

# Such is death for Ned

**132 years after his execution, bushranger's bones are laid to rest ... in cement**



THERE was talk of secret burials, even decoy graves. But in the end, Ned Kelly was laid to rest with the kind of tradition and dignity he had long been denied. Well almost.

The final curtain for this infamous Australian came crashing down in a tonne of quick-dry cement tipped from a trailer and mixed with water from a garden hose.

The remains of a young man, once protected by hand-beaten armour, now protected by solid concrete.

Fitting, some would say, for a convicted criminal hanged 132 years ago. Others said it was the only way to ensure his remains were never again raised.

His bones now lay deep in the heart of Kelly Country, beside his mother's unmarked grave in a cemetery in northeast Victoria.

It was his final wish to be interred there and yesterday members of his extended family were determined to grant it.

A tall marquee was used to cover the exact burial plot and burly descendants, warned those present not to take photos. But even as the coffin was lowered, they did.

This was, after all, one for the history books.

Opinion remains divided within the Kelly clan over the handling of his long-awaited interment. Some suggested the need for a private service was unnecessary, that it should be a ceremony shared by a nation. Bloodlines matter little, they said, when all those gathered never knew this man at all.

But those closest said it was far more personal than anybody could realise.

**Aaron Langmaid**

Mostly, for the elderly representatives, who had long carried the Kelly burden and who shed a tear at his funeral service on Friday.

"It's closure for us, an important moment," family spokeswoman Joanne Griffiths said. "People don't realise how Edward's life has reverberated so deeply into ours."

Yesterday more than 100 gathered for the intimate burial. And from the outside, this could have been a service for any country kid, taken too soon. There were wreaths of flowers and relatives embracing or quietly scuffing their feet. The

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sound of bagpipes even echoed between eucalypts as the coffin arrived by hearse.

But Catholic priest Monsignor John White reminded those present of the significance of the day. "This man Ned Kelly has a certain immortality," he said. "Not just in our hearts, but in the hearts of Australia."

Monsignor White said Kelly was finally being returned, not just to consecrated ground, but to the land he loved.

"Ned, as you know, was a superb horseman and bushman and he loved the northeast of Victoria. Here, 132 years later, a wish has been fulfilled."



**Set in concrete:** Ned Kelly's coffin arrives at the north east Victoria cemetery (top) preceded by a piper, and is placed in the grave (above). The cortege arrives at the burial site (below left) and cement is shovelled into the grave (below right).



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**GALLERY** Exclusive pictures of Ned Kelly's concrete grave