

# Treasure hunting in ANZAC places

How well do you know your local memorial place? What does it tell you about its people of the past?

This article suggests how to prepare for an on-site interpretative session at an ANZAC memorial place. It also provides an example from a session for a senior primary school class of a small Wimmera town. It could be used as a model for a similar session to delve into your town memorial's story.

## **Preparation:**

### 1. Site visit-

Look at everything there and its organisation  
- not just statues and guns,  
but plants,  
buildings  
and pathways

### 2. Take photos for further research and to create activities for the field session.

### 3. Research the origins of it all:

talk to old timers,  
use local papers,  
a local Museum  
and TROVE (on-line) for the National Archives of Australia .

### 4. Develop:

1. an active session from this research
2. narratives from the past, from which to imagine, and empathize with, the place's creation
3. a Key Question to reveal a message from the past

### 5. Practicalities

1. how to come, from which direction, how long to stay
2. a pathway through the place, activities, props

### 6. Reflection –

Every ANZAC memorial site was built by its local community, so is a window onto their 'war-view'.  
Try to discover this.  
Expect it to differ between places.

The **following example** of such a place had in its ANZAC memorial garden:

An entrance banner  
Pathways linking its parts  
a stone Memorial to WW2 and later wars  
flagpole  
a WW2 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial plaque  
a Great War Remembrance statue,  
Aleppo pine memorial stone  
New Aleppo Pine  
Rose garden

I also found and photographed in the local museum : a school honour roll and ANZAC photo.

The activity session plan:

## We're going on a Treasure Hunt!

### Approach -

We walked in single file, counting steps. - The children arrived quietly in a respectful mood.

### Direction -

We entered by the original entrance (from research), not today's rose garden arch, so the perspective was from the past.

### Imagine-

1918 - Local school children set up these gardens as an avenue of Cotton Palms – they were cheap!

Each one was named for a soldier lost from the district.

Everyone had a family member and/or friend who did not return home.

### Empathise

Someone you loved was 'planted' here. Why grow living things to remember them? What would it feel like to go along this main street everyday,... as the trees grew?

### Activity

Treasure Hunt (see sheet):

prepared from my photos;

edited a little and in B&W so that they were not too easy to find!

Clues – Sizes and shapes (Mathematics) and words (English).

When no one found the smallest item, I sent them all back in different directions to search until someone found "Lest we forget", and called the others over.

Intrigue- one item was not actually here! I had brought an old photo of an ANZAC soldier from the Museum, so I could tell his story.

### Discussion -

(seated on rugs I'd brought down for comfort),

What items did they expect to find, but didn't?

Answer - There is no soldier, nor big gun, nor word 'ANZAC' here.

### Reflect

What does all this tell you about the people of this town who built this? This leads into my **Key question** "**What was the message from the past to the future about the Great War here?**"

Additional clues so you can answer too:

The park is called "Memorial Avenue".

The Great War Statue is titled "Remembrance".

The photo from the Museum was on a highly decorated plaque, designed to be displayed and remembered.

The children felt that their town's ANZAC memorial place was not about the Great War, but about remembering people– loved ones who were no longer with us. I had felt it too, did you?

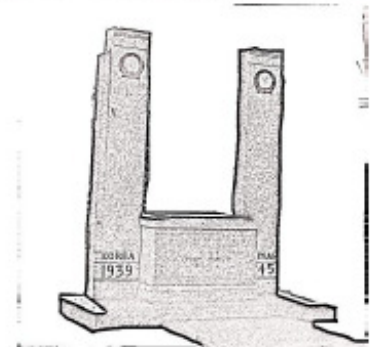
### Epilogue

We went up to the towering statue with names on each side of those who went to the Great War. The children quietly read and touched names 'remembering' individuals today loved in this town a century ago.

## The treasure hunt sheet:

shows from top clockwise:

part of plaque on WW2 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial plaque  
base of Remembrance statue,  
Memorial to WW2 + wars  
Aleppo pine memorial stone  
New Aleppo Pine  
Framed WW1 soldier photograph  
Top of memorial statue,  
entrance banner  
a school honour roll



© Photos by J. Clark 2013-2014