Back to Saints’ 2012

On Saturday, 15th September, a number of Old Bathurstians came back to the school for three different events.

Firstly was the dedication of the original Marsden gates which were moved over to the front of Marsden House. A number of MOGs (Marsden Old Girls) were present for the occasion. A special thanks must go to Shirley Burrow and James Pirie for seeing this project through over many months. The gates are magnificent and have been placed in front of the Marsden Boarding House.

The OBU Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday afternoon and the new President of the Union is Anne Llewellyn whose association with the school spans three generations. The Treasurer is David Provost who has looked after our money for a number of years. His wise investments and professional expertise has been invaluable. The Secretary is Memory Sanders and she is being assisted by Jayne Miller whose energy and enthusiasm for anything All Saints’ will be very valuable.

The Back to Saints’ dinner was attended by over 90 guests from the 1942, 1952, 1962, 1972, 1982, 1992 and 2002 cohorts. It was a great evening and hopefully enjoyed by all. Let us hope that those who could not come will be able to attend the next 10 year reunion or those in between. Thanks to Alliance Catering and the school students who assisted on the night.
The Story of Lt.Col. Clive Wentworth THOMPSON BSC MB CHM MC DSO

(By kind permission of Professor Elizabeth Elliott and Radius - Volume 22 Number 2, June 2008)

Clive Thompson was born in Bathurst on the 20th September 1882. He went to the University of Sydney to enter in Science in 1902 and lived in St Andrew’s College. He seemed to enjoy his sport more than taking to learning and in 1905 he decided on a university education and returned to land.

In 1908 he renewed his enthusiasm for his science and became energetic and devoted to the cause. He graduated in 1911 with a Bachelor of Science and thenHonours in 1913 with MB and ChB.

Whilst a Junior Resident Medical Officer at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, he became a Captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps and President of the Sydney University Medical Society.

At the outbreak of war in 1914, Clive was the first RMO to enlist with the 1st Bn. in the 1st Infantry Brigade in the A.I.F. Clive went to Egypt.

He was in the first landings on ANZAC Cove on the first day of the Gallipoli campaign in 1915.

The recalling of events and a subsequent letter to his mother reads… “The appearance of the country is most forbidding and would leave you to believe it was impregnable. There is a narrow beach backed by precipitous hills about 200 feet high, up which a few zig-zag paths were to be observed… Once on shore the Turks were using machine gun and rifle fire to great effect. Our casualties were extremely heavy, particularly among the Officers. I believe that about 70% of these were out of action by the end of the day. The medical units were unable to keep pace with the work.”

Gallipoli, May 13, 1915. … “After the first 4 days, due to lack of sleep and to hard work and the cumulative effect of attending to large numbers of wounded, many of them hopelessly maimed, and suffering from hideous wounds, I became quite nervous. I felt that if the chance had offered I would have gone away and deserted the whole concern. Fortunately, the situation eased, this enabled me to get some sleep, and now I do not know when I felt better.”

In a further letter to his mother… Gallipoli, June, 1915. “We were glad to get out of the trenches where it was impossible to keep clean. A quart of water per day was allowed for all purposes. The food consists of biscuits (wonderfully hard), bully beef (sometimes replaced by tinned Irish stew), cheese, bacon and jam. The men do wonderfully on this diet. You always expect a great deal of excitement and incident in war. This is the most boring experience imaginable. The same old thing every day. A few casualties which are regarded in the most prosaic manner by everybody. Fatalities are of little moment here and after a few laudatory remarks, you never hear the deceased individual mentioned. War totally alters your valuation of life.”

Clive remained at Gallipoli for the eight month campaign. He was promoted to Major in 1916 and appointed DADMS to the 4th Aust. Auxiliary Hospital. He went to France and participated in the battles of Ypres and the Somme and the attack on the Hindenburg Line. During 1917-18 he was promoted to Lt.Col. and commander of the 14th Australian Field Ambulance. He was twice wounded in action and in 1917 was transferred to London for treatment but he returned to France and resumed his command.

In January 1918 he was temporarily detached from the Field Ambulance to be Commandant of the Australian Corps School for Medical Officers, to conduct 10-day courses for 20 Officers at a time.

Clive developed a standardised Advance Dressing Station of three wooden huts, built in sections, transportable on three lorries and capable of “leap-frogging”.

Clive estimated that 2% of casualties held in forward posts could not undertake the long evacuation to surgical facilities. He introduced anaesthetic and resuscitation equipment to the Field Ambulance so that these men could be stabilised before evacuation; he further recommended that an operating team be provided at a Divisional location for deployment forward, as necessary.

This was an Australian “first”. The concept was developed by the Australian Army Medical Corps and then by the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Clive was one of Australia’s most highly awarded doctors in WW 1. In 1916 he received the Military Cross for “Conspicuous Bravery” at Gallipoli.

In 1919 the King awarded Clive the “Distinguished Service Order” … The Citation stated… “He showed great gallantry; initiative and organising ability throughout this trying period. He regularly visited all advanced medical posts, and by his tact and courage and experience was instrumental in co-ordinating the medical arrangements of his own Division and the American Division operating with us”.

The French Government awarded Clive “The Medal de la Reconnaissance Francaise” … “For distinguished conduct during the bombardment of the French town of Bailloul”.

Clive was also awarded the Volunteer Decoration of the Colonial Auxiliary Forces, promoted Brevet Major for…services in the field and five times mentioned in despatches…For Conspicuous Service.

It is said that Clive was… “a dashing soldier, blonde, good looking and over 6 feet tall, lightly built and a keen all-round sportsman. He was cynical, kindly and with a dry caustic humour. He was the best of comrades at Gallipoli. To his men he was a strict disciplinarian. No shriner dared face him, but from the day he landed on the peninsula his men respected and admired him. He was always straight and game, for every minute of every day, unswerving in his affections and his friendships, yet with a cutting irony for those he disliked. He was an excellent doctor and a better soldier, and greater than either - a man.”

After the war, in 1918, Clive held medical officer positions at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, then Crown Street Women’s Hospital.

In 1919 he was Acting Medical Superintendent at RAHC and completed a Masters in Surgery from the University of Sydney.

He was a GP in Bathurst; Honorary Surgeon at Bathurst District Hospital; Honorary Superintendent at Bathurst Red Cross Hospital; and President of the Western Medical Association.

Clive moved to Newcastle in 1926 and worked as a GP in Hamilton and Honorary Assistant Surgeon at Newcastle Hospital.

In 1928, Clive married May Davis. They had two children, Jane and William. Sadly, Clive died from rheumatic valve disease in 1941.

Clive’s granddaughters, Belinda Thompson (1985) and Sally Clifton (nee Thompson) (1982), both attended All Saints’ College as students in the 1980s. Sally returned to the College as a teacher for several years in the 1990s and Belinda is currently working at All Saints’ as the Senior School Secretary. Her daughter, Georgia Huxtable, who is Clive’s great granddaughter, is a student in Year 1.

(With kind thanks to Dr Bob Reid)