

## 8 December 2025 Bulletin Rotary News

### Christmas Lunch 15 December

Christmas lunch for members and partners on Monday 15 December – bar operating.  
Advise [mary@davegaynor.co.nz](mailto:mary@davegaynor.co.nz) for catering.

### Croquet

Lesley thanked the Croquet team who did really well with one team coming third.

### Next Year

First 2026 lunch is Monday 2 February.

### Brew Union Friday Drinks

Next Brew Union is Friday 27 February 2025.

## Christmas Meeting Monday 15 December

**Guest Speaker:** Danu Sefton

**Topic:** "The contribution to the community by MASH Trust"

Intro/Thanks  
Sergeant  
Corporal  
Parting Thought  
Bulletin Editor  
Attendance

Norelle Ward  
Liam Hehir  
Allan Ford  
Lesley Boulton  
Steve Parsons  
Stu Schwartz

## Report on Monday 8 December 2025 Stephen Parsons Poppy Places Trust Champion



Five new locations have been recognised by the NZ Poppy Places Trust for their significant military connections. These additions bring Palmerston North's total to **71 Poppy Places**,

ensuring that remembrance is embedded in the streets and buildings we see every day.

### 1. Bunnythorpe War Memorial



Unveiled in **1920**, the Bunnythorpe War Memorial features a six-foot Italian marble Digger atop a base of Coromandel granite. The inscription honours the local men who gave their lives in the Great War.

- Built from community fundraising, including £420 toward the monument.
- Opened by Lt Col W.L.H. Burgess, with reflections from MP J.A. Nash on the hope of peace through the League of Nations.
- Rededicated in **December 2023** after major restoration funded partly by a \$16,000 Lottery Grant, including the crafting of a new rifle for the statue.
- Today the memorial stands restored and renewed—a symbol of community pride and sacrifice.

### 2. PN Intermediate Normal School (PNINS)

Opened on **5 February 1941**, PNINS was NZ's fifth intermediate school. Within a year, the Pacific War transformed the brand-new school into an emergency military hospital.

- Requisitioned by the New Zealand Army; its wide corridors and newly installed swing doors (still visible today) enabled hospital stretchers to move freely.
- Staffed by 165 medical personnel, it provided **500 beds** for wounded soldiers and civilian overflow from PN Hospital.

- Classes continued across the city in halls, theatres, and other schools through remarkable community cooperation.
- Returned to educational use in **April 1943**.

PNINS stands as a testament to resilience, adaptability, and service to the nation.

### 3. Terrace End School Memorial Archway



Established in **1884**, Terrace End School is one of Palmerston North's oldest schools.

- In **1923**, Memorial Baths were opened in honour of 27 former pupils lost in WWI.
- In **1924**, a memorial arch and gates were added — creating a symbolic gateway to remembrance.
- The baths served generations until removed in the early 2000s, but the arch remains a commemorative landmark.

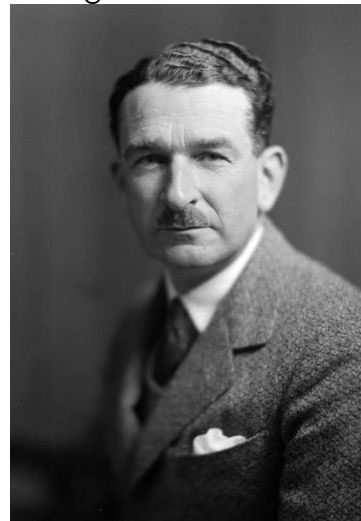
The school has endured earthquakes, epidemics, and the disruptions of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic yet maintains its spirit of community and resilience.

### 4. Peren Park, Ruapehu Drive

Recognising the life and contributions of **Brigadier Sir Geoffrey Peren** — agricultural scientist, military leader, and founding figure of Massey Agricultural College.

- Served bravely in WWI with Canadian and British forces.

- Became the first professor of agriculture and a driving force behind establishing Massey in Palmerston North.
- Made major contributions to NZ farming, including work leading to the Perendale sheep breed.
- Formed a mounted rifles troop at Massey and later commanded the 2nd Infantry Brigade Group and the 4th NZ Division.
- Knighted in 1959.



Peren Park honours his legacy of science, leadership, and national service.

### 5. McHardy Hall ("The Pink Hostel") & The Refectory – Massey University

These two early campus buildings reflect Massey's transformation during WWII.

#### The Refectory

- Designed in 1929 by Roy Alstan Lippincott in the Spanish Mission style.
- Served variously as temporary lecture rooms, dining facilities, and later study bedrooms.
- Requisitioned by the Army (1942–44) as the headquarters and mess for the **New Zealand Army Staff College**.

#### McHardy Hall

- Built in **1943** as dual-use wartime accommodation and future student housing.
- Became home to officers training under Brigadier Peren's leadership.

- Known affectionately as *The Pink Hostel*.



Both buildings remain integral to Massey's historic landscape and were formally recognised in 2024 as part of the **Turitea Historic Area**.

## 6. Caccia-Birch House



Overlooking Hokowhitu Lagoon since the 1890s, Caccia-Birch House has played multiple roles:

- Built for sawmillier Jacob Nannestad; expanded by the Strang family.
- Served as vice-regal residence (1908–10) after Parliament burned down.
- Gifted to the Crown during WWII to support the war effort.
- Used for Army accommodation connected to the Staff College, with additional wartime buildings added.
- Converted in **1946** to a convalescent home for returning nurses.

Today, it remains a cherished community venue and a key wartime heritage site in the Poppy Places network.

## Overall Message

These sites remind us that war touched every part of our country — not only distant battlefields but also our schools, farms, civic buildings, and homes.

**Palmerston North now holds 71 Poppy Places**, each marked by a red poppy on its signpost. These markers:

- Keep remembrance alive in everyday life
- Spark conversations across generations
- Honour sacrifice, service, and community resilience

**Lest we forget.**



**Parting thought:** Aaron Tait.

***"Sometimes deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do" - Steve Jobs***

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GOOD**