

A MOVING MEMORIAL

Wollongong has a very tangible link with the Boer War in the form of a memorial in MacCabe Park.



Wollongong man, Frank Andrews, was killed at Ottoshoop in South Africa on 26 August 1900. He died from a sniper bullet while fighting in the Boer War. Frank was a trooper in the NSW Imperial Bushmen force that was raised to supplement regular army units. The Bushmen were recruited for their horsemanship and their ability to adapt to the unconventional fighting techniques of the Boers.

Frank's death was greeted with great dismay in Wollongong and public subscriptions were raised quickly to commemorate his sacrifice. Local monumental mason, Frederick Rose, was engaged to construct the sandstone memorial which included a water fountain and a marble plaque. It was decorated with carved crossed rifles and laurel sprays. On the top of the memorial were spent artillery shells.

The unveiling ceremony was held on 2 June 1902 on the corner of Crown and Kembla Streets outside the Town Hall. It was well attended by the Andrew's family, local dignitaries, members of the community and Boer War veterans. The location and quality of the monument was testimony to depth of community feeling.

It remained there until an event of more contemporary importance was imminent. The civic fathers removed the Andrews Memorial to erect a dais for the visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip on 11 February 1954.

The memorial went into storage until lobbying by the Illawarra Historical Society resulted in it being relocated. The memorial's new home was in Rest Park which had opened in 1935. The park ran from Burelli Street to Globe Lane behind the present Wollongong City Diggers Club.

The memorial remained in the park until the development of the Gateway Shopping Centre in the early 1980s. Despite public opposition, Rest Park was included in the development site and the memorial was again dismantled and stored until re-erected in MacCabe Park.

It is now part of a war memorial precinct commemorating Australian personnel who have served in various wars and other conflicts. The memorial still has a drinking fountain but the shell casings that originally adorned the top have long since disappeared. Unfortunately, the memorial has a forlorn appearance due to leaking plumbing and the loss of highlighting of lettering on the plaque.

More information on Frank Andrews and Rest Park is available at:

<http://www.uow.edu.au/~morgan/andrews.htm>

<http://illawarramuseum.wordpress.com/2012/08/20/hello-world/>

‘The Andrews Family of Wollongong and Trooper Frank Andrews - a Boer War Casualty’
Organ, Michael. *Illawarra Historical Society Bulletin*, Feb and Mar 1992