ANZAC HOSTEL

Can you pick the photo with the Prince of Wales who visited 5th June 1920?

As the world commemorates the centenary of WW1, we have on our doorstep a living history of the aftermath of that war & the one that followed. The result of which so many damaged returned servicemen required permanent care.

The vast media coverage of this commemoration also enables the younger generations an insight into the harsh realities of war.

Below is a brief history of Anzac Hostel together with some photos of the property at the time. You may well recognise some of the rooms & different areas.

The Repatriation Department opened Anzac Hostel on the 5th July 1919 & provided a comfortable & less institutional style of care for permanently disables veterans of the First World War. The purchase of “Kamesburgh” was made possible through a 25,000 pound charitable donation from the Baillieu brothers, who saw to it that building was properly fitted out for the care of permanently invalided ex-servicemen.

Seven nursing staff were employed under the charge of Matron Catherine Munro to care for 25 residents at a time & four gardeners kept the grounds. The Repatriation Department also constructed an occupational therapy centre & a mortuary.

After 1945 Anzac Hostel became the home to the first of many Second World War disabled veterans until its closure on 30th June 1995.

The property was transferred to the City of Bayside under the condition a new hostel for veterans would be built on the grounds. The new Anzac Hostel was opened on the 27th July 1998 & Anzac has continued to provide care for disabled servicemen since 1919.

Kamesburgh was built in 1874 & has an interesting history. Should anyone be interested in this information, archives hold a comprehensive file.

In April this year 25 unmarked graves of servicemen in Brighton Cemetery were identified.

A group of volunteer historians researched for four years to uncover the details & identity of these soldiers. It remains a mystery why they were buried in unadorned graves, however it was possible that the lack of communication in those early days or as a result of post-traumatic stress & losing touch with family may be the reason.

It is thought that most of these servicemen came from nearby Caulfield Repatriation Hospital or Mont Park Asylum.

Following approval by the Office of Australian War Graves, the Department of Veterans Affairs & Australian War Graves arranged for new graves with military plaques to acknowledge their service & to mark them as official war graves.

The RSL conducted a dedication service at the Brighton Cemetery on the 14th April 2014.
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In honour of the brave men who fought in the Great War of 1914–1918. This property was provided by the Commonwealth of Australia from the donation of William Lawrence Baillieu and his brothers for the use of incapacitated soldiers opened by the State Governor His Excellency Sir Arthur Lyttelton Stanley K.G.M.G. 5th July 1919.