

EXTENDING

'Tis use alone that sanctifies expense,
And splendour borrows all her rays from sense.

Alexander Pope, *Epistles to several persons: Lord Burlington* (1731)

The advent of many new Fellows after the war and of anaesthetists with the founding of the Faculty, the College's entry into south-east Asia and a growing concern with surgical teaching combined to make the existing building inadequate. Yet revenue from subscriptions was not enough to allow much in the way of development.

The problem was approached from two angles: the first, to rearrange the existing space so as to provide better facilities and the second, to build up funds to allow further development. The second of these was slower of achievement, and it is the alterations and improvements within the existing building that may be examined for a start.

During the war, as we have seen, the Red Cross occupied the building to a degree that caused it to be regarded as 'the Red Cross building'. After the College regained full occupation, its use of the space came to resemble the Mad Hatter's tea party. The main office was used for library storage, and the original Council room had become a general office. The Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria occupied attic space which was being eyed by the library. And the basement (originally designed as a dissecting room, with sloping concrete floor) had never achieved its intended function and was simply 'an unsightly storage area'.¹ Its ugliness was compounded by the presence of a drain in the floor.

The departure of the Anti-Cancer Council freed up this log-jam. The library extension went to the attic, the general office returned to its logical place and, by way of a bonus, the basement was given a level floor and a facelift to fit it for use as an examination hall (as well as the anaesthetic museum). Suddenly the old Council room became available for some other use. The growth of the College and of air travel meant that Fellows were more often in the building, and it was decided to develop this space as a Fellows' lounge.

At B.K. Rank's suggestion (in his Handbook summary he writes simply 'one of the Councillors') the Council saw the development of this space as an opportunity to pay tribute to W.A. Hailes – and



B.K. (later Sir Benjamin but universally 'Benny') Rank had much to do with refining the utilisation of the College's space. He later compiled a valuable guide to the items of historical and aesthetic interest.

A meeting of the archives committee in the Hailes Room in 2000.



through his name, also to recognise what Fellows of the College had contributed to the care of the sick and wounded in wartime. Hailes, as will be recalled, had been both Consulting Surgeon to the Australian Army and censor-in-chief of his College; he had been the architect of the two-part examination and had been prevented by his early death from realising his potential in the service of the College.

Friends and colleagues contributed £650 towards the furnishing of the Hailes Room, which was opened in September 1957 by Douglas Miller as president, with Mrs Hailes and her family in attendance. In his *Guide*, written, like the handbook summary, in 1966, Benny Rank modestly stated, 'The object of the Hailes Room is fully realised by its use and popularity for meetings, informal social functions and reception of College visitors.' A third of a century later his claim stands – indeed, a record of the events that have taken place in the Hailes Room, of the distinguished speakers who have come there during Council meetings alone, of the plans and strategems that have been rehearsed there, would in itself make quite an interesting book.

Such events take place against a background of some of the College's treasures: furniture, silver, art works. For many years Hailes himself was represented by a framed photograph over the fireplace: he looked wise, kind, shrewd. But in 1994, hard on the heels of the *Portraits* book, the College received an oil painting of Hailes in his Fellow's gown. (Events always conspire to make a book outdated!) It is not, I feel, a very good painting: it makes him look huddled and defensive.

In 1955, during the presidency of Ivan Jose, two development funds (one for each country) were set up in the realisation that, although College finances were adequate for normal activities, there would need to be additional capital before the College could expand either operationally or structurally. Unfortunately there was, at the time,

no taxation relief available for donations or bequests, and the two funds languished.

In his 1957 Budget, however, Harold Holt as federal treasurer announced an amendment to Section 78 i (a) of the Income Tax Act. This listed the College as an institution in respect of which gifts in excess of £1 might be claimed as tax-deductible. Holt's decision must have pleased his prime minister, R.G. Menzies, who had secured the College its first 'tax break' through the courts. But Holt's decision did not help in New Zealand, and it had to be admitted, quite soon, that the concession had not enabled Fellows in Australia to achieve a great deal towards 'any significant expansion of College facilities and activities'.¹

The executive took advice from one W.J. Kilpatrick and a special Council meeting was held in August 1960, in Adelaide (the home of Leonard Lindon, who had succeeded Miller in the presidency the previous year). This took a far-reaching decision: to mount a full-scale public appeal, in both countries, with all the apparatus of national and regional committees – including businessmen and Fellows at all levels – necessary to make the project a success. It was an ambitious undertaking: in that year, the numerical strength of the College, surgeons and anaesthetists combined, topped 1100 for the first time.

In that same year, R.G. Casey, the Minister of External Affairs in the Menzies government, retired. He had surgical connexions, having married Maie, the daughter of Sir Charles 'Plevna' Ryan, a colourful Melbourne surgeon.² During the First World War, he had been decorated twice; in the Second, he became British Minister in Cairo and later governor of Bengal.³ At his retirement he became a life peer, and as the Right Honourable Lord Casey he became President



Lord Casey served as president of the Appeal which allowed the College building to be extended in the early 1960s. In 1962 he was admitted to the honorary Fellowship by Julian Orm Smith PRACS. Three years later he became governor-general of Australia.



Sir Harry Platt was president of the English College 1954-57; in 1961 he undertook a very successful high-pressure journey round Australia and New Zealand to promote the Appeal.

of the Appeal – a role in which, says Rank, he became most active and spared no effort on behalf of the College.

To launch the Appeal, the College invited Sir Harry Platt to visit Australasia. One of the few orthopaedic surgeons to have become president of one of the Royal Colleges, he served as the English College's first orthopaedic president 1954-57 and was, moreover, the first 'provincial' surgeon after Moynihan to break the London stranglehold.

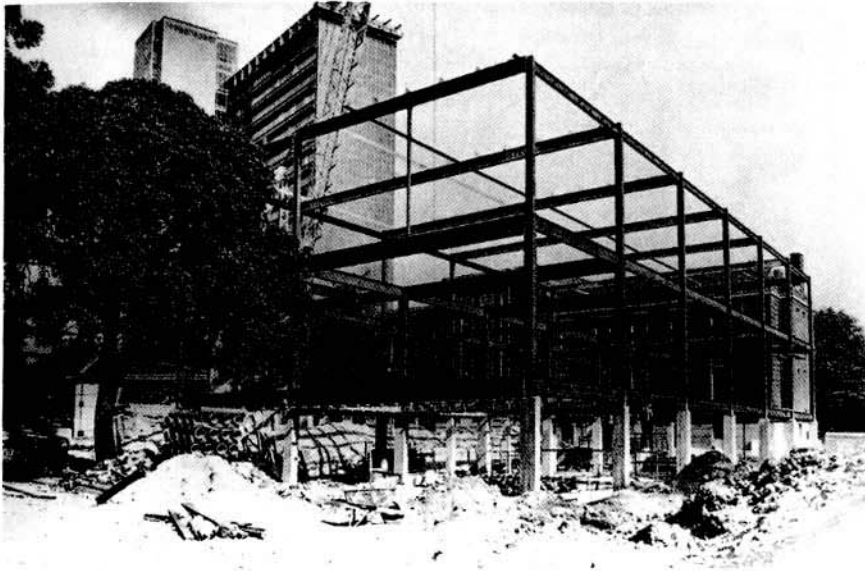
Writing many years later to commemorate Sir Harry's 100th birthday, Hugh Barry of Sydney (who was in the third year of his Council term at the time of the Platt visit) recalled:

Sir Harry accepted the invitation with his usual enthusiasm and spent four weeks travelling widely in Australia and New Zealand, visiting all the capital cities in Australia and both islands of New Zealand. A very busy programme was arranged for him and he spoke almost daily to meetings and on the radio. Sir Harry stressed the importance of cooperation between all branches of surgery and encouraged Australians to maintain their own College as the centre of surgical excellence. Before returning home he was elected to the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.⁴

The honorary Fellowship was conferred on 15 November 1961; Sir Harry was then 75 years young. His bruising schedule, and Lord Casey's presiding influence, combined with the zeal of committees of Fellows and their business associates to make the appeal an undoubted success in a period when there was already a surfeit of appeals. It raised £304,000, of which some £85,000 came from Fellows themselves, and it did so with expenses of only £11,000, a creditably low figure.

In the process the College became better known and appreciated 'by business interests and the public at large', as Rank wrote four years later. It would build on this awareness before the decade was out. Meanwhile, it hastened to show its appreciation of Lord Casey's help and standing, admitting him to honorary Fellowship on 18 October 1962. Three years later he became governor-general of Australia.⁵

The Council set aside £200,000 to provide income for funding the teaching of the basic sciences (relating to both surgery and anaesthesia) and subsidised the remaining £100,000 with an equal amount from accumulated funds to finance an extension to the College building. It amalgamated the Appeal and pre-existing development funds into one all-embracing 'Development Fund'. It was duly appreciative when the New Zealand committee decided that any money over and above £NZ40,000, raised in New Zealand, would be allocated to the building extension project - but it has, on occasion, needed to be reminded that the £40,000 itself was 'ring-fenced' for basic science education projects in New Zealand! (Fortunately, the New Zealand archives had gathered an Appeal brochure which detailed this safeguard.) But,



The western wing of the extended College was designed to accommodate Melbourne-centred educational activities. This view shows it at the framing stage and is taken from about the same position as the view (chapter 2) of the original College building under construction.

in all seriousness it was, and remains, a good exercise in Anzac collaboration.

Leighton Irwin's original plan had provided for the subsequent building of a great hall, projecting north from the central foyer to form the stem of a 'T'. However, by the early 1960s the Council's concerns were as much with teaching, administration and research as with assembly, and the concept that now emerged was one of two wings, capable in time of being linked to form a quadrangle.

As designed, the two wings reflect the College's preoccupations of the period. The 1966 Handbook described them thus:

The West Wing, along Spring Street, is a three-storied building which provides modern laboratory facilities for Anatomy and Pathology, a large Museum, a Seminar Room, Tutors' Rooms, Office and Storage space and a Caretaker's Flat. The upper floor will provide space for future development of research activities.

The East Wing, fronting Nicholson Street, provides a large modern lecture hall with associated facilities. A cloister system unites these additions in harmony with the existing building.

The caretaker's flat is one of the few areas in the west wing to retain its intended function (but the caretaker is now the building services manager, and this may be taken as evidence of evolution of a different sort).

Tenders for the extensions were called in March 1963: the contract went to A.R.P. Crow and Sons Ltd in the sum of £176,325.⁶ Work commenced in August, and on 6 March 1964 the College's old friend Sir Robert Menzies laid the foundation stone. Eight months later the building was handed over by the contractors – not bad going for a substantial job – and on 26 February 1965 the College's other old



On the eastern side is the Great Hall, which has proved to be too large for everyday use, but too small for major meetings. Most recently it has shown itself to be an asbestos hazard.



friend, Lord Casey, performed the official opening 'before a distinguished audience which filled the new hall'.

It has to be allowed that the great hall has not been full too often since, and it is the nearest to a white elephant of all the elements in the 1960s design. The growth in the size of the College over the past generation has been such that public or international events demand an even bigger auditorium, while most private and local ones cannot

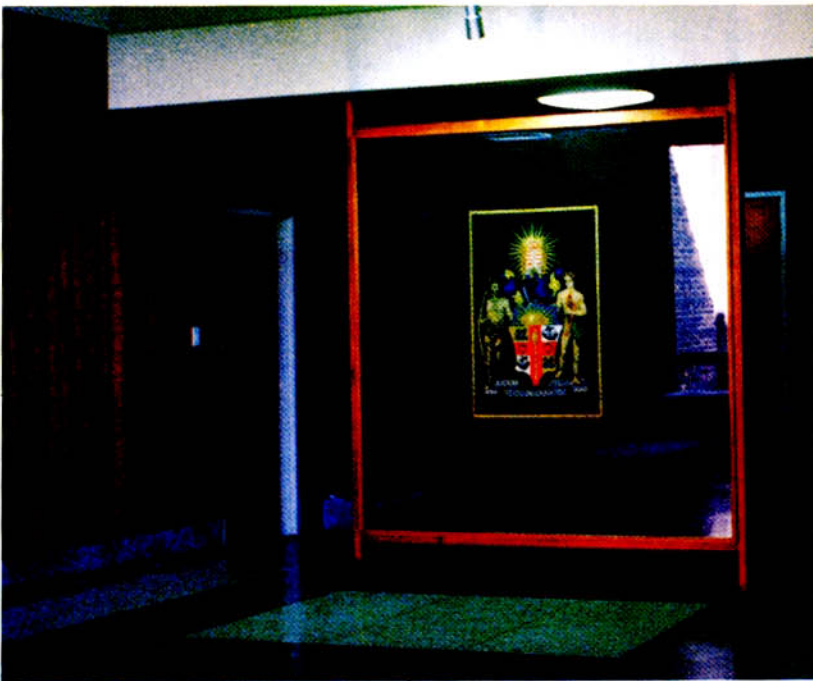
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fill the hall. Yet the hall provided something the College could hardly do without, it had a special character that could bless an occasion of suitable size – and it has shown off to advantage many of the College's portraits.

The facilities in the west wing have proved much more flexible and, with modest alterations, have coped with the needs of the library on the top floor, of the College archives in the lowest floor and of a multitude of committees and projects in between. In this new century, though, the College is again straining at its seams, and during the 1990s the Council gave regular consideration to future building.

The quadrilateral plot of land on which the College is situated had been well cared for under the original dispensation. Now it was named 'College of Surgeons Gardens' by the College's titular landlord (the Department of Education, on the site of whose former high school the College was built), and the naming was announced at the opening of the extensions. Thereupon various projects were undertaken, aimed at beautifying the College's surroundings still further.

The City Council, whose gardeners had done such a good job over the years, hastened to introduce trees to replace those which had fallen victim to the building project, and during the winter of 1965 one of these, an oak, was planted by Orm Smith, whose associations had been so diverse over so many years, and whose presidency (1962-64) had covered most of the building extensions.⁷ With his family he returned the compliment in 1967 by presenting to the College a representation of its arms, made by the Victorian Embroiderers' Guild and mounted so as to form a screen at the entrance to the great hall.



The screen at the entrance to the Great Hall displays a tapestry of the College arms, the gift of Julian Orm Smith and his family.

The Burnell fountain was the gift of the family of Glen Howard Burnell (Fellow 1929). His widow, Mary Burnell, had been Dean of the Faculty of Anaesthetists in 1966.



Noel Cass was Dean at the time of its presentation in 1969.



In 1969 the memorial fountain was placed in the 'courtyard' formed by the two new wings. This was the gift of Dr Mary Burnell and her family, in memory of her late husband Glen Burnell. He had been a Fellow for 25 years at the time of his death, and his widow was a recent Dean of the Faculty. This bronze grouping, entitled 'Forest Landscape', was handed over in a ceremony at the time of the October Council meeting, attended by the president (now P.J. Kenny) and Council, the current dean, N.M. Cass, and local members of the Board of Faculty, and the sculptor himself, the Victorian-born Stephen Walker. It is abstract enough to merit an explanatory note, which was provided in subsequent editions of the Handbook:

Some parts are reminiscent of heavy early morning dew dripping from overhanging branches, and of fertility and growth in the cycle of the seasons, and others of a mountain stream where the water babbles and flows freely.

In the furnishing of the original building in 1935 the Council table was the gift of the New Zealand Fellows – a large refectory-type table fashioned in *kauri* and bearing the legend HE TOHU AROHA.⁸ As the Council grew, not just to 16 but by the further addition of two representatives of the Faculty (the Dean and vice-Dean), the perimeter of this original table became inadequate for such an assembly. It was therefore relocated in the Hailes room.

The Council room, upstairs at the south-east corner of the building, established after the extensions, was in process of being furnished when F.P. Furkert died. It was therefore decided that a further gift – but, once again, of a Council table – from the New Zealand Fellows would be appropriate, and that this could be a memorial for Furkert,



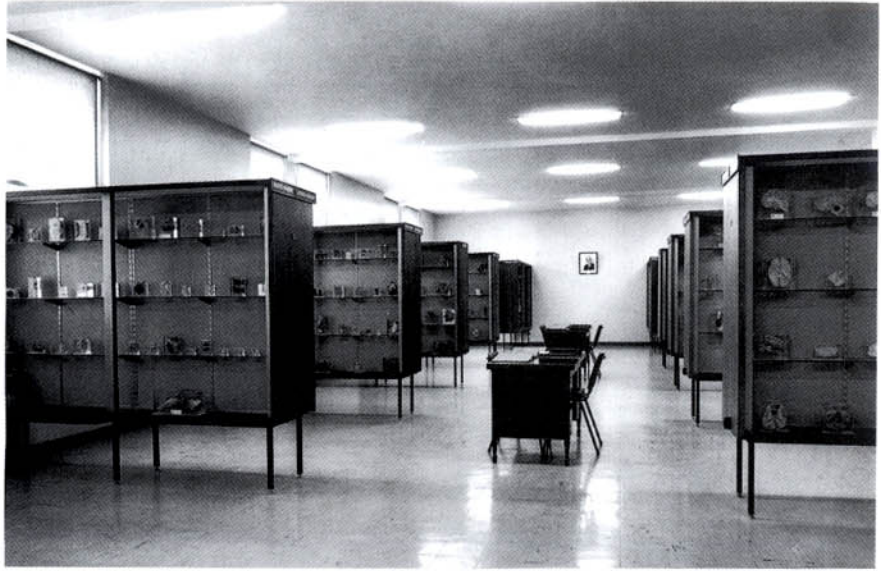
Tess Brophy (now Mrs Cramond) was Dean when the bookshelves in the Council room were presented by the Faculty of Anaesthetists. They house the College's greatest treasure, the historical volumes of the Cowlshaw collection.

who had sat at the previous table for his four Council years. The horseshoe mahogany table, built in segments and filling most of the room, did duty until the further enlargement of the Council in the early 1990s when, once again, New Zealand Fellows had a recently deceased colleague to commemorate. This was Richard Stewart, surgical scientist, mountaineer and recently chairman of the New Zealand committee, who died of motor neurone disease at a young age. The horseshoe magnet has now become a racetrack.

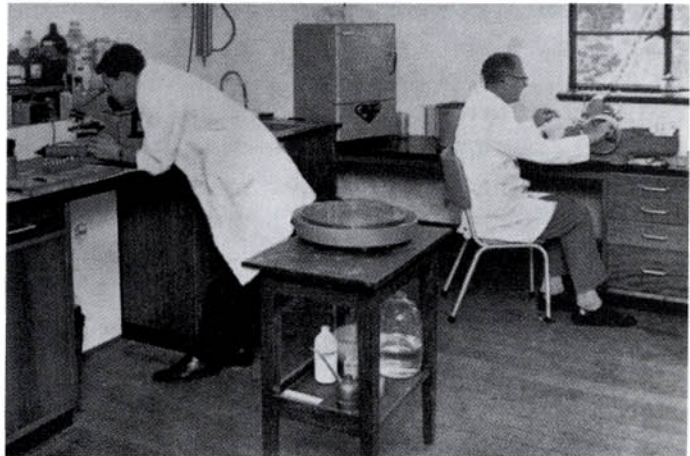
Another item of furniture in the Council room should be mentioned: the glass-fronted bookcases which cover the entrance wall and extend (below the windows) along each side of the room, were the gift of the Faculty during the term of office of Teresa Brophy (now Cramond) as dean. They contain the historical volumes of the Cowlshaw collection. It is pleasing, therefore, that Tess Cramond was one of the speakers at the first Cowlshaw symposium, and that the third symposium was able to be placed adjacent to the annual congresses of the Colleges of Surgeons and of Anaesthetists in the year 2000, so as to attract an anaesthetic contribution from Dr A.J. Newson.

The College wasted no time in staffing the basic science facilities in the new west wing: in 1962 it had appointed Professor E.W. Gault as curator of the museum. A 1935 Fellow, he had subsequently worked as a medical missionary in India.⁹ In 1965 he was joined in the Education Wing by a younger Fellow, F.J. Gray, as anatomy prosector (later renamed director of surgical anatomy). In 1968 Gault was succeeded as curator by a man whose name was to become a by-word in the College, G.W. Trinca, and Gray by W.L. Elrick.

Meanwhile, Howard Eddy's fellow-prisoner of war, I.C. Heinz, had been designated director of surgical pathology, and from 1967 the College had also boasted a professor of physiology, D.A. Coats,



In its early days the education wing housed laboratories for academic staff such as Professor E.W. Gault. It has adapted to the concept of widely dispersed activities.



whose successor in 1971, A. J. Day, was named director of surgical physiology.

The Education Wing had been visualised as a local equivalent of the Institute of Basic Sciences at the English College, but experience would show that the 'population base' in Australasia was too widespread to support so centralised a system. Like the short-lived College postgraduate school of surgery at Prince Henry's Hospital that had brought Grey Turner to Melbourne in 1937, it was a concept that did not transplant well.

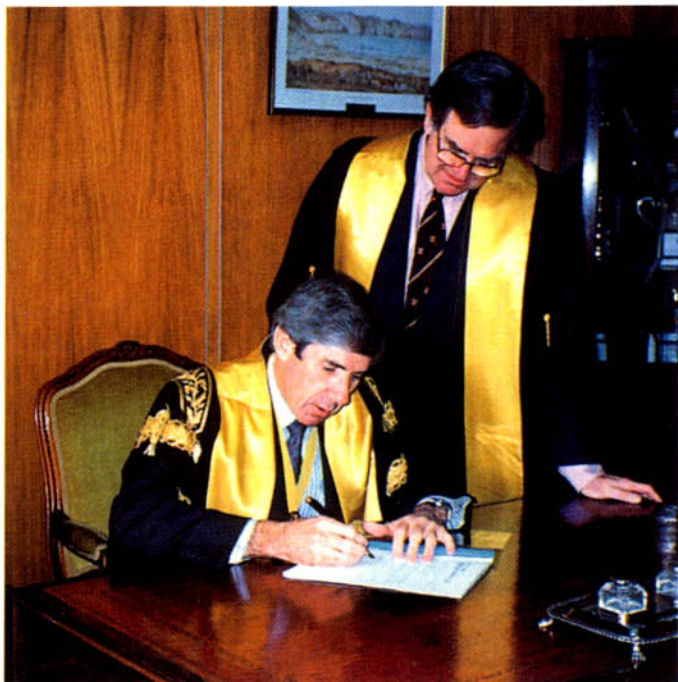
Another appointment in 1962 did, however, bring to the College one of its most durable and loyal servants. R.A. Chapman AASA was appointed secretary to the College (and Faculty) after spending a year as assistant to Wheeler. He devoted himself to the College and, taking up his position at a time when so many activities (not least the south-east Asian involvement) were developing, he became a key figure in



In 1962 R.A. Chapman became secretary of the College, which he would serve for more than a quarter of a century. He headed what became a durable team. From left; June Lehmann, Kerry Haywood, Ray Chapman, June Botica. Prior to his retirement he was elected to Fellowship.

its evolution – and to the Asian candidates for whom he played the role of ‘good shepherd’ during their examinations, he *was* the College.¹⁰ Two years before his retirement and after 25 years in harness – and already a Fellow of the Faculty – he was elected to Fellowship of the College in June 1987.

It will be recalled that the original lease, signed on 14 April 1932, was for fifty years at a peppercorn rental, with the option of renewal for another fifty years. With the approach of 1982, the Council set about taking up this option, and it was at the very point of having the



On 17 June 1992 the president, J.C. Hanrahan, and treasurer, J.P. Royle, signed a contract to purchase the Spring Street property.



Charles Snodgrass 'Plevna' Ryan was a colourful Melbourne surgeon whose daughter, Maie, became Lady Casey.



During his vice-regal term Lord Casey visited the College; he is seen at the entrance with the president, B.K. Rank.

appropriate documents signed when a change of government saw the advent of an administration which identified surgeons with greed and wealth, and saw no reason to extend concessions to them. It was a total reversal of the processes of fifty years earlier, when a change of government brought more favourable terms.

The matter of the College's entitlements became muddled, the courses open to it a range of unattractive options. After an uncertain decade – in which at times the College even contemplated walking away from an intolerable situation, but in the end could not face the idea of abandoning an elegant building into which had gone so much loyalty and hope¹¹ – a solution was achieved only by the purchase of the site and building for \$4.2 million. The purchase documents were signed off on 17 June 1992, almost exactly 60 years after the original lease. A decade of uncertainty was over, and at least the College was rescued from the caprice of politics.

NOTES

1. It was so described by B.K. Rank in his historical summary for the 1966 Handbook.

2. In 1875 Ryan, recently graduated and short of funds, answered a Turkish Government advertisement for military surgeons to serve in the war against Tsarist Russia; in 1877 he survived the sieges of Plevna and Erzerum and was decorated with the orders of the Osmanieh and the Medjidie. He and Howse were together at Gallipoli, Howse succeeding him as ADMS of the Australian 1st Division when Ryan became clinical adviser to the ANZAC Corps.

Ryan received Major-General W.T. Bridges as a patient when Bridges, commanding 1 AIF at Gallipoli, was wounded by a sniper's bullet in the groin. He claimed that he could have saved Bridges' life had he been allowed to amputate. Compton Mackenzie described the chagrin of a British staff officer who told a couple of Diggers of Bridges' posthumous KCMG, and received the reply, 'Won't do him much good where he is now, will it, mate?'

3. Harold Macmillan, in his *War Diaries*, (reminiscences which may be said to 'dance like a butterfly, sting like a bee') describes meeting Casey in Cairo on 3 March 1943: 'He is *very* pleasant – but not, I think, very clever. Mrs Casey is, though.'

4. Barry, HC (1986) *J Bone Jt Surg.* 68-B: 696.

5. Two years after Casey's appointment, the unusual situation was created where the governors-general of both Australia and New Zealand were honorary Fellows of the College. Sir Arthur Porritt, New Zealand expatriate, Olympic medallist, one of Sir Harry Platt's successors as president of the English College, had been made an honorary Fellow in February 1961, when he visited Australasia as outgoing president of the BMA. In 1967 he became governor-general of New Zealand, being made a life peer at the end of his term.

6. I am informed by Scotty Macleish that the contract broke the firm.

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7. To mark the jubilee of the College in 1977 Mrs Barbara Ewen, wife of the New Zealand committee chairman, K.M. Ewen, planted a *kauri* tree close to the Orm Smith planting. The *kauri* did not long survive.

8. The inscription may be loosely translated 'as between brothers, with affection'.

9. His academic qualifications were imposing: BSc, MD, MS, FRACS, MCPA, FCPATH.

10. His role as a supporter of examination candidates was not confined to south-east Asia. The saga of Chapman and the Madman, though not widely known perhaps, is a significant part of College folklore. As Ray Chapman himself recalls it,

It was a Saturday afternoon at the time of a Final Examination and we were examining in Surgical Pathology and Operative Surgery in the specialties. About mid afternoon I was told of an intruder in the Gents' Toilet who claimed to have a weapon and who was menacing candidates. I asked someone to find Jeff Griffiths [the caretaker who became building services manager] and get him to ring the police. I went up to the toilet and engaged the person in conversation. It was clear that he was not a disgruntled candidate but rather someone perhaps under the influence of drugs with an imagined grudge against doctors.

I gradually walked him out into the hall and towards the front door hoping that the police would appear. I felt a lot happier when I led him out to the front steps. After what seemed an eternity the police arrived and took him away. I informed the Examiners of the additional strain the candidate had endured and they agreed to give him time to recover.

The story has a happy ending in that the candidate passed and I had added a new clause to my terms of appointment - 'Restraining of angry Visitors'.

11. The building by now enjoyed a Heritage listing, and its purchase required a special Enabling Act of the Victorian Parliament. Apart from its negotiations with the State government and the city council, the College had to convince the 'Land Monitor' (an independent watchdog on the sale of government assets) that it was paying a realistic price, and persuade the Historic Buildings Council that the heritage building would not suffer because of the transfer of the property - from the State to the College that had erected it!



At the jubilee meeting in 1977 Mrs Barbara Ewen, wife of the then chairman of the New Zealand committee, K.M. Ewen, planted a *kauri* tree. She is being assisted by the then president, Bill (shortly Sir Edward) Hughes.



At the opening of the Perth CTEC facility in April 2000, Her Majesty the Queen was greeted by the College's newly appointed chief executive, Dr Vin Massaro.