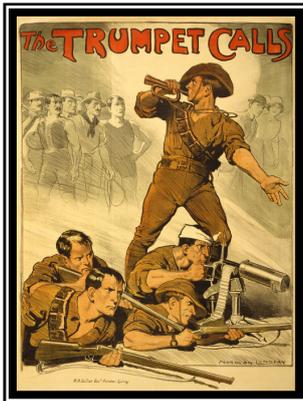


## Coburg's ANZACs - Guided Tour in April 2015



The 100 year anniversary of "The Great War" is bringing us TV specials, official memorials and community events and reminds us how this tragedy shaped our communities and our national identity.

To commemorate the sacrifices of the people of Coburg and surrounds we are partnering with

Coburg Historical Society to present a guided walk of the cemetery on 19th April, 2015. 100 years after the landing of ANZAC troops in Turkey, we will hear about the boys of Coburg State School and their families whose lives were transformed by war and sacrifice. As one event in the three-year project "A Hundred Men: A Hundred Heroes" coordinated by FOCC member Dr Cheryl Griffin, we expect a grand event with a lot of interest.

*If you'd like to get involved or just put yourself on the waiting list to attend, email us at [focc.group@gmail.com](mailto:focc.group@gmail.com) and keep an eye on our website for more details.*

### Diary Dates:

- NEXT FOCC MEETING AND SHED DAY - SUNDAY NOVEMBER 16TH 2PM
- END OF YEAR PARTY - 1PM SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER
- WWI GUIDED TOUR SUNDAY 19TH APRIL 2015

## FOCC Projects - What's Going On?

Over a few short years and with limited resources we, the Friends of Coburg Cemetery, have researched and run tours, built connections with the community and worked constantly to promote and conserve the cemetery. As 2014 winds down let's have a look at what's going on...

**Shed Days:** The third Sunday of each month at 2pm we meet at the cemetery and set up brochures, maps, and coffee urn. We discuss progress on projects and attend to visitors' requests and grave searches.

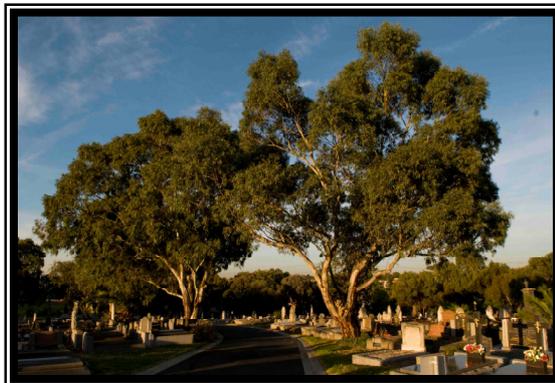
**WWI Centenary:** We are partnering with Coburg Historical Society, researching and preparing for the guided tour in April 2015.

**Newspaper Clippings:** We've been collating stories about the cemetery from old newspapers with a plan for publishing a booklet.

**Wikipedia:** This project has updated the wiki pages of some of the remarkable people buried in Coburg Cemetery. We plan to add more information on more people buried or memorialised at Coburg Cemetery.

**Website:** David Down has been managing, updating and ensuring that the FOCC website stays relevant, useful and professional.

**GMCT Community Advisory Committee:** Lee Anthony is an elected member of this committee



and has been involved in discussions that affect Coburg Cemetery and its environs. The new coordinator, Chris Jones, is keen to consider ideas and suggestions we may have to use this beautiful space in new ways.

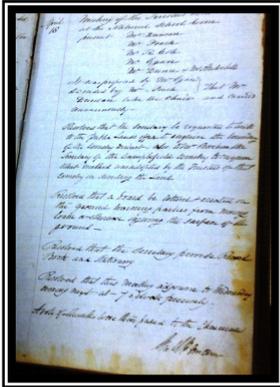
**On the backburner (but not forgotten!):**

- Photographic recording of graves and memorials
- Collating and recording data on the headstones stored in the shed

At the next couple of meetings we will start to plan several guided tours for 2015, researching and presenting more fascinating stories of long gone locals.

### Inside this issue:

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Handwritten Cemetery Trust Meeting Minutes

## Digitising Old Cemetery Records

Tucked away in an office in Fawkner are several heavy, fragile tomes of fine, spidery handwritten notes taken during meetings of the Coburg Cemetery Trust

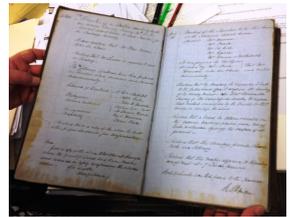
These meeting minutes date from 1860 and detail who was there, what they said, who agreed, who didn't and what else was going on at the Cemetery.

The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust has an archivist who is scanning, storing, preserving and

indexing these records so that one day we will all be able to access this rich, fascinating data. While family tree researchers might find their ancestors mentioned, local historians will find a treasure chest of data about the region and its people.

Although discussions are in their infancy, Friends of Coburg Cemetery are looking at getting involved and helping out with this massive project. There will

be a lot of painstaking work in reading and deciphering the handwritten notes and recording keywords and other information. Keep an eye on your emails or our website - if we decide to pull a team of volunteers together for this task we will need all hands on deck!



## Study Local and Family History

There are a number of courses available for those who wish to gain skills in historical and genealogical research. I recommend the Advanced Diploma in Local, Family & Applied History (ADLFAH) course offered off-campus by the University of New England. Details of the course are on the University's website using the following link: <https://my.uned.edu.au/courses/2015/courses/ADLFAH>

I have recently completed the course finding it both challenging and extremely interesting. The units range from introductory studies on history itself and Australian history before expanding out to include more specialised topics. Units cover heritage studies, oral history, local history, museum studies, family history and specific areas of Australian, Asian and World history amongst others. All units allow for off-campus on-line study with electronic access to the UNE library and other Australian University

libraries and a great number of overseas libraries as well. In all cases I found the Unit Coordinators to be extraordinarily helpful as were the student electronic forums.

The course is available to students of all ages. However I found the University to be particularly supportive of mature aged students especially ones like me who had never studied at a tertiary institution before. Whilst the course has a desired duration of study I found the University to be very flexible in its approach to mature-aged

students who face commitments not normally experienced by students entering university directly from school.

The course Unit fees are detailed on the University's website. All places in the ADLFAH course are covered by Commonwealth Supported Places scheme and consequently students who wish may apply for fee assistance under the HECS-HELP scheme.

I strongly endorse this course and believe that you would, like me, find all the Units extremely interesting and stimulating.

David Down

"UNITS COVER HERITAGE STUDIES, ORAL HISTORY, LOCAL HISTORY, MUSEUM STUDIES, FAMILY HISTORY AND SPECIFIC AREAS OF AUSTRALIAN, ASIAN AND WORLD HISTORY"



## Clippings of History

Digging into Trove newspapers online is uncovering treasures of Coburg Cemetery's past. There are the expected death and funeral notices, recording names and dates and addresses that are a boon for family historians and genealogists. Beyond that, we are finding all sorts of stories that grab your imagination. We've found descriptions of the cemetery from over 100 years ago, stories about the people buried there, some who died there; state funerals and

pauper's graves; mourners and lovers; council reports and tales of processions and cavalcades. This project is slowly gathering newspaper clippings that fleshes out the history of this fascinating community space. We are planning to compile them into a booklet to raise the profile of and interest in Coburg Cemetery.

*Want to get involved? Contact foccgroup@gmail.com.au to join this project and help us dig up buried treasures online.*



## Clearing out the Palms



While the Canary Island palms dotting Coburg Cemetery's landscape might look stately and attractive amidst all that stone and concrete, they are a big bunch of trouble.

Self seeding across the cemetery, the palms have been pushing over headstones, cracking slabs, and littering paths for decades.

GMCT has started to trim and remove many of these destructive plants. As the fronds are removed the true extent of the damage they've caused is clear.

Clearing the cemetery of these pests is a great step forward in protecting and preserving the condition of the cemetery, its masonry and the graves telling stories of local history.

“AS THE FRONDS ARE REMOVED THE TRUE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE THESE PALMS HAVE CAUSED IS CLEAR”

## Poppy Tiles for Returned ANZACs

Many of the 120,000 Victorians who fought in World War 1 came home, lived out their lives and are buried or memorialised without recognition of their service.

The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust and the RSL have produced a poppy tile for marking graves of these men and women to tell the world that they served

their country during war. These tiles feature a raised red Flanders Poppy on a white background. The packaging includes the original Flanders Poem plus the Ode of Remembrance.

Families across Australia and New Zealand have been buying tiles to mark ancestor's graves. So next time you are wandering

through Coburg Cemetery keep an eye out for little red poppies showing us that this was one of our community's returned ANZACs.

Poppy tile packages are \$11 each (includes postage) from [www.poppytile.com.au](http://www.poppytile.com.au) or buy direct from the GMCT offices at Fawcner Cemetery



Poppy tiles mark the graves of returned WWI servicemen and women.

## A Word from the President



After many months living away from Australia and taking a “hands-off” approach with the Friends of Coburg Cemetery group for a while, it has been delightful to visit the cemetery again, see the roses in full bloom, some of those pesky palm trees being removed and the cemetery in better condition than it’s been in years. It was also exciting to find at the most recent “shed day” meeting that the group has been plugging away at our projects, increasing membership and building solid relationships within the community. Did you read the list of

projects on the front page? We’ve got a lot going on!

In only three and half years we have established a place for ourselves within the community, made lots of contacts, planted seeds of ideas and enjoyed the upgrading and beautification of our beautiful treed space on the hill on Bell Street.

Although Lee and David have been the energy behind most projects, other members have also been working on various tasks, researching, turning up to meetings on shed days, conducting grave searches and telling interested locals about the group and our work. Together we have taken great strides towards our goals of promoting respect and appreciation for the cemetery and its history and encouraging its preservation and conservation.

With research underway for the WWI tour of the cemetery on April 19th and lots more ideas taking shape, 2015 is looking like it will be a big year for FOCC! Hope to see you at the November 16th Shed Day meeting and then again at the End-of-Year picnic on December 7th to celebrate another successful year.

Cheers! Julie Stratford

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**Friends of Coburg**  
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Treasurer: Lee Anthony  
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or emailed to  
[focc.group@gmail.com](mailto:focc.group@gmail.com)

## The Last Word: Someone should do something!



I recently heard that familiar refrain: “Why doesn’t someone do something?”

I think it was followed by “The council should fix up these graves”.

It’s sometimes heartbreaking to see damage done by storms, trees, animals and humans to what were once gorgeous statues or memorials. Broken columns, smashed statuettes, crumbling headstones are all common and often sad reminders of neglect, forgotten ancestors and lost histories.

But who is responsible? Certainly not the council. And even in most cases, not the Cemetery Trust. In fact, it’s the family. That piece of land and the

marble slab or delicate porcelain flower bowl or even the massive column ... it’s the descendants who are in charge. The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust who are responsible for general maintenance of Coburg Cemetery are not permitted to tamper with your ancestor’s headstones unless it poses a public risk. A lump of stone lying on a public path can be moved - sometimes placed back onto the grave itself - but it’s otherwise up to the legal owners of that grave, the family, to do the gardening, cleaning, polishing, restoration or replace headstones or lettering.