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THE NINER

Two long-serving members of the Linton and District Historical Society, Joan and Alan Giles, received the rare honour of being made life members of the Society at its Annual General Meeting on 16 September.

Only two other people have had the honour bestowed on them – the Society's late Secretary, Letty Armstrong, and former President, Joan O'Beirne.

President Jill Wheeler explained to the meeting that, under the Society's Constitution, Life Membership is awarded for outstanding service to the Society. She said that not only have Joan and Alan have been members for 25 years, but they have been constantly active throughout those years, holding a number of positions of responsibility and willingly carrying out a myriad of tasks.

Another feature of the Society's AGM was the address from guest speaker Dr. Kirsty Harris, a Melbourne-based historian and writer, who has published a book about Australian nurses during the First World War, entitled *More than Bombs and Bandages*.

Kirsty spoke about the

experiences of the nurses, a subject that has until now been neglected in military histories. Little was known about what work the nurses actually did, although there were possibly as many as 3000 members of the Australian Army Nursing Service serving in locations as diverse as the Dardenelles, Egypt, France, Belgium, Germany, India and England.

One such nurse whom we know about was Christina Morrison whose family came from Happy Valley, and who served in India before being moved to Egypt.

Kirsty described how these previously civilian nurses developed an extensive range of skills through nursing battle casualties and the war sick. Some took on new roles as anaesthetists, X-ray nurses and in pathology laboratories, and their roles included medical support through a broad range of specializations, such as ophthalmic or cosmetic surgery. Yet others had non-nursing roles such as running hospital kitchens and managing accommodation and meals for hundreds. In addition, the Army nurses provided important caring roles to their patients, such as those of counsellor, caterer, shopper, protector,

communications facilitator and 'morale officer', bringing the essence of home to their patients.

Kirsty's book is available through the Big Sky Publications website:

<http://www.bigskypublishing.com.au/researchedproduct.aspx?name=more%20than%20bombs>

The Society's fundraising concert with the Victoria Welsh Male Choir is coming up very soon, on Sunday 6 October at Carngham Uniting Church. The choir will present, words and song, the *Diary of a Welsh Swagman*. Tickets are available at the pre-concert discount price of \$22 each. Tickets at the Post Office, Susie's on Sussex, phone 0434 586 150 or email [enquiries@lintonhistory.org.au](mailto:enquiries@lintonhistory.org.au) Tickets can be bought at the concert door for \$25

The Society's next History Night will be held on 18 November when local historian, Joan Hunt, will speak about the research she is doing into the discovery of the research she is doing into the discovery of the Springdallah goldfields in 1852.