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Dark Tourism: collections and memories of war

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While battlefield tourism, museums and exhibitions to mark the dark side of war are now the subject of research through ideas such as dark tourism or thanatourism, these investigations are generally focused around present-day tourism. During the four years that marked the centenary of the First World War, museums within the Queensland Museum Network created and hosted several exhibitions pertaining to 'the Great War'. These exhibitions together are conceptually of a style that can be considered a form of dark tourism. However, in examining the many souvenirs, photographs and postcards considered for these exhibitions, it became apparent that considerations of dark tourism *of* the War and its sites is really a continuation of dark tourism *in* the War. This involved not only physical visits to sites of death and destruction during and after the War, but the collection of mementos of those visits and pictorial depictions to show at home.

This paper examines the practice of battlefield collecting and tourism during the First World War through the objects held in the Queensland Museum. It explores ideas that thanatourism may not be a new phenomenon, instead being part of a long tradition. The examples of collection objects that illustrate this 'morbid curiosity' are examined within the context of the war and the ideologies and personal motivations surrounding enlistment and military service in Europe and the Middle East.

❑ thanatourism, dark tourism, battlefield tourism, First World War, memory, museum

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INTRODUCTION

Empty artillery shells, decommissioned weapons, awards for valour, and death plaques give testament to the realities of a war a hundred years ago. Souvenirs, mementoes and personal belongings evocatively connect us to the people who fought, while postcards and photographs connect to the horror of war and, in contrast, some of the enjoyment of travel of the time. But what was it about these objects that made soldiers, seamen, and nurses collect them, carry them across the battlefields of Europe and the Middle East, and bring or send them home?

During the four years that marked the centenary of the First World War, museums within the Queensland Museum Network created and hosted several exhibitions pertaining to 'the Great War'. These included the exhibitions *Horse in War*, presented at Cobb+Co Museum in 2015, the exhibition *Railways 1914-1918*, presented by The Workshops Rail Museum in 2015, which subsequently toured from late 2016 to 2018 in a modified form, and the *Anzac Legacy Gallery,* a permanent exhibition created for Queensland Museum at Southbank, which opened in November 2018. As part of the development of these exhibitions, a range of collection objects related to the First World War were examined to identify those suitable for display. The variety of object types, including the preponderance of photographs, postcards, souvenirs and trench-art, led curators to consider these artefacts of the First World War in different contexts, most particularly in the context of tourism.

Growing recognition of battlefield tourism suggests that tourists are drawn to sites of massed or individually important deaths and disaster, epitomised by the battlefields of Culloden, the American Civil War, and First World War (Baldwin and Sharpley 2009; Cheal and Griffin 2013; Dunkley et al 2011; Lisle 2000; Seaton 1996; Stone 2013; Woodward 2014, p. 42). And while many studies have considered the tourism of battlefields occurring 'after the fact', there is recognition that combatants (and others who served) were themselves tourists of battlefields during the First World War, as well as acting as tourists while on their way to war, on furlough, and on their way home from war. Consequently, in contemplating museum collections and displays related to the First World War, three elements of wartime tourism suggest themselves for examination. The first is consideration of the act of tourism of the battlefields by those actually participating in combat. The second consideration is the physical representations of the battlefields that were collected, and how these artefacts, as mementoes, provide a way into the experiences and places of war. The third element is the experiences and mementoes of recognised tourist destinations and places visited during travel towards or from war – the visits to the Sphinx in the Middle East, or to Stonehenge in Great Britain.

In order to capture these forms of tourism, this paper examines what was brought home – and seeks to understand how these objects represent alternate yet equally authentic experiences of war. Items from the Queensland Museum Network's collection are presented as a way into the experiences of those who marched, rode, railed and sailed to war at the beginning of the twentieth century. Six small and discrete groups from individual donors shed light on the practices of collecting in the First World War. These objects are examined to understand what and where they represent, how they might be interpreted, what they tell us about the collector's view of war and wartime experiences, and how they illustrate aspects of dark tourism.

DARK TOURISM - VISITING PLACES

Portrayed as 'contemporary leisure activity', as a 'social pathology sufficiently new and threatening to create moral panic' (Seaton and Lennon 2004, cited in Stone 2011, p. 319) and as a site of emotional contagion (Podoshen 2013, p. 264), dark tourism pertains largely to sites associated with death and disaster. In fact dark tourism (also known as thanatourism (Dunkley et al 2007)) is defined as the act of travel to sites of death, disaster or the seemingly macabre (Stone 2011 p. 319; see also

Dunkley et al 2011; Dunkley et al 2007; Stone 2006, 2012; Stone and Sharpley 2008). Motivations for this form of tourism are varied and encompass ideas of spiritual journeys, morbid curiosity, fascination with death, quest for new experiences and authenticity, remembrance and pilgrimage, and personal memorialisation (Cheal and Griffen 2013, p. 228; Dunkley et al 2011, p. 861; Podoshen 2013, p. 264; Yuill 2003, p. 12). Stone and Sharpley (2008, p. 589) also recognise motivators such as a social neutralisation of death and, more relevantly for this study, the provision of an 'opportunity to confront and contemplate 'mortality moments' from a perceived safe distance and environment'.

One major form of thanatourism is battlefield tourism. Places of war – for example the battlefields of the First World War, the sites of the D-Day landings of Second World War, places of internment such as Auschwitz, and places of commemoration associated with the war in Vietnam – can all be classified as sites for thanatourism. Tourism of battlefields is not new, with accounts from antiquity and the Middle Ages of visiting battlefield memorials, and of more organised tourism the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Baldwin and Sharpley 2009; Seaton 1996). Dunkley et al (2011, p. 860) identify a slightly broader category of war tourism sites, that takes into account museums and war memorials as well as battlefield tours. Battlefield tourism increased significantly after the First World War (Baldwin and Sharpley 2009; Miles 2012), with visitors motivated by the acknowledged drivers of thanatourism, including memorialisation, remembrance, and morbid curiosity about an event with global impact. Battlefield tourism however was not limited to the aftermath of war, but also occurred during the war, with furloughed service personnel amongst the consumers. Strange and Kempa (2003, p. 387) argue that the tourist experience of battlefields both literally and figuratively fix 'the memory of collective violence to the places where suffering occurred'. This may be one element in the motivation of tourism of the war in the war – a means for those in combat to fix collective violence in place, to distance wartime experiences from life and neutralise experiences of death, or even as a personal form of remembrance. Nevertheless, while recognising a collective narrative, these sites should be understood as multi-vocal, with the potential for a disparate range of views and emotions from visitors of differing cultural backgrounds and experiences.

While fixing memory in place, or emotional siting, is a major element in battlefield tourism, Cheal and Griffen (2013, p. 229) point out the risks of 'heritage dissonance' where the manner of presenting past conflict is at odds with the way a particular group or individual perceives that past in place (see also Woodward 2014, p. 44). This is relevant in considerations of how actual battlefield experiences might be imagined or interpreted at sites of tourism (either in place or dislocated) today. Place is an important element in these reflections, but as Stone and Sharpley (2008, p. 575) point out, museums, while often disassociated from the sites of death and suffering, still provide interpretations and representations of topics of thanatourism, including wars, asylums, and places of suffering (see also Miles 2002). There are therefore challenges in addressing stories of death and destruction from the First World War in a museum context, a context where people encounter stories of war, but are dislocated from the emotional connection of place.

MARKERS OF PLACE

While museums are often dislocated from the place where an interpreted event occurred, they do use authentic objects related to these events. Material culture lies at the heart of museum practice, acting as points of focus for interpretations of places or as pieces that embody experiences. The material culture of war, while often concentrated on uniforms, weapons, military insignia and awards for valour, also includes mementos as material manifestations of war – trench art as representations of both war experience and the presence of acquirers on the battlefields, for example – but also as mementoes that represent places visited. These reminders of place include soil, rocks and pebbles, and samples of vegetation such as pressed flowers and pieces of

bark – equating to the 'pieces-of-place' souvenirs that Foxlee et al (2008, p. 200) argue demonstrate 'a personal act of symbolic connection and desire for remembrance'. Further to this, while not 'pieces' of a landscape, battlefield mementoes such as shrapnel, bullet casings and uniform buttons and badges can all be considered 'pieces of battlefields' and representative of place, marking a desire for remembrance and connection. These 'pieces of place', when translocated through time and space to a museum setting, in turn have capacity to bring forth symbolic connections and communal remembrance.

Overarching approaches to material culture recognise that for objects 'their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories' (Appadurai 1988, p. 5), and that there are social interactions involving people and objects that create meaning for those objects (Gosden and Marshall 1999, p. 169). If these are considered in the context of objects collected in wartime by people directly participating in war, then it can be argued that, no matter the functional intent of an object, it's trajectory and the 'social interactions' that the object has been present for imbues that object with meanings and stories associated with war. Saunders (2005, p. 78) argues that the objects of war are 'not anonymous weapons, scrap or ephemera, but rather different kinds of matter that can be seen as embodying an individual's experiences and attitudes'. This is equally as true for non-military mementoes collected in wartime. So what types of war-related objects are found in museum collections and why do donors give preference to particular objects (both in their collecting, and later in their donation) as representations of the past?

COLLECTING AND BRINGING THINGS HOME

Artefacts representing the First World War held in Queensland Museum's collection are varied. They encapsulate battlefield remnants such as shrapnel, shell casings, flags and signs; battlefield souvenirs collected from the 'enemy' – guns, helmets, personal effects, even dog-tags; and personal items of soldiers, such as uniforms, regimental badges and patches, medals, and kit such as bags, 'housewives' storage tins, and so on. Service men and women with pre-war interests or expertise also collected cultural objects when they visited places of professional interest – items such as traditional baskets, pottery, carvings, or archaeological artefacts like scarabs, tesserae and stone axes. Souvenirs of places visited also make up a significant element of wartime collections and include trinkets, craft items, and fake antiquities. Objects associated with military action are proportionally as prevalent as personal items associated with travel to war.

The collection and retention of these objects by service personnel raises questions about the motivations of the collectors. Did those bringing back mementos of battlefields do so as a representation or remembrance of their own experiences, or did they hold an already formed conviction of the importance of the First World War and particular battles? If so, collecting battlefield artefacts may have also represented the collection of an historically significant place. Further, those same battles may have represented elements of Australian identity to the collectors, the act of bringing back artefacts contributing to their own sense of identity and belonging. Woodward (2014, p. 42) suggests 'battlefields can be read as places of national identity construction'. This is nowhere more apparent than the ideologies of Australian identity attributed to Gallipoli.

Gallipoli is one of the most frequently represented places in Queensland Museum's First World War collections. Objects from Papua New Guinea, the Cocos Islands, Egypt, Palestine, the Western Front in France and Belgium, and training in Britain and Australia are also present, together with objects from voyages to and from war, and even from other cities in Australia. Similarities are observable between several individual collections, while some collections evoke very specific cultural or military activities and places.

In addition to three-dimensional objects, ephemera such as postcards and photographs, commemorative or celebratory cards and booklets,

diaries, and correspondence, both official and personal, find their way into collections, acting as representations of war and mnemonics for experiences. Official war photographs depicting battlefield scenes are commonly found in museums and libraries across Australia, together with collections of photographs from individuals; the latter create a different picture to the narratives of battle. Despite common subject themes of troops in training and snapshots of new places visited, these collections allude to individual experiences. Personal collections also contain mass produced postcards of remarkable places that include not only depictions of tourist spots but also commercially available mementoes of battlefield destruction (such as stereoscopic images of Gallipoli and war-torn Europe).

Within Queensland Museum's collection, six groups of First World War artefacts and images collected by individuals – Clive Balmer, Arthur Bennett, Herbert Homer, Edward Hope, Francis Brewer and John Lowe – represent a typical array of First World War material held in any number of museums across Australia. Collectively they speak to the view of war and wartime experiences of everyday people and were donated by the individuals themselves, or their descendants, as important artefacts of war and representations of their service. The objects and images not only convey war experiences visually and through material culture but also give some insight into the view of war held by the individuals who collected them. In effect, as representations of an individual's experiences and travels, these objects can be regarded as outcomes, or elements, of not only the war itself but also a form of experiential tourism in amongst the dark of war. It should also be recognised that these individual collections were necessarily curated either by collectors themselves, who had to carry the objects or arrange to send them home, or by the donors who would have selected what would be donated from a range of personal effects.

FIG. 1. Cottage near Amesbury, Queensland Museum Balmer collection (H14359.34).

BALMER COLLECTION

The Balmer collection consists of 104 photographs in two albums collected by Clive Richard Balmer, depicting scenes between 1915 and 1917. Balmer enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces in October 1916 and travelled to England on the RMS *Osterley* in early 1917. He spent approximately four months in artillery training camp at Larkhill on the Salisbury Plains before arriving in France in August 1917. At the end of the war, Balmer returned to Australia, discharged as a result of chronic illness. He later joined the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (the forerunner to the RSL).

The photographs in the collection include a small selection fundraising scenes in Australia from around 1915, but the majority of photographs are of Balmer and his fellow Australian soldiers on the troopship *Osterley* at Fremantle, Cape Town and England, undergoing training at Larkhill, and during visits to surrounding locations including Salisbury, Amesbury, Durrington and London. The collection demonstrates that tourism was part of the war experience of many Australia service men and women, who travelled across Australia, travelled across the ocean, visited to ports such as Capetown, and participated in tourism in England while training. In particular, the album features photos of soldiers, including Balmer, visiting well-known tourist destinations such as London, Stonehenge and Cotswold villages (figures 1 and 2). These images show collective experiences of troops, particularly on the troopships, but also highlight Balmer's tourism experiences and his personal service experiences. They are representations of the act of leisure tourism, incidental to war, although effected by travel associated with the war.

BENNETT COLLECTION

The Bennett collection is comprised of photograph albums, postcards, and personal items. These include items associated with Arthur George Bennett's pre-war Militia volunteer role, images and personal items related to his service at the front (bible, leather holding pouch, military badges, patches and medals, and newspaper clippings from his mother), and the shrapnel pieces which severely wounded Arthur Bennett and cut short his frontline service (figure 3). The gauze wrapped

FIG. 2. Troops visiting Stonehenge, Queensland Museum Balmer collection (H14359.32).

shrapnel in particular provides a highly haunting element within the collection, speaking as they do to the damage wrought on the human body by conflict.

One major element of the Bennett collection is the diverse array of photographic images and postcards which document Arthur's military service in the Militia through to enlistment and training in the 1st A.I.F. and later service on the Western Front. The photographs detail his travels (both while serving and during his long convalescence after being wounded), and some elements of his later civilian life. Illuminating something of Bennett's experiences and attitudes, the photographs feature images of Stonehenge, tourism of the English countryside, visits to family and friends, camp life, uniform issue, troops training and military leaders, together with post-war award ceremonies and parades in Ipswich. The images suggest Bennett was highly engaged with his own role in the war effort, but also have a voyeuristic element of tourism of the war, experienced as a participant/spectator in an event that was a 'life experience', emplaced in Britain and Europe, on boats and in hospitals. Some of the photos, such as the images outside the buildings at Larkhill Training Camp, closely mirror images from the Balmer collection (figure 4 and 5; see Balmer collection figure 2).

FIG. 3. Arthur Bennett's shrapnel (R6475.1-3) and gauze Queensland Museum collection (R6475.1-3).

FIG. 4b. Clive Balmer at Larkhill in new uniform, Queensland Museum Balmer collection (H14359.28).

FIG. 4a. Arthur Bennett (r) and colleague at Larkhill, Queensland Museum Bennett collection (R6440.29).

The First World War obviously left a considerable mark on Arthur Bennett, who served with the 4th Pioneers in France, and not only because he was severely wounded. Bennett retained the images and objects that memorialised his experiences of military service, throughout a long career with Queensland Railways on his return from war. Bennett's care of this collection speaks to his feelings about the objects associated with his war service, his reverence obvious in the passing of his collection to a custodian, historian Robyn Buchanan, who in turn donated the Bennett collection to Queensland Museum. While his motivations in retaining these evocative pieces of war were not documented, in keeping the shrapnel and dressing from his wounds on the battlefront Bennett memorialised his trauma and survival of war. The Bennett collection can therefore be viewed as representing elements of leisure tourism as a consequence of travel to war, but also as a physical representation of war itself and Bennett's associated experiences.

HOMER COLLECTION

Queensland soldier Herbert William Homer rose from the rank of Private to Sergeant. He was recommended for the Military Medal for his role as a stretcher bearer at Gallipoli from September 1915 until the evacuation (gazetted for this bravery award in 1916) and was recommended for the Meritorious Service Medal for actions on the Somme in 1916 with the Queensland-derived infantry unit, the 26th Battalion. By the time he died of wounds in a military hospital in the United Kingdom in June 1917, he had the rank of Second Lieutenant.

His family commemorated his life and service by donating an array of Gallipoli battlefield relics to the Queensland Museum during the 1920s. The collection, featuring artefacts that Homer had sent home to his family during the war, consists of selection of shrapnel and spent cartridges and shells, Turkish bullets, a group of 19 pebbles collected from the beach at Gallipoli (figure 6) and a Turkish belt buckle. Homer's family may well have curated the donated collection, choosing these items to donate

FIG. 5. Troops at Stonehenge (Arthur Bennett at front), Queensland Museum Bennett collection (R6440.31).

and retaining personal items such as medals and uniforms. This small group of objects may also be an artefact of what was considered worthy of Museum collections in the 1920s, when there was an emphasis on trophies and the technology of war (Hadnutt this volume). Nevertheless, these objects form a poignant collection of a Queensland soldier's experience in First World War, particularly due to his service at Gallipoli and on the Western Front.

The pebbles from Gallipoli are a highly affective and evocative representation of place, particularly for their association with a location integrally bound to the Australian presence in First World War and the narrative of Anzac as part of a national identity. Within the group of artefacts, there are also elements such as shells and shrapnel which, when combined with more personal items, such as a belt buckle belonging to a Turkish soldier, speak about the experience of war. Homer, in collecting both the physical pieces of place and artefacts of the battlefield, could be seen as memorialising his war experience but perhaps was also practising (battlefield) tourism of the war itself.

FIG. 6: Pebbles from Gallipoli collected by Herbert Homer, Queensland Museum collection (H5273).

HOPE COLLECTION

Another collection that speaks to war experiences is that of Ted Hope. Edward (Ted) Gilchrist Hope was born in Tiaro, Queensland, in 1892. His enlistment papers state he worked as an engine driver and windmill builder when he enlisted in May 1915, aged 23. Hope joined the 26th Battalion in June 1915. After training at Enoggera, he arrived in Gallipoli on 11 September 1915. At the end of October he left Gallipoli with typhoid fever and spent some time in hospital in Malta and England. In August 1916 he was sent to France for the first time, with the remainder of his active service spent in France and Belgium. Hope was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for his actions near Peronne, France, in August 1918:

> In the attack near Peronne on the 29th August, 1918, he rushed three enemy machine-gun positions single-handed, putting them out of action, and killing or capturing the crews. Later his company advanced through a heavy artillery barrage and suffered heavy casualties. Although wounded, he took up a position within 100 yards of the enemy and beat down their fire with his Lewis gun.

This collection of twelve personal objects includes Hope's military medals (including his DCM), the regimental patch of the 26th Battalion (purple over blue), and bullet-damaged personal effects. Most evocative are the artefacts representative of battlefield experience: a cigarette case (figure 7), Vaseline tin lid, and bar of soap, all of which show bullet damage, the lifesaving objects protecting him from harm. Place is also represented in collection, through mementos of the town of Albert in France, and the grave sites of two martyrs of the war in France, presumably collected while visiting these locations. Hope in his own way was participating in a form of thanatourism, as identified by Korstanje and Ivanov (2012, p58), through the act of visiting sites where martyrs had died. This was an interesting choice of place to visit; perhaps Hope was seeking to make sense

FIG. 7: Edward Hope's cigarette case, bearing evidence of bullet damage, Queensland Museum collection (H48811).

of his own sacrifice in visiting such a meaning-ladened and potent site? Alternatively, he could have been exercising battlefield tourism of the war, while in the war, visiting sites representative of conflict (where martyrs were buried) and sites of battle such as Albert, famous for its "miraculous virgin" statue, leaning precariously as a result of shell damage.

FRANCIS BREWER COLLECTION

This collection of 18 objects includes several battlefield souvenirs collected by Francis Joseph Brewer during First World War – objects that appear to have belonged to German soldiers (postcard, dog tags and awards (figure 8)) and a metal fragment purported to be a piece Baron von Richtofen's plane. The collection also contains personal items belonging to another soldier, Frederick Cox, and Brewer's own personal items including his notebook and service badges. The collection has been curated by either Brewer or his family members as it also includes ephemera related to the Brisbane Girls Club, who were patronised by Brewer's wife Muriel.

A journalist from Bondi, New South Wales, Francis Brewer saw active service in France and in 1918 was shot in the ankle, an injury that eventually led to him being returned to Australia. Like many soldiers, he

FIG. 8: German Gallantry Award, part of the Francis Brewer collection, Queensland Museum (H48409).

collected souvenirs, many of which he posted home to his family. He also kept a journal throughout the war, now held in the Mitchell Library.

The objects in this collection suggest it was a curated collection – developed initially through decisions by the collector and his family about what war related items should be retained, and later through decisions by his family about what would be donated and what the family would retain. Souveniring of war and 'the enemy' is a form of collecting representations of battlefield conflict – the alleged fragment of Baron Von Richtofen's aeroplane truly a sample of dark tourism. Although different from the munitions collection of Homer, the Brewer collection still provides a form of battlefield memory related to conflict and death. It is distinct, however, from the other collections as there is no clear link to place; instead, the collection could be considered as being about people alone, acting perhaps to some degree in memoriam.

JOHN HENRY LOWE COLLECTION

Sapper John Henry Lowe, a telegraphist of Brisbane, Queensland, enlisted at the age of 40 in 1917. He served with the 5th Signal Troop, 5th Light Horse Brigade, in Alexandria, Egypt, and Palestine. This collection includes mementoes associated with places of cultural significance. There is a sense that objects were selected especially for family at home, embodying everyday conversation, connecting to something family would want to see. His diary comments on places seen related to biblical stories, with the essence of places visited a feature both in his writing and in his collection, which include acorn cups from Abraham's Oak, and putative pieces of the Sphinx and pyramids of Giza. These objects are relatable as tourist mementoes or curios that reflect the type of tourism that is undertaken even today (figure 9). Clearly the result of tourism as a consequence of war, his correspondence makes it possible to characterise his motivations – a glimpse of agency and intention. The collection includes a postcard that accompanied the objects. On the back John Lowe wrote …

> Dear Dave
> Am collecting a few little curios
> Hope I am able to get them home safely
> Dad

John Lowe did indeed return home safely in 1919.

FIG. 9: Glass beads representing the Hand of God from Hebron, Palestine, one of several items collected by J.H. Lowe while serving in First World War (H2405).

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITIONS AND MARKING MEMORY

The collections of the First World War held by Queensland Museum provide a sense of what soldiers saw, and what they kept as marking their own experiences. Objects such as the shrapnel of Arthur Bennett and the bullet-damaged cigarette case of Hope lend themselves to interpretations of war that contribute to a flavour of thanatourism in exhibitions.

Remembering of place is particularly marked in these museum collections. Bringing or sending objects home mirrors the journeys taken by individuals and represents an internal connection with place that marks an embodied encounter (Foxlee et al 2008, p. 203). According to Foxlee et al (2008, p. 204), 'translocated objects create 'social trails' that facilitate the sharing of experience and, in turn, allow individuals to inscribe their 'personhood' in relation to places of autobiographical significance'. Foxlee et al (2008) write in particular reference to 'pieces-of-place', natural artefacts such as bark, coral, stones, which are directly dislocated pieces of place. As pieces-of-place, Herbert Homer's Gallipoli pebbles can be considered 'the very substance of a place' (Foxlee et al 2008, p. 200); the pebbles are 'material manifestations of … interactions with experiential place … [as] symbolic connection and desire for remembrance' (Foxlee et al 2008, p. 200). The object is imbued with meaning for the collector through details such as 'the moment when the piece is obtained, the attributes of the object that leads to its selection, and the motivation for picking up the object' (Foxlee et al 2008, p. 201). Donation processes of the past mean it is unlikely that the motivations or thoughts of the collector can be revealed (except with lucky exceptions where a retained hand-written note may convey some of these facets of the collecting decision – see comment from John Lowe above). Nevertheless, the pebbles of Gallipoli have an immediacy that, tapping into ideologies of national identity that Gallipoli represents, makes them highly connected to place and evocative cultural artefacts. In a museum sense, objects such as the pebbles can allow the visitor to gain some sense of connection to place, of remembrance and experience, even if this is perhaps not as embodied as the connection of the collector.

PHYSICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF BATTLEFIELDS

First World War artefacts, while largely not natural samples of place, still mark the place of war. For battlefield souvenirs there is an inherent pieces-of-battlefield relationship that conveys experience and inscribes the objects with events of significance (both autobiographical and more broadly as part of an internationally significant event). Similarly trench art, which Saunders' (2005, p. 81) describes as 'narratives of the war experience inscribed in three dimensions', is equally as identifiable as pieces-of-battlefield. Shrapnel, pieces of place, personal objects altered by war or indeed the material culture of enacting war (such as leather pouches, unit patches and uniforms) are all inscribed with the experiences of war. In museum collections, these artefacts serve as evocative connectors to past and to place, and to the profound personal experiences of those at the front; the objects become 'invested with meaning through the social interactions they are caught up in' (Gosden and Marshall 1999, p. 170). Furthermore, as Saunders (2000, p. 45) has argued for trench art, these objects become 'poignantly associated with memory and landscapes'. Despite their dislocation from the scene of events, these artefacts still serve as representations of that place.

As well as being associated with place, objects such as the cigarette case of Hope or the shrapnel kept by Bennett become embodied pieces of an individual's experience – the object 'remains as a reiterative reminder of place, and the embodiment of connection forged' (Foxlee et al 2008, p. 201), but also as the embodiment of a physical experience. People can 'invest aspects of their own biographies in things' (Hoskins 2006, p. 74; also see Clarke 2014), with the biography of battlefield events linked directly to these artefacts. Objects associated with an event become synonymous with that event and become the vehicle for memory, both for an individual and through museum interpretation for the public. In a museum setting then, these objects represent a form of battlefield tourism – the physical representations of battlefields carried away and, when presented in a museum context, serving as tourism of those battlefields translocated in time and space. By seeing the pebbles Homer collected at Gallipoli and the cigarette case of Hope damaged by bullets on the Western Front, museum visitors are undertaking an experiential engagement with the battlefields of the First World War.

TOURISM WHILE AT WAR

Souvenirs are another type of wartime memento of place – objects that mark the pauses in battle, such as Egyptian 'antiquities', handkerchiefs from Cairo and embroidered cards from France. Just like trench art, souvenirs act as a link between person, place and memory, evoking experiences of war beyond the battlefield. Collected and returned home (posted, returned as a part of the belongings of a fallen soldier, or brought home at the end of the war), these mementos still represent war and wartime experience to the collector despite their association with tourism rather than conflict. They were kept and may have become 'a cherished memory-object for the family' (Saunders 2007, p. 28), used for memorialisation, or as a long-held family heirloom, representing grandfathers, great aunts, uncles who sacrificed some part (or all) of their lives to go to war. Objects such as the piece of the Sphinx in Egypt and the beads from Palestine collected by John Lowe now find their way into museums; they are the material evidence of touristing during war and the experiences of service men and women abroad.

Paper-based objects are amongst the most commonly surviving mementoes of the First World War – photographs and postcards, diaries, letters and newspaper clippings – and despite being documents, also act as three dimension objects that elicit emotional responses, not just for the compelling words but for their physical form as well. While letters home and doleful telegrams tell of the cost of war, some mementoes – postcards, photographs and stereoscopic images – suggest a different 'war experience', perhaps war may even have been seen as an adventure, a chance to see the world. Photographs and postcards of the pyramids

in Egypt or English villages feature regularly, adding to the tourism narrative of souvenirs and curios. And certainly, it is to be expected that there are many more chances to take photographs, or buy postcards of idyllic rural scenes when training or on furlough from the war.

The similarities of photographic collections between two different men (Balmer and Bennett) hint at a standard tour or training experience and tourism while at war – photographs outside the barracks, trips to English villages and at Salisbury Plains – collective experiences, unambiguously demonstrated by the many. And yet for each it would have been an individual encounter, an experience that had such an impact that they not only kept these collective sets of photographs all their lives to remember, but felt their significance sufficient to see them continue in custodianship of heritage professionals. These photographs are not just visual depictions of place but take on elements of objects as physical representatives of experience in place – a piece-of-place, less tangible than a pebble but equally as representative. The collectors comprehended part of their personhood, their personal biography, their war experiences, through these images.

Lisle (2000, p. 92) argues that the safe/danger opposition connects war and tourism. Her argument is that perceptions of safety are important to thriving tourism but that the space/time context changes to permit tourism at the edge of danger (temporally or spatially). In terms of Australian soldiers in the First World War, the tourism of training camps, and outings to nearby Stonehenge and the Cotswolds, are both a mark of the adventure of war but still a 'safe' destination for tourism, in terms of place and also in contrast to the lurking and imminent likelihood of battle. Taken in this way, the photographs that appear at first glance to demonstrate a somewhat cavalier attitude to war, heading off on a great adventure, can instead be seen as a counter to the fear and danger of war, a manifestation of the separation of safe and danger (Lisle 2000, p. 93), furlough and war.

TOURISM OF BATTLEFIELDS BY COMBATANTS

Another way to consider the use of tourism as a means to counter feelings of the danger of war may be seen in the actions of service personnel who were tourists of the war. Returning to definitions of thanatourism, Seaton's (1996) continuum of motivation includes a fascination with death irrespective of the person involved and/or an essence of visiting scenes of disaster. It is understandable in some instances that despite (or perhaps because of) their personal experiences of war, some servicemen and women would have actively sought out destinations of battlefields to understand their own experiences, or to meet contextually other elements of a battlefield with which they had been intimately involved. The place (battlefield) was in essence their place, for all its horrors. Tourists today have reported visiting the battlefields of the Western Front 'to confront and validate the scale of the war, so that [they] now appreciates its magnitude' (Dunkley et al 2011, p. 864). This may have equally been a factor for combatants of the time – the intimate experience of a particular posting needing to be countered with a personal understanding of the magnitude of damage and loss. The imperative to travel to battlefields may also have been a form of immediate memorialisation – as Saunders (2003, p. 8) suggests 'battlefields were themselves visceral commemorative monuments'; this would have been equally as apposite in 1917 as 2017.

Along with visiting battlefields, images were taken, and indeed postcards – the quintessential means of remembering a visit – were created of battlefield damage. Other tourism images presented through stereoscopes showed battlefields and war damage, places of death destruction, in three dimensions. These images suggest a darker side to battlefield tourism, a form of voyeurism that acted to valorise war, and turn the carnage into a macabre spectacle. The distribution of War Office photographs to museums across Australia, while aimed at recording events and presenting the realities of war, also served to spectacularise and memorialise the places of war (figure 10).

FIG. 10: War Office image of damaged building, Peronne, 1918 Queensland Museum collection (H440-102)

The photos, postcards, and stereoscope views that depict the destruction of war, seen in conjunction with the official photographs of war, may have been part of the general human condition that is a fascination with disaster and death (Podoshen 2013, p. 264). These photographs and postcards may alternatively be regarded as a means of marking the experiences soldiers, in place, to memorialise the collective (yet intensely personal) experiences of war, interwoven with the marking of events of historical significance. Walter (2009) makes clear the distinction between memory and remembrance – 'Remembrance entails a commemoration of those whose suffering and death one may not have personally witnessed, but is not yet history … ways of relating to the dead and/or contemplating their deaths' (Walter 2009, p. 7). This reveals the role for museums as mediating institutions that allow people to encounter death, without doubt a form of thanatourism. Ironically, with the battlefields of Europe today 'almost completely obscured' (Iles 2008, p. 139), the landscape of war is more accessible through photographs held in museum and library collections, and presented in close focus through sense-scapes of exhibitions.

MUSEUM INTERPRETATION

Photographs and postcards in particular, as 'copies' of place (Taussig 1993), provide both a visual sense of place when one is no longer there, and also provoke memory and emotional responses. The emotional responses of museum visitors to photographs are necessarily to the sense of place and visual conveyance of context, rather than a response to memories, unless the visitors themselves share the experiences of the photographer in some way. How then do museums use these copies and pieces of place to create an emotional connection to the stories of the First World War? The 'narrative location' (Foxlee et al 2008, p. 203) of interpretations of the First World War in galleries or exhibitions, and the contemporary meta-narratives of that conflict, serve to take away the personal encounter with place and the material manifestation of specific experiences related to a particular (personal) artefact. Despite representing an individual's story, providing (curators hope) a personal and emotive demonstration of experiences of war, representations that do not engage with the collector's specific experience and that biography – the moment of the object's collection – miss a point in understanding a nuance of war-time experience and the intention of the collector. The memento of war that in some ways marks the conflict, associated experiences and realities of experience, is instead reduced to a metaphor or facsimile of the experience, being placed in an exemplar story.

Artefacts and images of war act as agents, their agency a facet of 'the ways in which they stimulate emotional response' (Hoskins 2006, p. 74-75). It is this agency that makes evocative objects central to interpretive uses in museum and yet, as discussed above, when selected for the emotional response to a recognised narrative (such as the human cost of war), may fail to convey the personal biographies that they might tell. Are museums just as responsible for sanitising war through the narratives of these objects as those that present dark tourism sites are sanitising through time, narrative and interpretation (Cole 2013, p. 115; Lisle 2000, p. 98)? Are we responsible for providing a less confronting history or a presentation that is obedient to the collective commemoration (Shackel 2001; Wilson 2010)? It is important to recognise, as Saunders (2005, p. 80) notes, that we cannot homogenise the meanings of these objects, or indeed the war experiences of individuals, and that any and all collected objects come with different stories, personal experiences and varying views about the artefacts. To see them all as a representation of the war story is flawed. By acknowledging personal stories, even if subsumed under an emotive and yet composite view of war, affect is brought back into focus through emphasis of an individual's emotional response, personal imperatives, experiences, choices, and commitment in selecting, carrying, sending a piece of place/experience home.

Nonetheless, along with the variety of object types and the links to personal (even intimate) stories, these objects have a collectivism that speaks to national and imperial ideology, human experience and the desire for remembering and memorialising, that commemorations such as the centenary of the First World War bring to the fore. For some of these objects, the very fact of becoming a part of a museum collection has in some way imparted a sheen of 'sacred relic' (Saunders 2005, p. 80) that may conflate or veil the individual significance of the object. Having said that, the opportunity afforded by display to explore the different meanings, the individual stories and the connections to place, may go some way to re-personalising and animating these objects. With recognition of the materiality and sociality of the objects, these collections allow visitors an emotional contact with the past – a past that has place not just in a museum but also in place where the collectors acquired their artefacts.

CONCLUSION

Re-engaging with the collections of the First World War has been an emotional experience for curators. It has involved contemplations about the sadness of death, and the harrowing stories of survivors. The development of the Queensland Museum exhibitions was more personal than creating a sense of remembrance and memorialisation, as individuals, their histories and their families become part of our world. The examination of these collections also stimulated ideas about how these objects came to be collected, why service personnel or their families kept them, and what experiences they represented. The collections from individuals like John Lowe led to considerations of soldiers as tourists, collecting souvenirs from the new places they visited. The photographs of Clive Balmer and Arthur Bennett echo that same thread, tourist-ing in the midst of the dark of war. The Francis Brewer collection speaks to the collection of war as an event, and battlefield tourism of the war while participating in the war, and yet there are glimpses of personal grief and commitment in the careful retention of another soldier's belongings. The collections of Herbert Homer and Edward Gilchrist respond to another motivation – the remembrance of battlefield; stark artefacts of combat that are now being used in a museum setting to evoke emotional responses and present death and danger at a safe distance. These three elements of tourism in the First World War – battlefield tourism of the war in the war, collecting of battlefields, and tourism as a result of war-time travel – speak to experiences of the war, and also the way in which these pieces of place allow museum visitors connect to the past. They also indicate elements of battlefield tourism – the presence of thanatourism in wartime. Together the collections battlefield mementoes and souvenirs of travel provide a picture of the experiences of those who went to war over one hundred years ago, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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