps; wherever they were, more than likely they were together in large groups of men and suddenly after war they were often with people who had not experienced the trauma of war, or else they were alone. These people were generally unable to understand the post-war difficulties the men were experiencing. Solace was found within the sacred walls of the clubroom.

There are stories of human frailty, but the strength of the members and the Association as a whole have pulled people through the tough times. The repetition of rituals goes a long way to ensure the continuance of tradition within this voluntary association; creating a sense of community. All the dramas played out and re-enacted here, where the members play out their lives surrounded in deep tradition and symbolism create a unique space, where time has both stood still and at the same time moved forward.

Unwritten rules are abundant but those “in the know”, embrace those outsiders they deem fit to be trusted to be taught the rules and become insiders like themselves. For Garfinkel (cited in Gouldner 1971:390),

“...the shared and tacit – that is, ordinarily unutterable – rules and knowledge that make stable social interaction possible...the social world is held together not by a morality tinged

with the sacred, but by a dense collective structure of tacit understandings (what men know and know others know)...”.

This tacit understanding is also applied to “gossip”, as gossip is also something that is shared with those “in the know”. If a person is not in the know then gossip will not normally be shared with someone perceived as an outsider. Gossip is a socially constructed concept, more often than not, solely associated with women. But in the Avondale R.S.A., as I am sure in many other aspects of society and other R.S.A.’s, the men it seems in the past did their share of gossiping around the table, over a beer.

An anthropologist studying a village in the French Alps called Valloirise wrote about gossip:

“...For men to sit around in public and gossip is quite acceptable since, it is generally assumed, this exchange is...a friendly, sociable light-hearted, good-natured, altruistic exchange of news, information and opinion. But if women are seen talking together, then something quite different is happening: very likely they are indulging in...gossip, malice, “character assassination” (Spacks 1985:38).

There are many theories of gossip some arguing that it is a form of social control, others a form of moral control, or some believe that it is merely a way of transferring knowledge. Throughout this thesis I believe all three arguments could be applied to the purpose of gossip within the Avondale R.S.A. Some gossip within the clubrooms will modify people’s behaviour, where they sit, who they associate with, for example. Other forms will control people’s behaviour as to how they behave on the dance floor. An example of this would be the couple who were asked to leave because of the way they were dancing, it offended some other members.

An example of a transference of knowledge would be one of the well known identities who spend their evening going from table to table passing on information as to who is doing what with whom, who has died, who is in hospital. Often the information is important to know, often it is soon forgotten and sometimes you really do not want to spend half an hour listening to things you are not really interested in.

The Avondale R.S.A. was formed in 1933 and from that day to this, a bottle of beer and a good story go hand in hand. It is a place where social capital is formed, lives are celebrated; death is remembered. As William Shakespeare said, “All the World’s A Stage” and I am sure the theatre of the Avondale R.S.A. will continue to stage performances for many more years to come. The actors and the audience may change, but the dramas will continue to unfold as they have for many years before.

The motto of the R.S.A. is “People Helping People” and as a voluntary association in New Zealand society, this was a significant feature that made the R.S.A. a unique and important part of the local community and it is hoped will remain this way into the future.

### **Questions for further research**

The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services’ Association is a voluntary association within New Zealand civil society. Further research would be significant when situating this Association within civil society. This theory enmeshes trust and social capital. Robert Putnam discusses this in his significant piece of work “Bowling Alone”.

There has been some work done on voluntary associations in New Zealand, but it seems that the R.S.A. was left out of this research. Further

research of the significance and importance of this Association to New Zealand society overall would be of consequence.

Also to research gossip further, as this is an area of human interaction worthy of further research. It is an area that has been dormant in anthropology for many years and has recently seen a resurgence of interest. It is a complex interaction in social groups that often falls beneath the radar in research.

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<http://www.anzacday.org.au>

<http://www.anzacday.govt.nz>

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>

<http://www.rsa.org.nz>

## Appendix A

### Appendix A

#### Research Supervision Statement

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Date 23 November 2009

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to state that the research carried out for the masters thesis/research report entitled "Remembering" within the Avondale Returned and Services' Association: Gossip, Social Dramas, Women's Roles, Ritual and commemoration with a Voluntary was completed by Margaret Caroline Johnson Associate

in the School of Social and Cultural Studies, Massey University, New Zealand, under my direct supervision. This thesis material has not been used for any other degree. I played the following part in the preparation of the thesis:

I have been Margaret's main supervisor  
Azzam Rimeedi

Thesis Supervisor

This is to state that the research carried out for the abovenamed Masters thesis/research report is my own work and has not been used for any other degree.

Student

M.C. Johnson

## Appendix B



## Appendix C



### AVONDALE RETURNED SERVICES ASSOCIATION (INCORPORATED)

7 Layard Street  
Avondale

Phone: (09) 828 8386  
Fax: (09) 828 6941  
E-mail: [secretary@avondalersa.org.nz](mailto:secretary@avondalersa.org.nz)

All communication to:

'The Secretary/Manager'  
PO Box 19-023  
Avondale

1 June 2005

Margaret Johnson  
[sweetiemarg@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sweetiemarg@xtra.co.nz)

The Avondale Returned Services Association Inc. has no objection to you using material from your research and the written work detailed as the history of this Association in your thesis. Once again thank you for your fine efforts.

Yours faithfully

Peter Page  
Secretary Manager

## **Appendix D**

### **A platform approved by N.Z.R.S.A. Executive on 26 September 1916, for publication by the press:**

“The N.Z.R.S.A. is non-sectarian and non-political.

The association is vitally concerned with:-

1. The efficient and successful prosecution of the war.
2. The interests of the men now at the front who are unable to give expression to their wants, but whose wants we as returned soldiers are able to appreciate.
3. The welfare of returned soldiers both now and after the war and especially adequate provision for permanently disabled men.
4. The problem of settling returned soldiers back in employment and developing among returned soldiers a corporate sense of civic responsibility. The fostering of returned soldiers clubs on lines which will achieve this object.
5. Uniformity of control and efficient administration of funds for returned soldiers.”  
(Melling 1952:134).

## **Appendix E**

### **Statement of the aims and policy of N.Z.R.S.A. - 3 September 1917.**

#### **“Statement.**

This statement of Aims and Policy has been decided on by an executive meeting of the New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association and presented by a deputation to the Right Hon. The Premier (W.F. Massey), Sir Joseph Ward, Sir James Allen and the Hon. Mr Herdman.

#### **Association.**

The Association consists of affiliated associations of honourable discharged soldiers who have served overseas. Local associations have been formed throughout New Zealand.

#### **Origin.**

The origin, purpose and proposals of the Association as drawn up by the Executive are as follows:-

The founders of the Association were returned soldiers, who, having taken up arms against a foreign foe, had recognised the right of the State to require from them as citizens such service. Their purpose in founding the Association was to emphasize and establish the consequent responsibility of the State to provide for those who suffered disability or loss in such a case. The Association has been established since the problems involved in the repatriation of the returned soldier first became manifest and showed the absolute necessity for creating a representative body to preserve and give collective expression to the valuable experience of returned soldiers already repatriated and to champion the cause of the soldier.

#### **Purpose.**

The purpose of the Association is repatriation of the returned soldier. Broadly speaking, the problems involved in repatriation reduce to the following:-

- (a) The re-establishment of the returned soldier in suitable employment.
- (b) An efficient system of land settlement.
- (c) Assisting suitable returned soldiers to establish themselves in business.
- (d) Opportunity for the acquiring of homes by returned soldiers.
- (e) Adequate pension for war disablement or loss, both in the case of soldiers and their dependants, and dependants of those who have fallen.
- (f) Facility and encouragement to learn new trades or professions in order to overcome war disability.

The first step towards repatriation is the development of a sense of civic responsibility in every returned soldier.

The Association claims to have made the first and only efforts in this direction.

- (a) By establishing soldiers' clubs throughout the Dominion thus preserving the esprit de corps of foreign service, and, by the experience of the returned soldiers already settled down to civilian life, making the way easier for those coming after.
- (b) By promoting the discussion of repatriation by the returned soldiers and bringing them to a proper realization not only of their rights as returned soldiers, but their duty as citizens.

The Association affirms the following proposals and principles and asks that the government take steps to give effect thereto. In arriving at the conclusion set out, the Association has considered matters from a due sense of national welfare and the best interest of returned soldiers.

### **State Responsibility.**

The soldier or his dependant must in every case look to the State to recompense him for loss or disability caused through service. That under no

circumstances should the State avoid its duty by delegating its responsibility to citizen organisations, e.g. patriotic societies.

### **Recognition of the Association.**

The Association should be given opportunity to express its opinion on all proposed legislation affecting returned soldiers. The Association claims the right, as representing honourably-discharged soldiers, to official recognition as the voice of the returned soldiers. The Association impresses on the government the urgency of perfecting a scheme of repatriation which will as far as possible cover every discharged soldier, and points out the value in this direction of collecting and recording the experience of returned soldiers in regaining their pre-war station.

### **Minister of Repatriation.**

That a Department be created which will concern itself solely with the question of repatriation. Such Department should have at its disposal expert experience and opinion in every branch of trade, profession, or business. The Association undertakes to supply the Department with evidence showing how the various systems work out in practice from the individual standpoint.

### **Parliamentary Committee.**

That a committee be set up forthwith to consider the whole question of repatriation and that such committee confer with the Returned Soldiers' Association. That such committee take evidence from returned soldiers already repatriated, with a view to remedying defects in the systems now in use. This committee to be at work while the Repatriation Department defined above is being set up.

### **Pensions.**

1. The acceptance of a man for military service is conclusive evidence of physical fitness and the Association is not in accordance with the doctrine of pre-war disability as enforced by the Pensions Department. Further it deplores the fact that any soldier appealing against the refusal of a pension is asked to prove that he had no pre-war disability.

2. A soldier's pension is his right by disability through service, and the fact that he is earning an increasing wage should not be sued for the reduction of same.

### **Representation on Pensions Board.**

The Association also asks the government to appoint a Representative of the Association on the Pensions Board.

### **Patriotic Funds**

The Association approves of the principle that Patriotic Funds should be under Dominion control and that representation from returned soldiers should be on administering Committees as well as the central body" (Melling 1952:135-139).

*Lest We Forget*  
Roll of Honour

**Avondale Men Who Gave Their Lives For Their Country**

**The Great War**  
**1914 - 1918**

AIMER, V.  
ASTLEY, E.  
BISHOP, W.  
BISHOP, J.  
BOLLARD, A.  
BROOKS, E.  
BURROW, W.  
CATTON, C.  
CHARLES, T.  
COX, H.W.  
CRUM, F.  
DARROW, L.R.  
DENYER, B.  
FILLEUL, R.  
FRANSHAM, S.  
HASTIE, J.  
INGRAM, W.R.  
KIRK, T.  
LANE, D.  
LEES, H.  
LILLEY, J.T.  
McCRAE, J.  
McDONALD, H.  
McLEAN, D.  
McLEAN, R.,  
MYERS, E.  
OXENHAM, F.  
PORRITT, J.O.  
SCOTT, O.  
STEWART, S.  
TARLIN, C.  
VERCOE, N.  
WARD, A.  
WELCH, W.  
WILLOUGHBY, R.

**World War II**  
**1939 – 1945**

ALLEN, R.E.  
BROTHERS, W.  
BLACKMAN, D.A.  
BUTTON, K.A.  
CASEY, J.E.  
CLARK, W.N.  
CREES, P.W.  
EARNEY, H.H.  
EARLAND, R.H.  
FELTON, W.W.G.  
FLAXMAN, W.C.  
GEARD, R.  
INGRAM, W.R.  
JOHNSON, J.  
LINDSAY, R.G.  
LOGAN, F.H.  
MARSHALL, J.R.B.  
MARSHALL, F.S.  
MEE, A.C.  
McGEEHAN, P.J.D. (D.F.M.)  
PORRITT, L.G.  
PRIAULX, R.L.  
PRINGLE, R.A.  
SHEPHERD, A.E.  
SMITH, E.P.F.  
THOMAS, R.A.C.J.  
THOMPSON, A.G.  
WEIR, A. McK.  
WOOD, A.W.

## Appendix G



### AVONDALE RETURNED SERVICES ASSOCIATION (INCORPORATED)

7 Layard Street  
Avondale

Phone: (09) 828 8386  
Fax: (09) 828 6941  
E-mail: [secretary@avondalersa.org.nz](mailto:secretary@avondalersa.org.nz)

All communication to:

'The Secretary/Manager'  
PO Box 19-023  
Avondale

Margaret Johnson  
4 Wharapapa Place  
The Landing  
Albany

Dear Margaret

Mr Neville Southey – President cordially invites you and a guest to the

#### Avondale RSA Veterans Day & the Opening and Blessing of the Memorial Garden

Friday, 11 November 2005  
10.30am to 4pm

Entertainment Courtesy of  
"Eddie Taylor"

Complimentary glasses of wine or handles of beer available from Midday till 3pm.  
Light Lunch will be provided at Midday.  
Dancing and fellowship till 4pm.

If you are wishing to attend must register with the door staff or myself.  
Please have your membership card ready when registering.

Seats are limited so please register your intent to bring a partner when you register yourself.  
Seats will be allocated on a "First Come, First Served" basis.

Due to catering requirements, reservations close Monday, 7 November 2005, 4pm.

Please remember to carry your membership card on the day.

Yours faithfully  
Louise Okey  
Administrator

RSPV: Avondale RSA Office, 7 Layard St, Avondale, Ph 828 5000

# Appendix H

312635

RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION AT  
10th Dec 13th Dec 1922  
RECORDED 25/1/24  
INDEXED 25/1/24

352173

RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION AT  
10th Dec 13th Dec 1922  
RECORDED 25/1/24  
INDEXED 25/1/24

11/5  
B. 2nd

ANNE PEREYON & ANOR  
TO  
F. P. HARRIS & ANOR

Mortgage  
OF  
Lot No 4, portion of Lot 3, 7, 8 & 9  
containing 64 1/2 Acre of land

25/1/24  
25/1/24

NICHOLSON, GRIBBIN, ROGERSON & NICHOLSON  
SOLICITORS  
AUCKLAND  
BANK PRINTING CO. LTD. - 1924

352173

We Frank William Hampshire and Frederick Ivo Hampshire the mortgagors named and described in the within-written deed of mortgage registered in the Deeds Registry office at Auckland under Number 312635 do and each of us do hereby acknowledge to have received all monies intended to be secured by and being in full satisfaction and discharge of the said deed of mortgage Number 312635.

Dated this 18th day of Aug 1925

Signed by the said Frank William Hampshire } F. W. Hampshire  
in the presence of }  
Witness J. H. Carmichael  
Occupation Postmaster  
Address Morrumsville

Signed by the said Frederick Ivo Hampshire } F. I. Hampshire  
in the presence of }  
Witness J. H. Carmichael  
Occupation Postmaster  
Address Morrumsville

TEN  
SHILLINGS



# This Deed

made the *Twenty Third* day of *August* one thousand nine hundred

and twenty two BETWEEN ANNIE BRERETON wife of William Cyrus Brereton of Auckland in New Zealand Book-keeper and CHARLES WESTON PRINCE OF AVONDALE near Auckland aforesaid Farmer (hereinafter termed "the Mortgagor") of the one part and FRANK WILLIAM HAMPSHIRE Boot-maker and FREDERICK IVO HAMPSHIRE Grocers Assistant both of Hamilton in New Zealand aforesaid

(hereinafter termed "the Mortgagee") of the other part WITNESSETH that in consideration of the sum of one hundred and sixty six pounds

(hereinafter termed "the principal sum") paid lent and advanced by the Mortgagee to the Mortgagor (the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged) the Mortgagors <sup>do and each of them</sup> do hereby convey and assure unto the Mortgagee ALL THAT piece or parcel of land more particularly described in the Schedule hereto with all the rights and appurtenances thereunto belonging TO HOLD the same unto the Mortgagee

by way of Mortgage only for the purpose of securing the repayment by the Mortgagor to the Mortgagee of the principal sum together with interest thereon in accordance with the covenant in that behalf hereinafter contained and for the purpose of securing <sup>and each of them doth</sup> the observance and performance of the covenants herein contained and implied AND the Mortgagor DO hereby COVENANT with the Mortgagee as follows:—

1. — THAT the Mortgagor will pay the principal sum to the Mortgagee on the twenty third day of August one thousand nine hundred and twenty five

2. — THAT the Mortgagor will in the meantime and so long as the said principal sum or any part thereof shall remain unpaid pay to the Mortgagee interest for the same at the rate of six pounds per centum per annum computed from the twenty third day of August one thousand nine hundred and twenty two by equal payments on the twenty third day of the months of

November February May and August in every year ~~PROVIDED ALWAYS that if the Mortgagor shall on each of the days hereinbefore appointed for payment of interest or within fourteen days thereafter respectively pay to the Mortgagee interest on the said principal sum at the rate of~~ per centum

~~per annum then the Mortgagee will in such case accept such interest in lieu of and in satisfaction for the interest at the higher rate hereinbefore made payable.~~ *A.B. C.M. 92 intine here*

3. — THAT the Mortgagor will duly and punctually pay all rates taxes assessments and other outgoings from time to time payable in respect of the mortgaged premises and in default thereof the Mortgagee may pay the same and recover from the Mortgagor any amount so paid with interest at the rate aforesaid computed from the date of payment in the same manner as the principal and interest moneys hereby secured.

AND IT IS HEREBY EXPRESSLY AGREED AND DECLARED:

5. — That the covenants and provisions for insurance against fire and accidents contained in the Fourth Schedule to "The Property Law Act 1908" shall be effected with some insurance company to be nominated by the Mortgagee and that the receipts for the premiums payable in respect of such insurance shall be delivered seven days prior to the day or days on which the same respectively fall due.

6. — THAT the implied power to pay off given by Clause 5 of the Fourth Schedule to the said Act shall not be exercised by the Mortgagor without giving to the Mortgagee at least one month's previous written notice of the intention so to do.

7. — THAT in case default shall be made in payment of the said principal sum or the interest thereon or any part thereof respectively and such default shall continue for the space of thirty days after any of the days hereinbefore appointed for payment thereof respectively or in case there shall be default in the observance or performance of any of the covenants and agreements on the part of the Mortgagor herein contained or implied ~~as in case the Mortgagor shall become or be declared a bankrupt within the meaning of any law now or hereafter in force in New Zealand relating to bankrupt or insolvent debtors~~ the said principal sum shall at the option of the Mortgagee without any demand of payment or notice whatsoever become at once due payable and recoverable and it shall be lawful for the Mortgagee thereupon or at any time thereafter by virtue of these presents without any notice to exercise such power of sale and incidental powers as are in that behalf vested in Mortgagees by virtue of the provisions of "The Property Law Act 1908" in as full and ample a manner as if the terms of two months and one month in the Seventh Clause of the Fourth Schedule of the last mentioned Act had duly elapsed and the notice therein also mentioned had been duly made and given PROVIDED ALWAYS and it is hereby agreed and declared that upon any sale purporting to be made in pursuance of the aforesaid power in that behalf the purchaser or purchasers shall not be bound to see or inquire whether any of the cases mentioned in this Clause has happened or as to the necessity or expediency of the stipulations subject to which such sale shall have been made or otherwise as to the propriety or regularity of such sale or be affected by notice (express or constructive) that no case has arisen to warrant the exercise of such powers or any of them and notwithstanding any impropriety or irregularity whatsoever in any such sale the same shall so far as regards the safety and protection of the purchaser or purchasers be deemed to be within the aforesaid power in that behalf and to be valid and effectual accordingly and the remedy of the Mortgagor in respect of any breach of the clause or provision lastly herein contained or of any impropriety or irregularity whatsoever in any sale shall be in damages only.

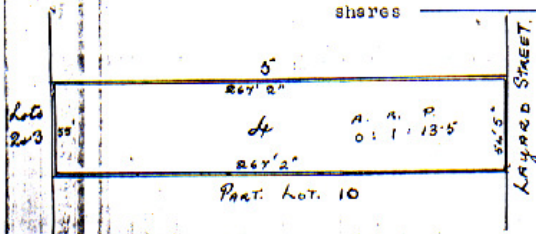
8. — THAT the covenants powers conditions and obligations implied herein by "The Property Law Act 1908" or any Acts amending the same are so far as the same are inconsistent with or contradictory or repugnant to the covenants powers and conditions contained in this instrument or any obligation hereunder hereby expressly negatived but in so far as the provisions of the Fourth Schedule to "The Property Law Act 1908" are not inconsistent with or contradictory or repugnant to the expressed covenants and conditions hereof such provisions shall be implied herein.

9. — THAT if the Mortgagor shall duly and punctually pay the said interest and shall duly observe and perform all the Mortgagor's obligations hereunder the Mortgagor shall have the option of paying off the said principal sum on any of the days hereinbefore appointed for the payment of interest by instalments of not less than fifty pounds each upon giving to the Mortgagee three calendar months previous written notice of the

intention so to pay off or upon paying to the Mortgagee one quarter's additional interest on any amount so paid off as a bonus PROVIDED HOWEVER that should the Mortgagor give any such notice as aforesaid and upon the date stated in such notice fail to pay the amount therein mentioned then the whole of the said principal sum shall immediately become due and payable to the Mortgagee, and such failure may be treated by the Mortgagee as such a default as shall render exercisable the power of sale incidental and other powers hereinbefore mentioned.

10. — THAT if the principal sum or any part thereof shall remain unpaid on the twenty third day of August one thousand nine hundred and twenty two the Mortgagor shall not thereafter pay the same except on a day hereinbefore appointed for payment of interest and after the Mortgagor shall have given three calendar months' notice in writing to the Mortgagee of intention to repay the same.

11 — And it is hereby declared that the principal sum hereby secured is advanced by the mortgagees as tenants in common in equal shares



IN WITNESS whereof the said parties have hereunto subscribed their names.

#### SCHEDULE.

ALL THAT piece of land containing one rood and thirteen and five tenths more or less being lot number four of the resubdivision of lots two seven and eight of allotment sixty four of the Parish of Titirangi Bounded on the East by Leyard Street Fifty four feet five inches on the south by part of lot ten of allotment sixty four two hundred and sixty seven feet two inches on the west by lots two and three of said subdivision fifty five feet and on the north by lot five of said subdivision two hundred and sixty seven feet two inches be the said several admeasurements a little more or less as the same is delineated by the plan drawn hereon edged Red

SIGNED by the said ANNIE BRERETON

in the presence of

*N.B. McEwen.*  
*Law Clerk*  
*Auckland.*

*Annie Brereton*

SIGNED by the said CHARLES WESTON

PRINCE in the presence of

*Witness*

*Occupation*

*Address*

*Ample*  
*Stock Buyer*  
*Hamilton*

*Chas W Prince*  
*Charles W Prince*

## Appendix I

### R.N.Z.R.S.A. National Awards Recipients



#### **Angus Edward (Ted) McRae - 2000 “M” Badge and Certificate of Merit**

*Ted was the first Avondale R.S.A. member to receive the prestigious R.N.Z.R.S.A. “M” Badge and Certificate of Merit. This award was presented to Ted on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2000. Mr Colin Topp R.N.Z.R.S.A. Vice-President presented the award to Ted and recognition came also from The Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Helen Clark who made time to visit Ted.*

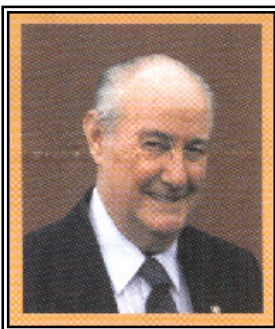
*Some of the many areas in which Ted gave his time and service to were the P.O.W. Association where he was a founding member in 1946; The West Auckland Homes for the Elderly Trust and the Avondale Branch of the K.E.V., as well as his commitment to the Avondale R.S.A. where he was on committee from 1986 to 21st November 2000.*



#### **Kevin Emberson - 2001 National Gold Star Award and Certificate of Merit Laureate**

*An official presentation ceremony was held on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2001. Kevin was awarded the National Gold Star Award and Certificate of Merit by the Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association Incorporated in recognition of his service to Avondale, other R.S.A.'s and the community. Kevin works hard for*

*the R.S.A. Homes Trust, as well as the Auckland District Youth Council. Kevin takes personal charge of the Avondale R.S.A. library and maintains the memorabilia.*



#### **President, Ray Penney - 2002 “M” Badge and Certificate of Merit**

*Ray was awarded the “M” Badge and Certificate of Merit in the Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association, Honours List of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2002.*

*The Awards were presented to Ray for services to the R.S.A. and the Community. An Award of the “M” Badge and Certificate of Merit is awarded in recognition of at least 15 years outstanding honorary service to the R.S.A. for the benefit of ex-service*

*personnel and the community in general. Local R.S.A. service must have already been recognised by the award of the local Life Membership and/or local Certificate of Merit.*

*These prestigious awards are given by the R.N.Z.R.S.A. in recognition of the many hours a member has given to the Association and the community and also recognises the family of the recipient. The Association recognises that if a member has spent many hours involved with their commitments, then the family is missing out on spending time with their loved ones. Ted, Kevin and Ray are examples of this, with many hours spent in volunteer work.*

## Appendix J

### Kings Empire Veterans (K.E.V.)

The K.E.V. Association began in 1897 when Lord Ranfurly was Governor General. He realised there were 7,000 veterans in New Zealand so in 1900 he established, under his guidance, the "Empire Veterans Association" with himself as President. A Medal was given to these Members. In 1910 when Lord Kitchener visited New Zealand, he suggested the Association be changed to "Kings Empire Veterans". A Lapel Badge is now issued to members. This Association was recognised by the N.Z.R.S.A. and over time has become a Section of the respective R.S.A. clubs.

Mr Eric Bullen was welcomed to the Annual General Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1999 and was asked to explain who was eligible for membership to the K.E.V. Mr Bullen replied:



- a. New Zealand Ex-Service Personnel of good character who have served in or with His or Her Majesty's Forces overseas during War or Conflict waged by the Crown and sanctioned by the New Zealand Government and who have reached the age of 60 years.
- b. Second World War British, Australian and other Commonwealth Service Personnel to be eligible must as well as the above, have been entitled to receive the 1939-45 Star (Not Medal) or one of the following Stars, Atlantic Star – Air Crew Europe Star – Africa Star – Pacific Star – Burma Star – Italy Star – France and Germany Star. In the case of the Korean, Vietnam and other Wars or Conflicts waged by the Crown applicants must be entitled to the appropriate Campaign Medals or Clasps and be 60 or more years of age. Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation Service Personnel to qualify, as well as the above will need to have served between 16 June 1948 to 31 July 1960 and 8 December 1962 to 11 August 1966.
- c. J Force (except for those with previous 2<sup>nd</sup> World War Time Service. Those personnel who served in Japan and have the correct document and proof of service and as well are entitled to the appropriate medal are entitled to join under Rule 4a.
- d. The Executive Committee of the Dominion Council may accept applicants younger than 60 years who have rendered Special Overseas Service of which satisfactory proof must be provided (e.g. the V.C.).
- e. From time to time the Dominion Executive Committee may accept applicants from over-run Non-Commonwealth Countries who served under British Command between 3rd September 1939 and 2nd September 1945 subject to satisfactory documentation and proof of service."

### Avondale Kings Empire Veterans (K.E.V.) Honours Board

A. Black 30.8.85	K. McEwen 8.6.89	A.E. Owens 25.11.95	F. Topham
D. Calder 10.9.85	G. Mitchell 30.6.89	R. Moulden 6.3.96	G. Lawrence
J. Thompson 22.1.86	S. Mortensen 4.7.89	D. Olsen 6.3.96	L.F. Morrell
N. Goss 20.1.86	G. McRae 11.11.90	R. Thomas 14.7.96	R.A. Holdaway
A. Spencer 1.7.86	R. Clarke 25.3.92	W. Browne 23.3.97	J.S. Pendergrast 23.2.95
H. Purchase 6.8.87	K. Brodie 5.8.92	H. Snookes 28.7.97	E.R. Gibbs 27.7.98
F. Smith 3.12.86	B. Mead 17.4.95	K. Wolfendale 8.9.97	D. Ashford 13.4.85
( " also listed as 3.12.87)	J. Dawson 16.5.94	E. Mann 15.10.96	D. Calden 10.9.85
W. Sadgrove 6.4.88	P. Holmes 21.2.95	R. Mitchell 8.1.84	D. Ross 26.4.91
C.R. Hayes 2.4.88	A. Barker 26.9.94	J. O'Flaherty 18.4.97	Bob Armstrong 2.11.98
R. Fraider 23.2.88	F. Cortesi 17.1.95	R. Sanderson 30.7.96	R.A.J. Tyrie 21.2.98
N.J. Brownlee 11.7.88	J. Collins 29.9.95	A. Dunlop	Eric Strong 1.4.99
F. Lowry 18.4.89	S. Tahana 10.11.95	F. Bethell	Harry Lauder 20.3.99

*K.E.V. Ladies Badges are available for \$2.00, wives and partners of K.E.V. Members Badges have No Crown. Widows Badges are Crowned. Ladies can wear both if they wish.*

## Appendix K

### **Women's Section Memories from the past**



Padre Thompson enjoying a selection of the splendid food prepared by the Women's Section.

Mrs Museaus agreeing with Claire about the need for world "peace", or was that a "V" for victory over the men? We will never know! Mrs Museaus was known as the "Museum Piece" as she was the only women member of the Avondale R.S.A., because she was a returned women.



An example of the food prepared by the Women's Section for occasions such as ANZAC Day, Members and Wives Nights, or other special occasions where the women pulled together and prepared a sumptuous meal for all to share.

Patroness and long time member of the Avondale R.S.A. Women's Section, Mrs Lil Jillings celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.



The pictures below are indicative of the annual Women's Section Birthday Party. This year 2002 was a roaring success, with wonderful singing and dancing by the ladies. It was a significant year, as for the first time the men joined the ladies to entertain the packed lounge. These photos show some of the themes and illustrate the professionalism of the members, as well as the authenticity of the costumes.



**"The Troops"**



**Claire dressed up as “Carmen Miranda”**

**The men with a tribute to the “Black and White Minstrels”**

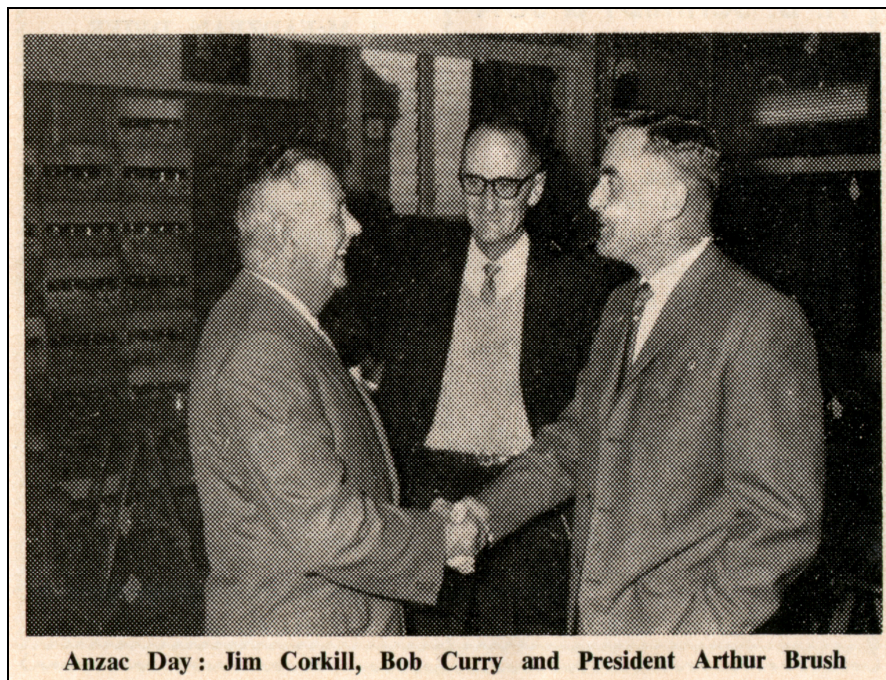
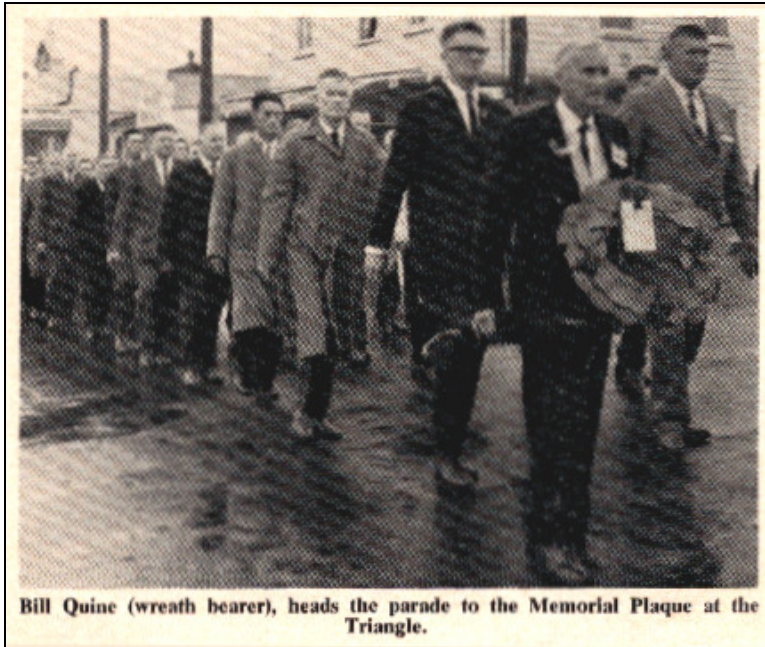


**“The  
Grand  
Finale”**

## Appendix L

### Anzac Day Memories

#### Anzac Day 1968



Photos courtesy of Norm Harrison, Avondale R.S.A. member,  
cited in Johnson 2002 pp. 46-47



Photos courtesy of Norm Harrison, Avondale R.S.A. member,  
cited in Johnson 2002 pp. 46-47

### **Anzac Day - 1970's**



These are the Memorial Gardens in Avondale Central shopping area where Avondale members hold their Anzac service each year. The traditional wreath and poppies which were acquired by members and the community on Anzac Day are also laid along with the wreath. (Photo courtesy of the Avondale R.S.A.).





Avondale R.S.A. members laying wreaths and poppies on the same Public War Memorial on Anzac Day (Photo courtesy of the Avondale R.S.A).



## 2002



## Appendix M

### **Building of the new Avondale R.S.A. clubrooms in 1983**



A major extension of the clubrooms, this time running the full length of the old building, saw the first addition to the new Clubrooms. The work began on 16 April 1983 and as the photos show it was a major transformation of the site.

By mid June the floor and underneath was on its way to being completed, with the general shape and size of the completed building becoming apparent.



Late June saw the external building near completion, showing a contrast between the old and the new Clubrooms.

## **1997 – Alterations and Additions: Restaurant and Members Lounge**



The photograph shows the addition to the clubrooms, being the new restaurant. This also shows the windows that give a spectacular view out over Avondale and the Racecourse. To the right, through the doors is the Members Lounge. It is sometimes used as an overflow from the Restaurant.

This is the new extension to the original Lounge, known as the Members Lounge. There would eventually be a big screen television installed that was connected to SKY TV. Members would be able to watch all their favourite sports live on the television and enjoy a meal from the restaurant just through the doors, while watching a game.



The new bar that is the feature of the clubrooms, part way through being built. There is easy access to the bar from all facets of the clubrooms: the games room, the Members lounge, the restaurant and the lounge surrounding the stage and dance floor.

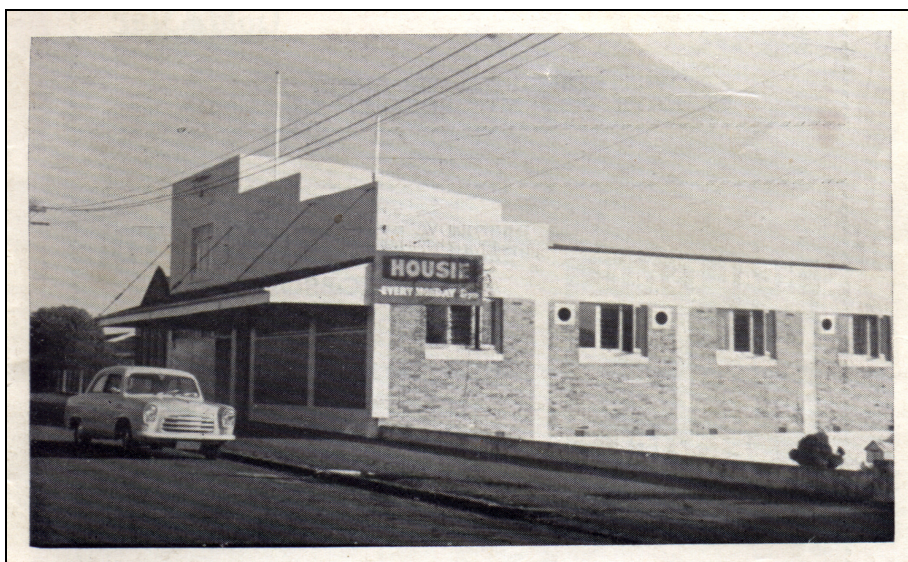
## **Building renovations in 2002**

### **Before and...**



### **During**





The clubrooms in 1964...



During mid-1980's – 2004...



The clubrooms at the Memorial Opening in 2005 and remains this way today.

## Appendix N

### Maori Battalion Marching Song

This marching song had its origins in Rotorua. Corporal Anania Amohau wrote the words in 1940, music by Mark Sheaf, 1906 and the tune was shaped during the Te Arawa's preparation for the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the Treaty of Waitangi, held in February 1940. This became the Te Arawa's marching song. The trainees at Trentham adopted the tune, after Amohau first whistled it during training. It was soon sung in countless bars, music halls and wherever Maori gathered, as well as a nostalgic reminder of home to all soldiers of the New Zealand Division. It is sung to the tune of "The Washington & Lee Swing". It also became the marching song of the 28<sup>th</sup> Maori Battalion, whose 3,500 members won fame in World War II ([http://folksong.org.nz/maori\\_battalion](http://folksong.org.nz/maori_battalion)).

"In the days that have now gone  
When the Maoris went to war  
They fought and fought until the last man died  
For the honour of their tribe  
And so we carry on  
The conditions they have laid  
And as we go on day by day  
You will always hear us say...

**Maori Battalion march to victory  
Maori Battalion staunch and true  
Maori Battalion march to glory  
Take the honour of the people with you  
We will march, march, march to the enemy  
And we'll fight right to the end.  
For God! For King! And for Country!  
AU – E! Ake, ake, kia kaha e!**

A loyal band of Maoris  
Sailing from New Zealand  
To win us freedom and peace  
Marching shoulder to shoulder onward  
And we will shout again  
Ake aka kia kaha e  
Haere tonu haere tonu ra  
Kia – o – ra Kia – o – ra

Te Ope Māori Hikoi kia toa  
Te Ope Māori Hikoi kaha ra  
Te Ope Māori Hikoi kia kororia ai  
Mauria te hōnore o te iwi

Ka hikoi mātou kit e hoariri  
Whawhaitia tae noa kit e mutunga  
Mō te Atua! Mo te kingi! Me te whenhua!

AU-E!, ake ake kia kaha e!

**Maori Battalion march to victory  
Maori Battalion staunch and true  
Maori Battalion march to glory  
Be living expression of the honour of the people**

**We will march to the enemy  
Put them to flight at the end.  
For God! For King! And for Country!  
AU – E! Forever and ever be strong!**

## **R.S.A. WOMEN'S SECTION SONG**

**(To the tune of the Happy Wanderer)**

We're Women's Section R.S.A.  
We meet in friendships name  
We greet you with a cheery smile  
To help you is our aim.

### **CHORUS**

We are here to lend a hand  
In any way, to our Diggers in the R.S.A.  
So come, rally round  
Women's Section R.S.A.

So let us do what e'er we can  
And strive with all our might  
To help someone less fortunate  
And make their days more bright

### **CHORUS**

We are here to lend a hand  
In any way, to our Diggers in the R.S.A.  
So come, rally round  
Women's Section R.S.A.

## Appendix P

The following song was first sung at the 1992 Reciprocal Tour and was written by a 16 year-old girl (whose name is unknown) and is sung at the beginning and end of every meeting. A child who has been on tour is asked to come forward and sing this song.

### ♪ “ANZAC Song – ANZAC is their Name” ♪

*There's a legend told  
Of men brave, bronzed and bold  
For treasured freedom they did fight  
And their glory,  
Will forever reign  
Our heroes, ANZAC is their name.*

#### **Chorus:**

*They fought on land, sea and in the air  
They fought everywhere  
When lives were gone, they would fight on and on  
So you and I might share  
Freedom everywhere  
ANZAC is their name*

*To foreign lands  
Across desert sands  
Over mountains to the sea  
Forward to the fray,  
They marched on their way  
To places like Gallipoli.*

#### **Chorus:**

*They fought on land, sea and in the air  
They fought everywhere  
When lives were gone, they would fight on and on  
So you and I might share  
Freedom everywhere  
ANZAC is their name*

#### **Final Chorus:**

*We will remember them all  
As they stand tall  
In history and in our memory.  
All so that we might share  
Freedom everywhere  
ANZAC is their name.*

## Appendix Q

### In Flanders Fields

In the Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That marks our place, and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and we loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from falling hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields.

*Dr John McCrae (1872-1918).*