

Annie Bell's Diary

5th December 1914 - 11th November 1918



Threads of Connection

The threads of connection between family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances that tie our lives together are intricately woven. Unravelling and then resewing the threads of my grandmother's life during these vital four years of her life and of Australia's history has been exciting and rewarding.

I hope you also enjoy discovering the many connections that merely start here.

Stephanie Kihlstrom
December 2002 (2nd. edition)

Table of Contents

Anne's Diary	
The Journey Out	2
In Egypt	8
Leaving Egypt	44
In Britain.....	46
In France.....	57
On Leave in Britain	66
In France	68
In Britain.....	77
Journey Home.....	82
Home	87
Appendices / Notes	
Family as mentioned in Diary	88
Places mentioned	89
People mentioned	90
Abbreviations used	96
Notes on Family Members and Friends serving in A.I.F	98
Armstrong – Bell – Stewart Family Tree	99
Family Notes	100
Newspaper Clippings regarding Family Members.....	102
Letters from Click to Anne – from Gallipoli and France	103
Letters of Gratitude to Anne.....	106
Notes on Ships and Hospitals	107
Index.....	108
Official Documents from Australian War Memorial.....	114

The Journey Out

Dec 5th

Left "Burnswark" 10.15am with Mother, Bessy, Jean & Buttons, also Mrs. Quartenay. Went to "Killearnan" to say goodbye to Granny, then to Miss G's office, but she was out. Found Mr G in his office - saw a M.H. patient when getting into taxi outside his office- met Aunt Jean & Bess at pier. J.C.H also came down. Granny & Aunt Lil in afternoon. Saw Nurse Rogerson, Miller, Mason, Taylor, also Mr Woods, who spoke of Dave. After much delay left at 6.00pm. Passed through Heads at 11.40pm.

Dec 6th

Shall draw a veil across this day. Read Gran's gift about 5.00pm.

Dec 7th

Button's birthday. She will have her hair up when I see her again. Carl brought me up on deck, could not have managed without her.

Dec 8th

Feeling better. Concert in the evening. "Little Grey House in the West" one of the songs, made me think of & long for the evenings at "Alma" last winter.

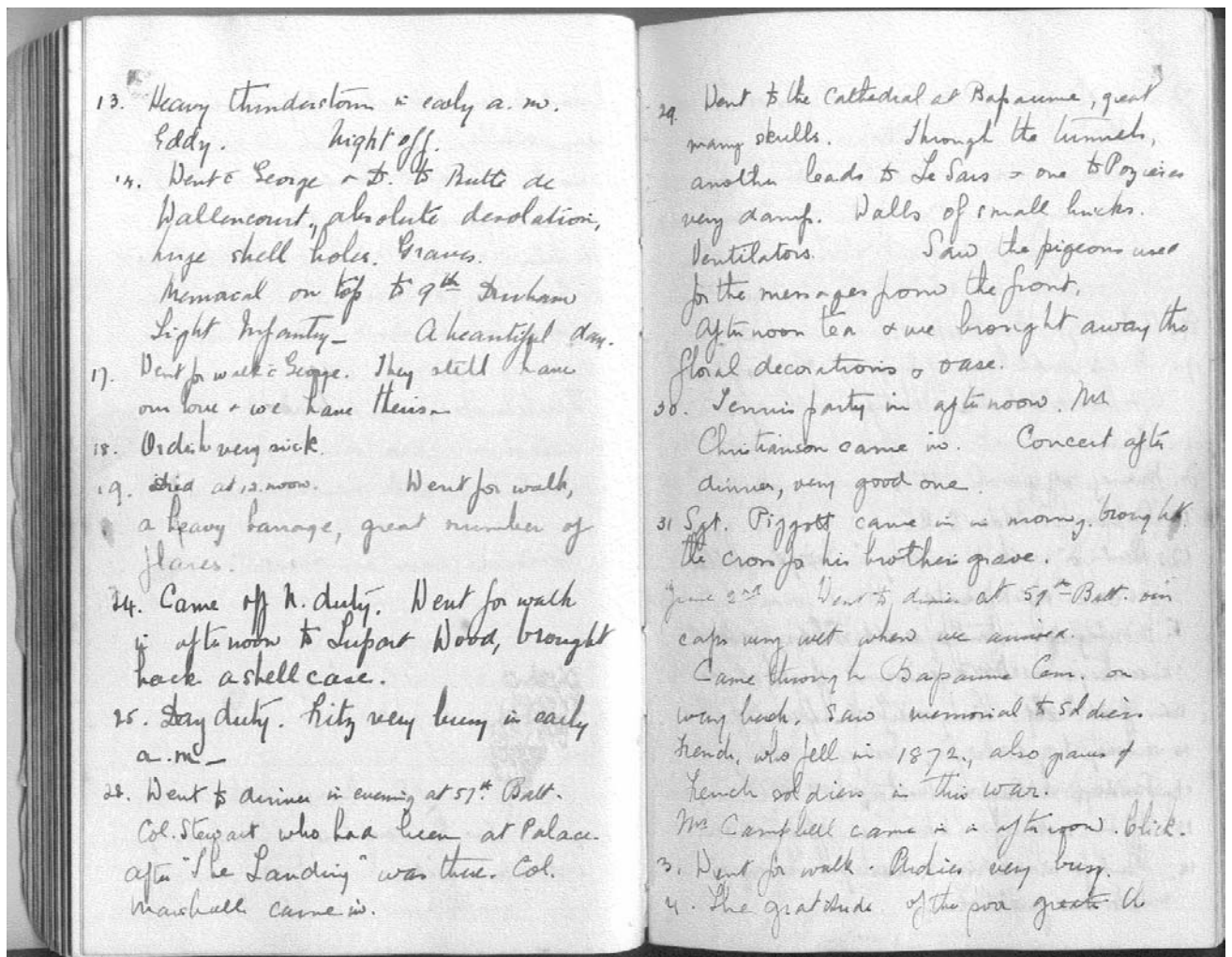


Figure 1: Entries in Anne's diary 13 May to 4 June 1917

Dec9th

A beautiful sunny day, wrote Biggie & Mrs. McClure.

Dec10

Sighted land 3.00pm. barren looking, King George's Sound.

Paid 13/-

Dec11th

Raining, saw flying fish

Dec12th

Reached Freemantle, but anchored in stream. Coaking began almost at once. Not allowed on shore.

Saturday

On board all morning, left ship at 2.30pm, walked on to coal barge, & climbed down rope ladder into motorboat, thought we would never arrive there. S. Hart, D & McC. Came in same boat, also Red Cross boys. Very glad to reach the shore & feel land beneath our feet once more. Sent to Fremantle R station, & waited for 4.00pm train. Hot dusty day. After leaving Fremantle, saw Cable Station Rottneest Is. where prisoners are being kept. Also saw Garden Is. Agricultural Showground very fine. Land from Fremantle very sandy, marran grass planted – also trying the effect of Pig's face. Between the stations, country, strange to see it so near city, beautiful trees, saw Scotch College. Many familiar names on buildings. Robert Harper, Kitchens Velvet Soap. Foy & Gibson.

Arrived in Perth about 5pm & decided to at once have a cup of tea. Tea at Albany Bell tearooms, then J.M.K. showed us to King Edward Hostel. Very comfortable. A fine view of bedroom window across Swan River with King's Park beyond. A bowling green just near window & a hedge gay with flowers surrounding it. Beautifully quiet after the noise of the boat. After dinner went for a tramride to Victoria Park, across the Swan & along The Causeway, which extends for a mile. Saw racecourse where every Sat. night there are trotting races. This the W.A. people say, almost takes the place of theatre. No good theatres usually come to Perth. People not dressed as well as in Melb, but heard that every drought, poverty is marked, especially in country. Came back part of way in tram, then walked, each found our own church. The R.C. church, Bishop's Palais & schools occupy excellent position. Walked along the street facing Gov. House, beautiful grounds. Saw the Deanery like a picture of an old English home.

13.12.14 Sunday

A beautiful morning & we all felt well after a good night's rest & a hot bath. Soon after breakfast S.D. & I went to Perth Public Hospital, saw S. Gill who took us over it. Fine views of the Darling Ranges from the balconies. Saw J. Levi who was resident at H.H. for a time. The grounds well kept & several beds of flowers. Quiet after the noise of the H.H., floors of jarrah wood looked v. well. Ward, one with 34 beds. Saw theatre, instruments made us long for work again & feel homesick – Strange to see so many empty beds. Nurse's home very comfortable & a nice sewing room, good large table. Sister G. kept us to dinner, saw Matron & Miss Gray for a few minutes, had been to church. Part of the hospital wall had been made by convicts. The theatre not large, black & white tiled floor. In afternoon took tram to King's Park, & entered at back gate instead of front. Were to meet S. Gill at Tea House, found it closed & after waiting over an hour for her, found we were at the wrong entrance. But the time was not lost, the trees were beautiful, & the bush like home. Walked round to front entrance, red road leading through the bush, saw S. Hart, also S. Carlile driving. Arrived near front Entrance, a very fine view across the river, a clear day so saw it at its best. A long avenue of gum trees, some just coming into bloom, others out. Flowers in profusion near entrance, a scarlet hibiscus, colour very vivid, walked back to Hostel along streets, struck by the number of asparagus ferns growing almost wild. Bougainvilleas also very numerous. Went to church in evening, St. Andrews. A nice service, well known hymns & had the 46th Psalm. Think it was the church Mr Gray used to have. Text, "Many are called, few are chosen", special prayers about the war & for those who were going to minister to the wounded. Not many people in church. After church met Ss D & L & went across to S. Perth with some friends of S. Gills, only waited for a few minutes.

Monday 14

Returned S.S. "Kyarra" at noon, left Perth at 11.10a.m. Liked Perth very much, fine trees in the streets. Electric trams. All the horses look very tired. S & Lady Barron came on board during the afternoon. Sailed about 7pm. Matron Gray came to see boat off. Very funny waiting for the crew to turn up, some appeared looking drunk but were sane enough to have their passed ready.

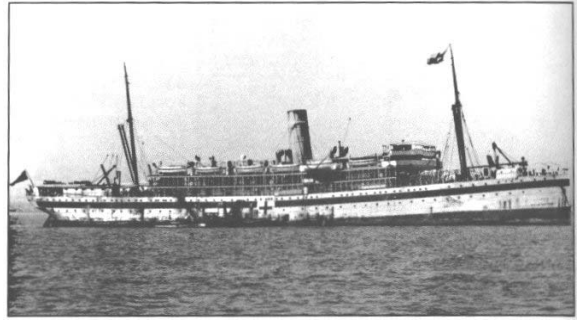


Figure 2: S.S. "Kyarra"

15.12.14

Lecture by Col. Nash in evening on the Vascular System, (lantern slides) photographs taken by Mr F. Bird. Fine day, but boat rolling very much -----

20.12.14

Service on deck in morning. Text "I have learned.....content." Deck full. Passed Cocos Islands about noon appeared to be one long island, two smaller & then one long, bet. small island you see the surf breaking.

First saw what looked like a wire fence, these were coconut palms. Did not see The "Embden" said to be on the other side of island.

Service in Music Room in evening, unable to get to it, no room. Heard hymns from deck all ones we knew very well – Church makes me very homesick.

21.12.14

On duty from 10 to 2 pm. Wrote letters in afternoon. Very trying day, muggy.

Christmas Day

Nice bright day. Duty in morning. Opened Jean's present, very pleased with it, also N. Rogerson's book & Miss Key's letter. Afternoon tea Melb. Hosp. people, enjoyed it thoroughly. Mr Syms, Mr. Givar etc. Dinner in even, 1st Aust. Gen. Hosp. had it together.

Very homesick.

Paid 15/-

26.12.14

Reached Colombo, view v. fine when entering harbour, long breakwater. Sunset gorgeous, deep orange, boats rowed by niggers everywhere. Mails brought on board, letters from Mother & Jean. Heard of Uncle George's death, Jean enclosed cutting re unveiling of Mr Macrae's tablet – Mother going Sydney.

27

On duty till 2 pm, then went across with Miss L. to jetty, going across to G.O.H. saw M & S Douglas, decided to go with them to Kandy. Drove in ghani to station, entered r. carriage then found that Peter had brought wrong tickets, frantic rush to get others, train kept waiting (quite an honour). On our way saw the bullock carts, banyan trees, my first glimpse of The East & its people. They chatter incessantly. Saw Salvation Army of M.G.A.

R. station is quaint & natives offering lemonade etc. Tea carried along in teapot, & glasses for it in quaint tin box with handle across. Saw the native fruits, natives washing in the running streams, washing clothes, beating them on a rock. Rice fields, tea, rubber, Dusk, fire flies in myriads, like fairyland, mists on mountains beautiful. Watched the natives in their huts moving about, small lamps. Strange to see a native appear out of what seemed dense jungle. Colours of flowers vivid. Arrived Kandy 7.45, ghani to Queen's Hotel, again saw hundreds of natives, very keen to carry our bags. Dinner almost finished, gay scene, some nurses in caps & capes, others in evening dress. S.D. & I went for walk at lake, not far. Struck by the reflections in the lake.

28.12.14

G and I walked before breakfast, in 15 min. got there. 9 different kinds of flowers, also ferns. After breakfast drove to Paidiniya Gardens, saw natives washing their babies, one pouring water from tin over its head. Some children ran after us with bunches of flowers, all anxious for coins. Saw the cakes (small statue to Sir George Ward, governor from 1855-1860. Wrote letters in evening. Most of the "Kyarra" people had left.

29.12.14

During night heard tom toms, had seen a funeral afternoon before, three brass poles carried, then candles.

Left Q.H. 7.a.m. Views from train worth getting up at any hour to see. Mt. Allagalla 2,500ft. At Scout's Hill column erected to memory of Capt. Dawson, who planned & superintended the construction of the road, erected 1832. Point Sensation, see far to the valley below. Mists in morning, light glorious. Went to G.O.H. on arriving in Colombo, headache, stayed there till going on board. Others went shopping. Sailed 8.p.m.

31.12.14

Last day of the year, wonder where we will be next year, little we thought last year that we would be on our way to nurse the wounded – Passed Island in a.m., lighthouse. Fancy dress ball in evening.

1.1.15

New Year's day. Saw whale spouting in afternoon, not near. 1st Gen. Hosp. had a tea together at centre table. Moonlight on clouds & sea beautiful, sorry to have to retire to our cabins.

4.1.15

Passed Socotra Is. Wrote letters.

3.1.15

Church on deck a.m. Hymns in evening, Communion after evening service.

6.1.15

Sighted land about 11pm, rough & barren looking, shadows wonderful. Anchored Port Aden, blackies came along with their wares. Natives blacker than at C. Hair very curly. Sunset behind rocks beautiful tins, mountains a deep purplish colour. Left about 11p.m.

7.1.15

Land on both sides when first going on deck. Empress of Russia, Himalaya Frewgal, to be seen – Passed Perin Is. Dry looking. Lighthouses ---- Very interesting.

10.1.15

Church morning & evening. Passed Doedalus Island.

11.1.15

Land both sides. Wonderful sunset, colours pink, blue, purple, misty colours. Wonderful. Arrived Suez during evening.

12.1.15

Up to see sunrise. Left Suez about noon, canal very interesting, Indian troops, trenches etc. Saw a crow.

13.1.15

Arrived Port Said, coaking began almost at once. Allowed off, walked round shops, better than in Colombo, charms, feathers, corals very pretty. Letter from Chris. Also received Recorder. Went to Mosque, put on cane shoes. Grace walked on ahead, very funny. Saw Koran, Egyptian flag. Beggars very annoying. Called at Hospital. Sisters very queer cape, told us the way hospital managed, linen & store room like M.H., but much smaller. Lunch at Exchange Hotel, Grace & S. Green. Returned to boat 4 p.m. Sailed 6.15 p.m. Saw aeroplane in p.m.

14.1.15

Letter from Duckie. Arrived Alexandria 9.a.m. Breakwater such numbers of vessels in harbour. Glorious day. Heard in evening that we could go off in a.m. Waited for our passes, got to bed about 11.30p.m.