



united service club

# history & heritage notes

## TAPESTRY CREST

Our thanks go to Mrs Payens and to long-term Members Major Brian Purssey and Captain Ron Purssey for their assistance in gathering this information.



These History and Heritage Notes have been prepared as 'bite-sized' light reading for our Members. The intention is to broaden awareness and understanding of selected aspects of the Club's rich history and heritage, and the remarkable people who have contributed to its development over the years. They are based primarily on a number of websites, with specific additional information in places. We acknowledge that there are probably errors and omissions. Please contact the Club if you have additional information or comments that will assist to improve these Notes.

We thank Mrs Payens and long-term Club Members Brian and Ron Purssey who have provided the information for this Note. The series will be progressively expanded and developed over time. They are intended as casual reading, for private use by Members only, and as few have the rigor, attributions and acknowledgements required to be suitable for academic or public use, Members are requested not to reproduce or distribute them outside of our membership.

## TAPESTRY CREST

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Hanging above our now-disused and beloved old elevator in the foyer (opposite Reception) is a tapestry that is a beautifully-embroidered and framed crest of the United Service Club.

At the Fifty-Year Members' Lunch in 2015 Dr Brian Purssey related the story behind its creation and presentation to the Club. When the President expressed his interest and the wish to capture the story before it was lost in the mists of time, he undertook to assist to piece the background together for the benefit of today's Members. The aim of this Note is tell that story.

The crest was created by Mrs Johanna Payens in a year-long labour of love that required not only the patience, concentration and skill that such art requires, but also some ingenuity to track down and trace a high-quality version of the crest as a start-point.

Neither Mrs Payens nor her late husband (Dr Joseph Payens) were Members of our Club, and this makes her gesture even more remarkable. They were dining in the Club as guests of Dr Brian Purssey and his wife in the 1970s when she noticed that the Club did not display a large, high-quality version of its crest. She undertook to create one, and after about twelve months of dedicated work it was complete.

As you will read overleaf, she also committed to another long period of work to create a family crest for a friend in return for his assistance in reproducing the Club's crest as a start-point.

Before it was presented to the Club it was entered in the competition at the 1976 Royal National Association show (*The Ekka*) where it won second prize.

Mrs Payens responded to Dr Purssey's request for more details in June 2015 and the story is told in her words below:

*Dear Sir,*

*May I introduce myself; I am Johanna Payens, a very good friend of Brian and Ron Purssey who are members of the USC. Brian has asked me if I could outline the history of the tapestry which is located on a wall within the club premises.*

*I have to cast my mind back now. I embroidered the family crest of my late husband (Dr Joseph Payens, GP in Brisbane until he passed away in 1989). This task took me a year to complete in 1976 and I was so pleased with it that I took it to the Royal National Agricultural (RNA) show that year and received second prize for this work.*

*My husband and I were dining in the Club one night with Brian and his wife Daphne and I noticed the USC emblem seemed a little ordinary for such a wonderful Club! I then advised Brian that I could embroider the Club's crest emblem as I had done with our family crest. This was not a simple exercise, but Brian's brother Ron advised he could get me the official crest to work with. In the meantime, I was able to get a Club towel with its emblem embedded thereon to use as a template for this work.*

*A good friend of ours, an art teacher in Toowoomba (Mr Alex Rotteveel; passed away early 1990's) was able to paint the Club's crest onto a fine embroidering canvas. For his effort, I agreed to embroider his own family crest.*

*The work on the embroidery took about a year to complete. Now I do not recall the date on which I actually finished the USC crest, but it is likely to be found on the reverse side of the frame. This was then handed to Ron Purssey for mounting in the club when I was invited to present it....*

The creation of the artwork was a wonderful and generous gesture by Mrs Payens and her creation will be proudly displayed in the Club for many years to come.

Sadly our record-keeping was not as comprehensive as perhaps it should have been and it was serendipitous that we were able to piece this story together for the appreciation and enjoyment of today's Members.

We publicly thank Mrs Payens most sincerely and somewhat belatedly for her work, and we also thank Brian and Ron Purssey for their assistance in recording this story.