

Death has taken its toll
Some pain knows no release
But the knowledge of brave compassion
Shines like a pool of peace.
May we who come to this garden
Cherish life for the sake
of those who died
Cherish compassion for the sake
of those who gave aid
Cherish peace for the sake
of those in pain.

— Margaret Scott, 2000

If you want to know more

For more information surrounding the events of
28 April 1996 we recommend:

Margaret Scott — *Port Arthur: A Story of Strength and
Courage*, Random House, 1997

Mike Bingham — *Suddenly One Sunday: the true story
of the Port Arthur tragedy based on an eyewitness account*,
Harper Collins, 1996

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SUNDAY 28 APRIL 1996

A brief outline

Please understand

... that for many people, including staff members at Port Arthur, answering questions about what happened on 28 April 1996 can be very disturbing. We prefer to not use the name of the gunman.

We want to explain to visitors what happened, but we also want to protect our people from distress. This account is intended to outline the facts with clarity and simplicity.

loss. overwhelming, crushing grief pain

PORT ARTHUR is not just a story about death. It is also a story about life and how precious it is. It is not just a story about tragedy, it is also a story about triumph. Triumph of the human spirit.

Thursday, November 11, 1996
Quilt a symbolic gesture to Port Arthur victims

HELP US OPEN OUR DOORS

Gentle living a tribute, says PM
AUSTRALIANS should strive to eliminate violence from daily life as a memorial to the victims of the Port Arthur massacre, Prime Minister John Howard said yesterday.

MAY 11, 1996

Tassie unites on gun laws
Banned
Automatic and semi-automatic guns outlawed
RECOVERY BEGINS
We've taken a decision and we're going to stick to it. It's the right decision.

RECOVERY BEGINS

Future of hope emerges
November 23, 1996

A nation unites to rebuild hope from the ruins

Tuesday, April 29, 1997 THE MERCURY

One Sunday in Autumn

On the morning of Sunday 28 April 1996, a young Hobart man armed himself with three high-powered automatic firearms and a large quantity of ammunition, then drove to Port Arthur.

Just north of the township he entered the home of a local couple he knew. Inside, he shot and killed them both. He drove to the Historic Site and ate a meal on the deck of the Broad Arrow Café. He re-entered the café, which was crowded with lunchtime customers, took a rifle from his bag and began shooting. In the first 90 seconds, 20 people died and 12 were injured.

The man then moved into the adjacent car park, where he shot and killed four more people and wounded a number of others. After shooting indiscriminately at people in the grounds of the Historic Site, he got into his car and drove up the former main entrance road to the original toll booth.

In this area, seven more people were killed in two separate incidents, during which he stole a victim's car and abandoned his own. The man then drove north. Outside the General Store he killed one person and took another hostage. He drove back to the house where the first killings had taken place, firing random shots at vehicles along the route and injuring a number of people.

At the house, the man set fire to the stolen car, then took his hostage inside. Through the afternoon and night, shots were fired at police officers on the scene.

At some point during this time, the gunman killed the hostage. In the morning, he set fire to the house and was captured by police as he fled from the burning building.

The man was tried and convicted of 35 counts of murder. On each count he was sentenced to imprisonment for life, with no eligibility for parole.

The crime was reported around the world and caused widespread shock, outrage and grief, and more than 20 years on, many still suffer as a result of this tragedy.

The devastating events of that day at Port Arthur encouraged Australians to question our laws on the private ownership of automatic and semi-automatic firearms. A vigorous national debate was marked by strongly held views on both sides.

As a result, State and Federal Governments passed new gun control laws that are among the strictest in the world.

On the Historic Site, it was agreed that a memorial garden, incorporating the shell of the Broad Arrow Café, would be established as a place of quiet beauty and calm contemplation. It was formally dedicated on the fourth anniversary of the massacre, 28 April 2000, by the Governor General. Today the Memorial Garden offers a peaceful place, open to the elements, sun, wind, rain and sky where we may reflect, and remember.

Over the years, commemorative services have been held at the Historic Site, which have seen hundreds of people in attendance to pay their respects, and to remember an event that changed our nation forever.

Annually the anniversary is remembered by our staff and by many for whom the events are not a matter of the past.