

“I’ve never been much use”

This issue’s front page story comes from FoCC member Warren Maloney, who has brought us tales of his ancestors Annie Cartwright (Zinga Lee, the fortuneteller), Ron and Ruby Maloney (The Tossing Testros circus act) and this story about his great grandmother, Florence, another of the Maloney clan buried at Coburg.

“I’M SORRY THAT I’VE NEVER BEEN MUCH USE TO YOU.”

These were apparently the last remembered words uttered by Martin Maloney to his wife, Florence (Flo Chaplin), before he died of typhoid fever in 1888.

Flo was left with four kids under twelve years, no money, and the only income was from home-washing, “nursing neighbours”, and the rent from the lodger in the front room, Bill Barker.

Martin had been that distinctive male – handsome, funny, skilled at some trades, alcoholic, womaniser, always good-intentioned, but always unreliable.

They had had a decade of adventures of travelling throughout Victoria and New South Wales by horse-carts and the new train systems, taking jobs as they arose from



Martin’s shearing and carting to Flo’s house-cleaning and mending.

But health had caught up with Martin, and Flo had no other support. So, decisions had to be made. Bill, the lodger, moved bedrooms and took up the responsibility of providing for Florence and the kids.

It appears to have been a happy second chance for Flo as she had three more children over the next five years. But Bill’s health also gave out early, and he died, just ten years after Martin. Flo buried Bill in the same Melbourne General Cemetery grave as Martin, then got on with tackling a future with seven children, aged from five to twenty-two.

Warren’s story of his legendary womanising “Uncle Bill”, one of Florence and William’s sons, will be featured in the next issue of *Buried Treasures*.



Inside this issue:

“I’VE NEVER BEEN MUCH USE”	1
UNCOVERING STORIES: CAN YOU HELP?	2
A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT	2
BEFORE AND AFTER: GIVING NEW LIFE TO OLD GRAVES	3
NOT SO PLEASANT MEMORIES OF COBURG CEMETERY	4
GERMAN CEMETERY IN THE HEART OF MELBOURNE’S NORTH	4

Uncovering Stories: Can You Help?

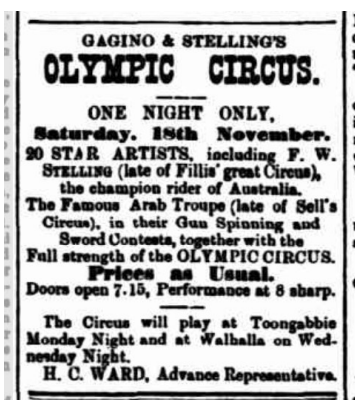
Coburg Cemetery holds a rich history of the people who once graced Melbourne. Today, we shine a light on two intriguing individuals whose graves have caught the attention of FoCC members. If you have any information or personal connections to these individuals, please share their stories with us.

The first grave that piqued our curiosity is that of **Alexander Gagino**, a circus licensee and musician who was born around 1860 and died in 1916.

During the 1890s Alexander was licensee of the Gagino & Stellings Olympic Circus, where brother John was a performer. They travelled extensively throughout Victoria, leaving an indelible mark on the local entertainment scene. On his son Albert's baptism record in 1895, Alexander is listed as a "musician," shedding light on where his talents may have lain.

Delving into his family history, we discovered that Alexander Gagino married Lillian Donovan in 1891. Alexander and Lillian had six children: Lillian, Albert, Florence, Alfred, Reginald, and Rupert Gagino. Alexander's parents were Louis Gagino and Jane Mackintosh, while his siblings included Jessie, John, Louis, David, and Teresa. The Gagino family lived around Fitzroy, Carlton, and Brunswick West.

Alexander was around 55 when he died in St. Vincent's Hospital in April



1916. He was buried in Coburg Cemetery in one of its Church of England sections, alongside Lillian and their son Rupert.

Just near the Gagino family grave lies **William Graham**, a bandmaster from Port Melbourne. William was also a Brother of the Grand United Order of Free Gardeners Royal Charter Lodge.



Born in 1873, William was the son of Joseph Graham and Annie Cassen, husband to Jane and father of at least three children. William died in November 1912 aged 39, at the Alfred Hospital. He is buried with Jane, their daughter Dorothy, and a baby whose name is unknown.

So, buried almost next to each other on the slope of the Merri Creek lie a circus musician and a bandmaster. Probably once known to many, yet now their stories seem lost. The usual sources for historical research, family tree websites, BDM records and old newspapers on Trove, show only a few names and dates.

Can you help? Do you know of these men? If you have any information, family connections, or personal ties to these individuals, your input can help us dig deeper into their stories. We'd love for you to share what you know about Alexander and William, or, in fact, any interesting stories of people with connections to this little piece of northern suburban history.

A Word from The President

Welcome to the first edition of Buried Treasures for 2023. We certainly missed Cheryl Griffins invaluable input this time and thank her again for her great work on previous editions.

As Melbourne is getting chillier, days shorter and traipsing around a cemetery seems a little less fun, we're holding off on tours and activities until closer to Spring. Stay tuned for details about the sports-themed tour planned for 20 August.

Our AGM is scheduled for Wednesday evening, 12 July. The FoCC committee are working on details and all members are invited. Note: there is likely to be food!

This edition of Buried Treasures tells interesting stories of renovating old graves at very little cost, a story about a widowed great grandmother and there's also a story about exhumations in the 1960s.

Enjoy the read, stay well and warm and I hope to see many of you at upcoming events. Julie



Before and after: Giving new life

As George and Ebenezer Shade's stone was reinstated, their great niece, Jenny, laid flowers on their grave but noticed how the neglected and crumbling grave appeared forlorn and forgotten. Some readers may recall the story of this gravestone's journey from Brisbane back to its original resting place in Coburg, thanks to the remarkable efforts of the Friends of Balmoral Cemetery.

Fixing up a grave doesn't always have to involve major renovations and formal processes; it can be cheap and easy and still look fresh and loved. Jenny's simple and inexpensive renovation has made a significant difference. A few bags of stones from a hardware store surrounding the simple concrete paver with the shield-shaped gravestone has given the Shade grave new life.

Take a leisurely stroll around Coburg Cemetery and you'll see creative yet simple fixes like mini gardens, fresh stones and clean and shiny headstones. Making a difference doesn't always mean the hefty costs of stonemasons and new headstones.



In 1896, Lydia (Featherstone) Mumme's husband, John, buried his 52 year old wife and placed a large white headstone to say how much she was loved, and moved on with this life. Lydia has remained alone in her grave in one of the Church of England sections of Coburg Cemetery for the past 127 years.

Judy McCartney, one of our FoCC members and Lydia's great-granddaughter, has now memorialised Lydia with a shiny new plaque naming her husband and each of their nine children with their birth year.

Along with a few bags of fresh gravel and stones, Judy and her family have honoured Lydia's memory and made the gravesite look loved and cared-for again.



Join FOCC and get involved!

We are a small group with some big ideas! If you'd like to get more involved in FOCC activities we are always looking for members and people who can research, write stories, take photos, present on tours, hunt up funding sources and promote FOCC activities. Contact us to find out more: focc.group@gmail.com

Not so pleasant memories of Coburg Cemetery

As the Medical Officer of Health with Coburg City Council during the early 1960s, Dr Percy Rogers watched as gravediggers lifted lids, dug out soil and exhumed coffins and their contents.

Exhumations at Coburg Cemetery were not uncommon in the 60s. Many of the post-war European migrants had by then established new lives with homes, families, jobs and successful businesses. They could now afford to send deceased parents and grandparents back home to their final resting places in the land of their birth.

Of course, these exhumations had to be supervised and certified. Dr Rogers learnt to stand upwind of the diggings. "It wasn't pleasant! I had to be there, but I really didn't want to." The memories of those exhumations are still strong.

It's no wonder the good doctor is a bit reluctant to come along to one of our cemetery tours!

Read more about Dr Rogers' work in remote northern Australia and PNG, in Melbourne's north and his ongoing campaigning for social justice in "Active Labour: Memoirs of a working-class doctor", available from Readings Bookstore and online.



German cemetery in the heart of Melbourne's north

A tour of the Thomastown Lutheran Cemetery by FoCC Committee member Yvonne was a curious journey into the world of German immigrants of the mid 1800s.

Once named Germantown and then Westgarthtown, this region was first settled by German immigrants in 1850. The first burial was recorded in 1852 and there are two religious denomination areas: Lutheran and Methodist. Previously surrounded by farmland, the cemetery was once described as 'An idyllic setting in the Australian landscape.'

The cemetery is still open but is restricted for use by members of the Thomastown Lutheran congregation and descendants of the original settlers.

Yvonne wandered around the cemetery, the old Lutheran church and Ziebell homestead, enjoying the original house furnishings and the rose garden planted over 120 years ago. The museum, heritage garden, original farmhouses, the church and cemetery are mapped out in a brochure for visitors that you can find online (look up "visit Westgarthtown").



Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc.

www.friendsofcoburgcemetery.com; established 2011

President/Administrator: Julie Stratford;

Treasurer/Administrator: Lee Anthony,

Committee: Colleen and Gerry Burns, Yvonne Kernan, Kelly Morgan

Send items for publication to:

Friends of Coburg Cemetery,
P.O. Box 329, Carlton South 3053
or focc.group@gmail.com