

## Gravestone restoration project kicks off

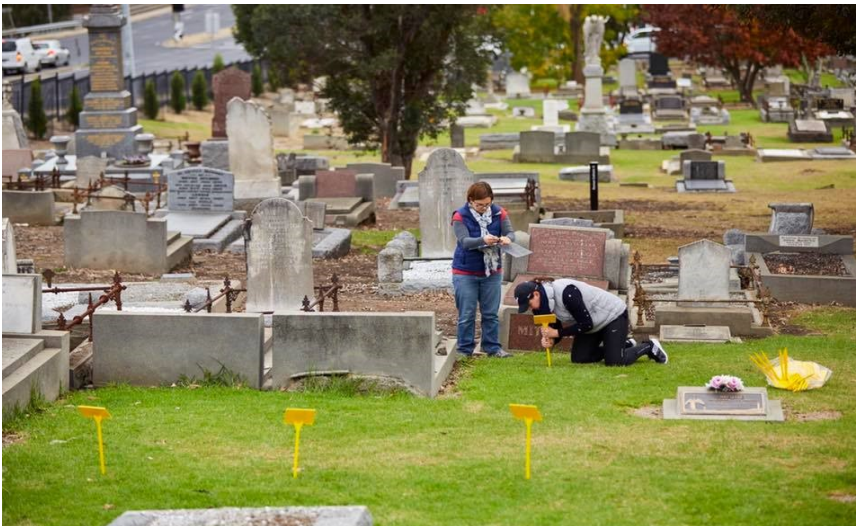
After decades in the dark, more than 300 gravestones are about to be placed back where they belong. The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (GMCT) has started replacing headstones, mounting them on specially designed sloped concrete bases by a stonemason with specialised knowledge in conservation and restoration.



GMCT engaged historian and heritage consultant Louise Honman to advise how the headstones could be preserved in perpetuity. Louise reviewed the colours and surface textures of the bases to ensure they contributed to the historical aesthetic of the cemetery. Before any work can begin, original sites needed to be identified and in May, GMCT staff and Friends of Coburg Cemetery spent the morning locating and marking gravesites.



In September 2019 the first 11 reinstatements occurred and stones memorialising some of the people of Brunswick Coburg, Preston and surrounds, that haven't seen the light of day for decades, were secured to concrete bases and set in place.



FOCC and GMCT locating graves for reinstating stones (May 2019)

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**HELP NEEDED!** Know anyone who can help us format our new website using Wix? Please ask them to get in touch!



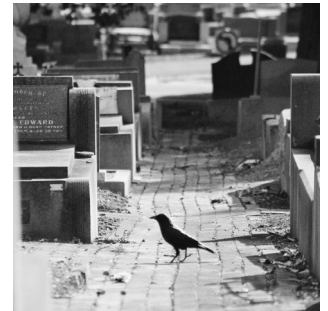
One of the first reinstated gravestones, back where it belongs (September 2019)

You can see the list of names on the GMCT website (or email Friends of Coburg Cemetery and we will send you a link). If you are a family member of an individual listed in the public notice, contact GMCT's Customer Care team on **1300 022 298** or email [enquiries@gmct.com.au](mailto:enquiries@gmct.com.au).

## In the Cemetery in the Dead of Night

Walking among the dead at night didn't freak out thirty curious people who ventured out to the Dead of Night tour of Coburg Cemetery in April 2019. The atmosphere of the cemetery is calm and eerie after dark and not something most people think of doing on a cool Sunday night. Listening to stories of

some of the fascinating people buried in the cemetery, everyone on the tour wandered through the rickety paths under weak moonlight, whispering and sometimes giggling nervously. As one person commented 'It's amazing what you can see in the dark!'



## Making an Impression and Getting Crafty



Headstone impressions are a popular way of recording data and making artistic versions of images, lettering, patterns and textures of gravestones. Led by our secretary and long-term member, Lee, a small group of crafty FOCCers wandered through Coburg Cemetery in April, creating stunning images from many

different stone carvings. We used a variety of methods and media including charcoal, crayon, and graphite on different types of paper to rub images of majestic lettering, stylized symbols and patterns. It was great fun and the results speak for themselves.

## Virtual Cemetery Tour at Coburg Library

As part of the Moreland Libraries' "Read More" program, Friends of Coburg Cemetery presented a virtual cemetery tour in August to a packed room of avid historians and curious locals.

Choosing characters from the popular "Lawyers, Guns and Money" tour, a slide presentation showed images of newspaper clippings and headlines, images of the deceased and photos of their graves as we told stories of their lives, loves and troubles.

The "virtual tour" presented stories of gangsters and their criminal exploits, victims of shootings, robberies and political scandals.



Sunday, 5 May 2019. Friends of Coburg Cemetery members and GMCT staff who took part in the locating and marking of gravesites.

## Tree replacements at Coburg Cemetery

An extensive audit of trees across the Coburg Cemetery has been conducted and 40 declining cypress trees along the James Street boundary are now being removed. After consulting the community, GMCT considered the requests of neighbours and other locals to ensure the cypress trees will be replaced with a mixture of native trees that will attract native birdlife and flourish in long-term environmental conditions, such as drought.

The replacement species have been selected to provide visual interest and also to avoid pest and diseases risks. These include the following species:

### ***Angophora hispida* (Dwarf Apple)**

This is a small native tree up to 7m with attractive bark, compact shape and masses of white, bird-attracting flowers. It is very drought tolerant and adapts well to most conditions.



### ***Calothamnus quadrifidus* (One-sided bottlebrush)**

This shrub (2.5m) has stunning red flowers which attract native birdlife and it is an excellent plant for light screening and understory planting.



### ***Acacia pendula* (Weeping Acacia)**

A medium native tree (5-10m) with masses of wattle flowers in late winter. It has a soft weeping habit and light grey foliage. The Weeping Acacia is very attractive to native birds and insects as habitat and the seeds are an excellent food source for native birds.

### ***Eucalyptus mannifera* (Red Spotted Gum)**

A tall, decorative native tree (20m) which has attractive bark, produces light shade and is covered in white flowers in late winter, spring. It is very drought tolerant and provides excellent habitat for a wide range of birds and native animals.



### ***Eucalyptus melliodora* (Yellow Box)**

An elegant native tree with beautiful bark and is an ideal shade tree. It has very fragrant, white-to-cream flowers and reaches around 20m in cultivation. It is used widely in honey production and provides excellent habitat for wildlife.

Autumn in Coburg Cemetery, 2012.  
Photos by Cheryl Griffin and Jerry Galea

### ***Corymbia maculata* (Spotted Gum)**

This is a stately tree which grows straight and tall. The bark is smooth and cream in colour with grey spots from the older bark creating a spotted or 'mottled' appearance. The leaves are dark green and glossy and from autumn to winter, small clusters of fragrant white flowers appear attracting birds and honey bees to the area.

### ***Acacia melanoxylon* (Blackwood)**

Blackwoods are known for their long life, elegant dark grey-green foliage, and abundant winter flowers. The flowers appear in late winter, and are multi-branched inflorescences of pale yellow balls with a sweet fragrance. The bark of Blackwoods is dark brown, deeply furrowed, and not typical of many wattles.

### ***Allocasuarina littoralis* (Black Sheoak)**

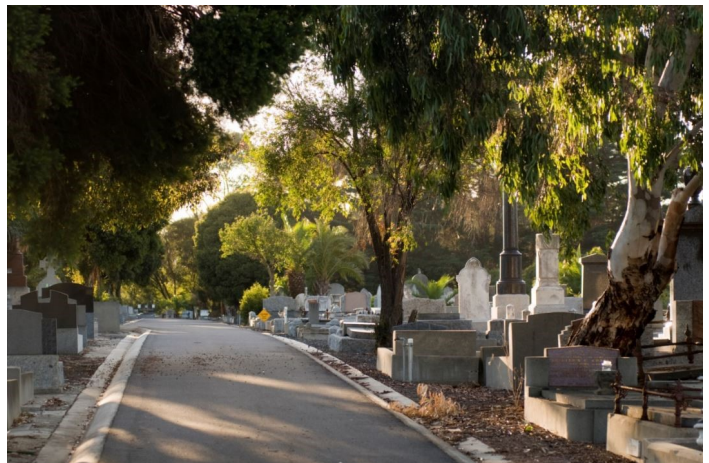
The Black Sheoak is so named due to its very dark almost black bark which contrasts beautifully with the fine light green foliage. It is erect in habit and is often used for screening. It has showy dark red flowers in spring which attract native birds and bees with good drought tolerance once established.

### ***Allocasuarina verticillata* (Drooping Sheoak)**

This is an attractive specimen tree which can tolerate a wide range of soil conditions and is very drought tolerant. It has delicate foliage with a horizontally striped trunk. It is an excellent food source and habitat for birds and provides good screening.



Removing the old, declining trees is expected to be completed by early September. Planting the new screening, bird attracting natives will begin in Autumn 2020.



## Online Search Tool Helps Us Hunt for Buried Treasures

Searching for a grave at Coburg Cemetery is getting easier with each development of the General Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust's online "Deceased Search" function. With digitised records and detailed maps, anyone with access to the internet can download the grave number, names of people buried there and several maps. Friends of Coburg Cemetery receives many requests each month to find and photograph graves of people's ancestors, connections or people of interest. Most of these requests come from people who can't get to Preston to hunt up a grave for themselves. Some are from as far afield as Perth, Townsville and even Scotland!

"Finding the exact spot can be difficult when many old graves no longer have headstones and the markers have been lost or moved", said Lee. She has been wandering around this cemetery for decades and knows the general size and direction of most graves there. This helps Lee find even unmarked graves.

"People are often disappointed to find there isn't a headstone on an ancestor's grave but they do appreciate that we've found and photographed the spot", Lee explained. "Other times, finding a headstone with lots of names, dates and details can sometimes overcome a genealogist's most frustrating brick walls. Those are the best graves to find!"

If searching online for a grave at Coburg or any other cemetery managed by GMCT, don't forget to tick the box under the name and to consider varied spellings or versions of names. Sometimes you can find treasure buried deep in those records.

**COBURG PINE RIDGE CEMETERY**  
GIS Location: CO-MET\*B\*\*\*648  
Plot Register Number: 94551

Service Type	Burial Num	Surname	Given Names	Date Birth	Date Death	Age
Interment	275621	SMITH	HENRY FRANK			88 Y
Interment	275622	SMITH	AGNES			83 Y
Interment	275623	SMITH	VANESSA ROSEMARY			14 D
Interment	275624	SMITH	FRANCIS HENRY			34 Y

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The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust

18/10/2019 7:00am - 5:30pm  
7:00am - 7:30pm (daylight savings)

When searching for a grave, FOCC's secretary and head grave searcher, Lee Anthony, will often use variations of names before finding the right one. Some records are misspelt, some names have changed over the years and sometimes full names are not known by descendants.

Once the record is identified on the system, the "Show Map" link will lead you to a screen showing the grave location. There is a red icon that produces a page with details of the grave number, names and distance and close-up maps that you can print and take with you to the cemetery.

### Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc.

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Established 2011

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## A Word from the President

It's been a busy year of tours, presentations, grave searches, a street party and, after years of work, the beginning of the replacement of some of the hundreds of stones in the shed. As we often say, we are a small group with some big ideas! The key players in the Friends of Coburg Cemetery are full time workers and so time and energy is often limited. Despite this, we organised almost ten major activities throughout 2019, including tours, presentations, stalls at festivals, crafty sessions, working bees and a small but productive AGM, as well as many grave searches, facilitating communications between the GMCT and locals, families and other interested parties, as well as sunk a few beers while planning what happens next!

We currently have \$1784 in the bank, have raised \$360 while spending \$270 in total on our website, catering for tours, printing expenses and incorporation fees. We have 22 paying members and many others keen to remain on our mailing list.

Thanks to members who got involved this year and helped out during tours, to Dr. Cheryl Griffin for drafting most of this newsletter and presenting at the September tour, to the army of hard workers involved in marking out where the GMCT are to replace headstones from the shed and especially to Lee, the hard-working grave searcher, treasurer and secretary extraordinaire. Here's hoping we see you all again in 2020!

We will organise an end-of-year catch up and celebration for members shortly, so stay in touch! Julie

### Get involved!

We are a small group with some big ideas! If you'd like to get more involved we are looking for people for a variety of roles. In particular we need help with tours, newsletters and our website. Contact us to find out more: focc.group@gmail.com