

DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL GATES

FOUR SHIRES PAY TRIBUTE TO WHITTON

Sunday last was another Red Letter Day for Whitton when a large assemblage took part in an impressive ceremony which was the culmination of almost two years of effort and perseverance, and the result of splendid co-operation by the people of Whitton and surrounding district. The function on Sunday last was the Dedication and Official Opening of the Whitton Memorial Gates and Children's Playground, when the opportunity was taken by the representatives of four Shires—Carrathool, Murrumbidgee, Wade and Leeton to congratulate the people of Whitton and the committee responsible for bringing to fruition such a worthwhile accomplishment.

IMPOSING STRUCTURE

The Memorial Gates are an imposing structure with two main columns constructed of brickwork upon which are placed the memorial tablets bearing the names of the Fallen in the 1914-18 and 1939-45 World Wars. Upon these columns are hung the large ornamental steel gates. On either side of the columns is an ornamental fence with brick columns supporting the steelwork. In the fence is placed a plaque worded:—"Whitton Memorial Gates and Playground, officially opened November 11, 1951, by Mr. J. Cliff." Immediately in front of the gates and placed in the concrete footway is a large sign set in terrazo with red lettering the words "Whitton Memorial Park." The gates provide the entrance to the Children's Playground and Memorial Park, located in the Main Street of Whitton.

The gates were designed by Mr. J. Currie, assistant engineer of the Carrathool Shire. The steelwork was carried out by the Cyclone Works, the brickwork was done by Mr. Jack Tucker, of Leeton. Mr. Trennery of Griffith made and inscribed the tablets and the Carrathool Shire carried out the concrete footpaths and provided the flagpole.

The playground equipment includes swings, giant strides, merry-go-round and gymnastic outfit. The gates and playground cost over £900.

At 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoon there was a large assemblage in front of the Memorial Gates when a most inspiring ceremony was preceded by eloquent addresses befitting the importance of the occasion. The Leeton District Band looking resplendent in their uniform, brightened up the proceedings with their music rendered under the baton of Bandmaster Mr Frank Foran.

The audience included a number of representative people from Leeton, Griffith, Darlington Point and sur-

rounding districts. Junior Red Cross girls were present selling Red Poppies of Remembrance.

On the platform were Mr. E. Smith (Master of Ceremonies), Mr. W. B. Scott, president, and Mr. J. Cliff, secretary, of the Memorial Committee. Mr. F. J. Hogan, president of Whitton Sub-branch of R.S.L., four of the leaders who were prominently associated with the Gymkhana and money raising efforts. Other members of the Memorial Committee are Mr. R. S. M. Taylor (treasurer), Mrs. W. Thompson, Mrs. J. Painting, Mrs. U. Tallentire, Mr. Bob Black and Mr. D. Rhodes.

Representative visitors were: Cr. R. Munro (President), Cr. E. C. L. Killen, Cr. Barry, of the Carrathool Shire; Cr. Jack Davies, of Murrumbidgee Shire; Cr. W. Arbuckle (President), Leeton Shire; and Cr. J. C. Thorne, Wade Shire. Rev. F. M. Peirce (Presbyterian), of Griffith, and Rev. R. L. Kerdel, rector of St. Peter's, C. of E. Leeton.

A film record of the proceedings was taken by Mr. J. McAuliffe, of Leeton.

Mr. E. Smith (chairman), in opening the proceedings extended a cordial welcome. He referred to the tribute they were paying that afternoon to the Fallen of Two World Wars and said it was an occasion that reminded them that they should as they pass on, leave the place a little better for those to follow.

The Band then played the National Anthem, the whole company singing. Short speeches then followed.

STARTED IN 1950

Mr. Wal Scott, president of the Memorial Park Committee, said November 11 was set down as Remembrance Day, when in silence they remembered those who gave their lives in the cause of Democracy and a Free World. The idea of erecting the Memorial

CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY AND A FINE TEAM
 The idea of erecting the Memorial Gates and Play Ground was first conceived in February, 1950, and since then two gymkhanas had been held and £2000 raised. The Gates and Playground have been constructed with £500 donated by citizens of Whitton, £250 from Carrathool Shire and £250 subsidy from the Government. The cost so far was less than £1000. It was hoped to complete the park by laying down of lawns and planting of trees, and a bowling green was also envisaged. He took the opportunity of thanking all those associated with the raising of the funds and the constructing of the park, and made particular reference to Mr. Jim Cliff, organiser and secretary of their gymkhanas, who gave so much of his time.

Cr. Munro in expressing congratulations on behalf of the Carrathool Shire, said he did not know of a better organiser than Mr. Cliff. They all knew that Mr. Cliff had received the support of the people of Whitton and the co-operation of the surrounding district.

Cr. Arbuckle spoke on the significance of the Memorial and the ideal for which the soldiers fought and laid down their lives. He complimented the committee on behalf of the people of the Leeton Shire.

The hymn "O God, Our Help," was then sung.

Cr. Davies on behalf of Cr. Ryan, President of Murrumbidgee Shire, expressed greetings and congratulations.

Cr. Thorne apologised for the absence of Cr. P. Hamilton of Wade Shire, and in doing so said how proud the people of Griffith were in what Whitton had done in erecting such a fine Memorial to the Fallen Soldiers. The task of those who have been fortunate to come through the wars was to see that we of the living are wor-

thy of those who have died. We have to serve to the best of our capacity.

RETURNED SOLDIERS' PRESIDENT

Mr. F. Hogan (president), speaking on behalf of the members of the Whitton Returned Soldiers' League, thanked the Whitton Park Memorial Committee for the privilege extended to him to be one of the speakers. On behalf of the League, he thanked the Carrathool Shire for its co-operation. Speaking in terms of Remembrance Day, when their thoughts were with those brave men and women, who were not with them that day. He would say they gave their all in a cause that could be summed up in four words: Justice, Opportunity, Strength and Faith. Justice because they believed in the justice of their cause; Opportunity because they saw the chance to make their country safe and great; Strength as it applied to

the chance to make their country safe and great; Strength as it applied to their physical and mental make-up; and Faith in an undying belief in the future of their great country.

Continuing Mr. Hogan said those four words applied to those who are left to carry on the heritage. Justice meant economic and social justice; in other words a "fair-go" for all in economic spheres and equality of man in his social outlook. Opportunity should mean to work to earn and derive some spiritual and cultural development. That opportunity must be open to all. Strength—to be strong in the sense of those glorious dead whose death they commemorated that day. They must realise that their first objective must be more sons and daughters to populate this fair land. There must be greater discipline in their habits and their actions, for self-discipline is strength, and we needed strength to adjust our lives to the needs of an outnumbered nation. We must aim for the complete restoration of family life. Finally, the fourth word, "Faith." Our national moral must be raised on a complete faith in the future of Our Country. We must be prepared to fight and die if need be for the upholding of Christian ideals. Were not these the ideals of those whose names adorn the Memorial Gates. Those Gallant Dead did not fail us. Let each remember as he glanced at this beautiful monument to the brave, that what we needed was an United Australia free from jealousies, with less beers and bets and built on Justice Opportunity, Strength and a sincere belief in the Christian way of life.

Hymn, "Lead Kindly Light."

DEDICATION SERVICE

At this stage the proceedings were handed over to the Rev. Kerdel to conduct the Dedication Ceremony and religious service in connection with the unveiling of the Memorial Tablets. When the draped flags were drawn aside by the Rev. Kerdel, the following names were seen on the tablets.

1914-18: H. Baxter, W. Everitt, G. A. Finley, H. Hennessey, A. P. Newson, H. Warby, J. R. Rhodes.

1939-45: A. J. Clifton, J. Cotton, R. Cotton, J. Elmy, W. Gavel, R. Hinton, J. D. Maskus, J. W. Maskus, F. J. Oakroot, J. Painting, D. Williams, J. Withers, M. Waugh.

"Last Post" was sounded on the bugle by Mr. W. Burnard.

Then the chairman called for two minutes' silence, the singing of "The Recessional" and the sounding of the bugle call "Reveille."

OFFICIAL OPENING OF MEMORIAL GATES AND CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

Mr. J. Cliff was invited to perform the official opening of the Memorial Gates and Children's Playground.

Gates and Children's Playground. This was done by untying the coloured streamers and pushing open the gates.

Mr. Cliff said he appreciated the honour. Anything he had done to assist the people of Whitton and district in their desire to erect that memorial, he considered a privilege and duty. A privilege to have had the opportunity to assist, and a duty, that they as members of the community owed to each other. Too often they may be prone to be critical of the efforts of others, without being in any way helpful or constructive.

Continuing, Mr. Cliff said that sometimes it was said that the erection of Memorial Gates served no useful purpose, because interest waned and the memorial suffered through lack of maintenance. However, from his knowledge of the people of this district, he knew that such would not be allowed to happen. Great interest had been taken in its erection and he knew the interest in the Memorial would continue until they had a beautiful park befitting the memory of those for whom the park had been created. When the children pass through the gates to the Memorial Playground, they may perhaps pause to think that those men who paid the supreme sacrifice in two world wars, sacrificed their lives that we may continue to enjoy the heritage of freedom we, at times so unthinkingly accept. As the children grow to man and womanhood, we hope they will with pride, take upon themselves the task of beautifying the surrounds of this Memorial and maintain them in a manner worthy of those who Gave their All.

The assemblage then sang "Advance Australia Fair," accompanied by the Band.

As that concluded the ceremony the chairman invited the public to move towards the gates, whilst the

children raced to the playground. Mr. McAuliffe was active taking final shots, to complete the coloured film that was commenced at the Whitton Easter Monday Gymkhana and Procession. The chairman announced that the completed film would be handed by the Memorial Committee to the people of Whitton to be handed down to posterity.

Five life members of the Whitton Red Cross were asked to stand in front of the gates, whilst a picture was taken. These ladies were Mrs. J. Painting, Mrs. T. Williams, Mrs. J. Asmus, Mrs. O. de Marniel and Miss A. Thompson.

Whilst all this photographing was taking place, the Band continued rendering very nice music. Bandmaster Foran and the bandsmen are to be complimented on the very nice

part they took in the afternoon's proceedings. They certainly helped with the playing, the public to sing the hymns and "Advance Australia Fair," whilst their music prior to and at the conclusion of the ceremony was greatly appreciated and added much to the enjoyableness of the afternoon. Amongst those present was Mr. T. Napthali, president of the Leeton Band Board, as well as some members of the Board.

AFTERNOON TEA

With their customary hospitality, the women of Whitton put on afternoon tea, which was served to the multitude in the Whitton School of Arts. Cakes that would take prizes in any show, were placed on the tables. Beautiful chocolate and cream sandwich cakes, others adorned with strawberries and cream; rich fillings; also tasty meat and bread sandwiches and hot cups of tea. This afternoon tea was greatly appreciated by one and all, particularly those who had travelled such long distances as from Narrandera, Leeton, Griffith and Darlington Point.