

## UK RUGBY TOUR 2009

The students at Townsville Grammar School are fortunate to have a dedicated staff who are prepared to organise and supervise a variety of sporting and educational tours both within Australia and overseas. One tour that encompasses both sporting and educational values is the Rugby tour that travels to the United Kingdom every two years. In the most recent tour, undertaken during the last vacation the boys were fortunate to visit, among a variety of castles and cathedrals, the battlefields of the Somme and to have a guided tour around Oxford University. The visit to the Somme and to Oxford has a close association with important facets of our School history.



On the tour of the Somme the boys had the opportunity to attend the moving evening service at the Menin Gate in Ypres. While there they found the name of **Andrew Cameron KNEATH [1913]**. Andrew had been a boarder from Bowen so a photograph was taken of the four boys from Bowen who toured studying the name on the Memorial. Killed at age twenty, Andrew Kneath was one of the youngest Past Grammarians killed in World War I. The boys were also fortunate to locate the graves of **Charles Stuart CRAIES [1906]** and **Charles Chalmers JAMESON [1913]**. Craies is buried at Mouquet Farm, Pozieres while Jameson is buried at the Ploegsteert Cemetery in Belgium. Jameson was the son of Judge Jameson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees from 1911-15 and a great supporter of the School. On a more poignant note **Ben CALEO [12/09]**, touring with the team, managed to locate the grave of his great-grandfather.

The team was also fortunate to tour the site of Hill 60 where a crucial battle took place. Members of the School community are probably aware that a film about Hill 60 has just been shot in Townsville but what is probably not known is that two past students played a crucial role in that battle. **Lt-Col Albert Cecil FEWTRELL [1903]** was the Officer commanding the troops at the battle and was awarded the DSO for his contribution. After the war he was made a Commander of the Order of Bath; the highest award achieved by a Past Grammarian. **Major James Douglas HENRY [1896]** was the Officer in charge of the Queensland Mining Corps and was responsible for instilling discipline among the ranks. He was awarded the DSO and OBE [Military] and was mentioned in Dispatches on three occasions. He had previously been awarded the Queens Medal for Gallantry during the Boer War in South Africa [1899-1900].

While in England the boys visited Oxford University, ostensibly to visit the Black Oxford Exhibition and see the display on **George HALL [1910]**, our first Rhodes Scholar. The Exhibition had been arranged to celebrate the achievements of non-whites who had been awarded Rhodes Scholarships. Unfortunately, the Exhibition did not take place so the boys had a quick tour of Rhodes House where they came across a Memorial Honour Board honouring those Rhodes Scholars who lost their lives in wars. Many of the boy boarders were pleased to find the name of **Chester PARKER [1934]** who went missing in 1942 while serving as Second in Command of the HM Submarine *Thorn*. Chester Parker was a boarder from Collinsvale and was Dux of the School, Head Prefect and winner of the Rugby Prize in 1934. He attended Queensland University where he achieved brilliant academic results and rose to be President of the Student Union. As a consequence he became Queensland's Rhodes Scholar in 1938. He graduated in law at Oxford and then joined the Royal Navy. At the time of his enlistment he wrote home to his brother Athol saying: *"Though it may seem a bit idealistic and old fashioned, I'm rather passionately convinced of the necessity of fighting Hitlerism."*

While our Rugby team was touring France and England, Pimlico State High School students under the leadership of Mike Foster, a former boarder master at Grammar, toured the battlefields of Turkey and visited war grave sites in Thailand and Changi in Singapore. In order to give the Pimlico students a closer interest in the tour of Gallipoli Mike Foster gave them a list of former Townsville citizens to research. Grammar was able to help with the names of six people: **J.F. WALSH [1906]**, **H.W. TILLIDGE [1905]**, **J.I. SMITH [1909]**, the brothers **H.D. FOOT [1899]** and **A.M. FOOT [1908]** and **D.N. MACGREGOR [Staff]**. MacGregor was killed in the first landing on April 25 while Walsh was killed two days later.



It is pleasing to report that the Pimlico students were able to find the graves and Memorials of all the six Grammarians killed and Mike Foster reports that his students were all able to do some research on all six. They were particularly moved by the letters that Alexander Foot wrote home describing his experiences, especially the letter written the day before he was killed. It is interesting to note that Alexander Foot left £20 in his will in order that the School up-date the tennis courts. Whenever a member of the School community is next in the Principal's office they should look at the medals presented by the Foot family to the School. A section of the main boarding house has been named after the Foot brothers.

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