



Buried Treasures

Newsletter of Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc. (A0057103A)

Issue Four, March 2013

Cleaning Up: The December Working Bee

It turned out to be a hot, sunny December day when the Friends of Coburg Cemetery arrived with spades, gardening gloves, hats, water bottles and garbage bags ready to work. Our plan was to pick an area and start tidying.

With the promise of a cold drink and a snag on the barbie afterwards, we cleared weeds and overgrown bushes, collected rubbish, broken bottles, dead plastic flowers, chunks of wire and broken crockery from the north east corner of the cemetery until our backs ached. (Admittedly that didn't take long!) Although the maintenance workers have done amazing things at tidying up the cemetery and maintaining lawns and garden beds, we found and filled several bags and one large bin.

With our bags of booty and hot, red faces the working bee team then enjoyed a Christmas barbie and chatted about all thing cemeterian.

There are other patches of the cemetery calling for our keen eyes and begloved fingers to work our magic in, so it won't be long and the next FOCC Working Bee will be at it again! See you there!



Above: Yvonne and Marilyn clean up.

Below left: Time to relax. Left to right: Lee, Shirley, Cheryl and Marilyn enjoy their BBQ lunch.

Photos courtesy Julie Stratford

Crimean War and the Cemetery



Essex-born Robert Bugg served in the Crimean War before moving to Victoria in 1868. He settled in Coburg, established a rope and twine works, was a member of the Coburg Shire Council in the 1880s and a lodge member. He died in April 1915 and was buried at Coburg Cemetery. His funeral was attended by a number of Crimean War veterans and escorted by a master of the Royal Navy veterans. He is buried in the Church of England section, compartment A, grave 21.

Source: *Adelaide Advertiser*, 5 April 1915, p.11.

Celestina Sagazio talks to members of Friends of Coburg Cemetery and Coburg Historical Society



Image courtesy Celestina Sagazio

The guest speaker at the first Coburg Historical Society meeting for 2013, on 20 February, (a joint meeting with the Friends of Coburg Cemetery), was Dr Celestina Sagazio who worked at the Victorian National Trust for 26 years and now works for the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust. To an audience of about 25 people, Dr Sagazio spoke on the subject of the heritage values of cemeteries and conservation techniques. She illustrated her talk with a power point presentation including photographs of the recent infrastructure improvements and heritage interpretation at the Coburg Cemetery, aerial views and photo images of various Melbourne cemeteries.

Dr Sagazio argued that cemeteries offer a sense of continuity with our past communities and landscapes. They contain an historical record of the local communities that created them. Headstones, for example, can have fascinating historical facts sometimes found nowhere else. Cemeteries are

time capsules and are the least changed cultural aspect of our society. They reflect attitudes and the social and economic development of their local communities and sometimes contain fine memorials, buildings, structures, gates, fences, layouts and landscapes. But for a long time they were ignored as a consequence of our fear of and our reluctance to talk about and consider death. Dr Sagazio argued for the acceptance of the principles of cultural heritage significance (aesthetic, historic, scientific and social) and the conservation management practices, as outlined in the Burra Charter (1979 and revised in 1999).

In Victoria, the National Trust Cemetery Committee (now disbanded) was the first to undertake heritage surveys and assess the historical significance of cemeteries. At one time, significance was synonymous with the graves of white, Anglo Saxon, well to do males. Now those of women, the poor, working class, other ethnic and racial groups as well as children are considered in assessments of significance. Cemeteries can also be an important habitat of native plants, birds and animals.

Dr Sagazio believes that every cemetery has at least local significance. The existing features of each cemetery should be recorded and its significant features

identified. Victorian Cemeteries can now be protected by their listing on the Victorian Heritage Register if they have state significance or covered by a Local Government Heritage Overlay if they have municipal significance. Dr Sagazio listed the types of monuments, great number of working class graves, the entrance gates, its location on top of a hill and the cypress plantings as contributing to the regional significance of Coburg Cemetery

The cultural significance of the cemetery is conserved by maintaining, repairing, preserving, restoring, reconstructing and adapting. The philosophy of the Burra Charter ensures conservation practices are underpinned by the cautious approach of doing as much as possible to care for the cemetery and make it useable, but changing it as little as possible. The responsibility for grave maintenance lies with the descendants who hold the right of interment. If descendants cannot be located, newspaper advertisements can be placed in local papers to try to locate them and if there is no response, then work on graves can be carried out. Dr Sagazio advised us that it is better to repair cracked gravestones than to replace them with new ones. The appropriate adhesives for different headstone materials should be identified and used. If a brace is required for a badly broken tombstone, a metal which

will not rust should be used. She advocated a gentle approach to the cleaning of headstones - no scrubbing with hard brushes, no harsh detergents, and the use of fish oil on iron work once the rust is brushed off. Great care should be taken with inscription renewals

as the original lettering can be obliterated. She strongly recommends obtaining the advice of expert conservators before repair work is undertaken.

At the conclusion of her talk, Dr Sagazio answered questions from

the audience. The Coburg Historical Society President, Malcolm McIlvena, then thanked Celestina and presented her with a small gift.

Marilyn Moore, Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc. Committee Member

Shot by Mad Dog Morgan!

HIGHWAY ROBBERY.—On Sunday night last two carriers, named William Seacomb and George Spry, of Pentridge, were “stuck up” by two men at the Black Springs, a place three miles from Pyalong. The men were armed and presented pistols, and plundered the carriers of a cheque on the Bank of New South Wales, Melbourne, for £28 15s 8d, drawn by a man named Alexander, of Deniliquin; also a £5 note, and one £1 note. Spry refused to give up his money, upon which one of the men fired at and wounded him in the shoulder and leg.—*Argus.*

Born and bred in Coburg when it was newly cleared farmland, George Spry hit the newspapers when he was shot and robbed by the famous bushranger, Dan ‘Mad Dog’ Morgan.

As carriers and bullockies, the Spry men were successful Coburg businessmen. George and his brother worked on the Victorian goldfields for a while and had been contracted to transport valuables for banks and government. One Sunday night in

April 1861 at Pyalong just north of Kilmore, George was accosted (or ‘stuck up’ as *The Argus* described it) and, refusing to give up the money, copped three bullets that crippled him for years.

George eventually settled into farming, but not before he had been held up again, this time by the famous Pentridge escapee, Harry Power.

After returning to North Coburg to live with his sister, weakened and

crippled, George fell into the Merri Creek not far from the Coburg Cemetery, drowning.

He is buried with his mother and father in the Cemetery, only a short distance from the suburban street that still carries his father’s name.

(Image – Excerpt from *The Ballarat Star*, 10 April 1861)

REMARKABLE WOMEN OF COBURG CEMETERY

Celebrate International Women's Month 2013

Come along to a guided tour of Coburg Cemetery

Find out about the lives and passions of local women from yesteryear

SOLD OUT

Date: 2pm - 4pm
 Time: Sunday 24th March
 Venue: Coburg Cemetery, Bell Street, Preston
 Cost: \$10 per person & \$2 per member
 Bookings: Please book early by emailing us at: focc.group@gmail.com

The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust
 Friends of COBURG CEMETERY

The Remarkable Women guided tour has sold out but we are planning to conduct a repeat performance later this year.

We are also conducting several short tours of the Cemetery that will visit graves and memorials of some fascinating people on Sunday 21 April as a part of the GMCT's 'Visit A Cemetery' campaign.

Details will be online as soon as they are confirmed (www.friendsofcoburgcemetery.com) or email us on focc.group@gmail.com and we will let you know.

Remarkable Women - Virtually

Can't make it to the Remarkable Women tour on 24 March?

Come along to Talks on Moreland at Coburg Library at 7pm on Wednesday 1 May to tour the cemetery from the comfort of your chair.

Coburg and its surrounds have been home to many remarkable women over the last 170 years. Come on a virtual walk around Coburg Cemetery to hear about some of these women and what makes them remarkable. Hear about the strong and fascinating characters who built communities, raised families, wrote

books, made hats, buried children, won medals, bred prime ministers (well, one did!) and forged successful careers to leave their mark in a man-made world.

Presented by the Friends of Coburg Cemetery, this talk will also describe how the Friends group formed and is working to discover more buried treasures on the Bell Street site.

Date: Wednesday, 1 May 2013

Time: 7 pm

Place: Coburg Library, corner Victoria and Louisa Streets, Coburg 3058.

How to book: All bookings to be made through Moreland City Libraries. Watch out for their events brochure to book your seat or contact the library on 9353 4000.

For more information, check out the Talks and Activities section of the Moreland City Libraries website at <http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/moreland-libraries.html>.

Memorial at Metung



The latest in our series of images from cemeteries in Victoria and beyond comes from Metung in East Gippsland.

An initiative of the local Lions Club, a memorial was established in October 1994 at Sandy Point, Metung in memory of those whose ashes have been scattered in Bancroft Bay.

Our new website



As the Friends of Coburg Cemetery group has increased its activities it became more and more important that we develop a web site to promote ourselves. We have been privileged to have had assistance of the GMCT to develop the artwork for our logo. Using those colours and fonts we have recently prepared and launched a simple website using our domain name www.friendsofcoburgcemetery.com.

The site will advertise our various events as they are planned and provide links to our membership forms, our storyboards and our brochures. The site will also contain links to the history of the cemetery

and the local area and links to like organisations and historical societies. It is planned to develop electronic request and enquiry forms so that we may interact more easily with the wider community. We would welcome your suggestions for improvements and material to populate existing pages or new pages. Email your suggestions to David Down at dpd1949@gmail.com

Please tell your friends and contacts about our site and take the opportunity to promote the site and the Group as much as possible.

David Down

Lieutenant Alfred Lucas - WW1 hero



Alf Lucas was born in Gippsland but moved to Northcote with his family while still a boy.

A bright boy, both Alf and his brother George attended Melbourne High School.

After joining the 1st AIF, he moved rapidly through the ranks to become a Lieutenant in the 8th FAB and was awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre for bravery.

Having survived the war, Alf Lucas fell victim to the 1919 flu epidemic, finally succumbing to tubercular meningitis at the Caulfield Military Hospital on 15 December 1919.

He is buried in the Coburg Cemetery, in the Church of England section, compartment H, grave 101.

His father George, who died just before Alf's enlistment, is buried in an unmarked grave in the Church of England section, compartment D, grave 522.

from information supplied by relative, Damien Hynes, Eltham

Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc (A0057103A) Membership Application Form



Contact Details

I, _____
(Name of individual / group or organisation)

of _____
(Postal Address)

desire to become a member of Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc. If accepted as a member by the committee, I agree to be bound by the Rules of the Association for the time of my membership.

(Signature of applicant) (If representative, please sign here)

Date _____

Mobile _____ Phone _____

Email address _____

Annual Membership from 1 July 2012 - 30 June 2013 (please circle)

* Full Friend \$20.00 *Pension / unwaged \$10.00

* Corporate/Organisation \$20.00

Donations

Yes, I would like to make a donation to the Friends of Coburg Cemetery:

\$ _____

Please return this application form with your cheque or money order (not cash) made payable to "Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc":

**Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc.
PO Box 329 Carlton South 3056**

For more information, contact us via email: focc.group@gmail.com or write to us at the above address.

Farewell

The latest issue of our newsletter 'Buried Treasures' is about to hit the printing press and it is appropriate that I formally announce that Dr. Cheryl Griffin, FOCC Research Officer, Committee Member and Newsletter Editor has now resigned from these roles. David Down will be taking over as editor of Buried Treasures.

Cheryl has worked tirelessly and skilfully for over 18 months to help establish Friends of Coburg Cemetery, researching various interesting characters buried at the cemetery for the self-guided walk and developing and editing the newsletter. She has been instrumental in decisions and initiatives that have set us up for a strong future. I would like to formally thank Cheryl for her hard work, many hours, dedication and professionalism that she has brought to the group and to the newsletter. We could not have got to this point without her.

On behalf of all members of the FOCC committee and of the group membership: thank you Cheryl. We are pleased you will be remaining a member of Friends of Coburg Cemetery and are still involved in the Remarkable Women's walk. We look forward to your involvement in FOCC activities in the future.

Julie Stratford

President, Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc.

Dates for your diary (@ 11 January 2013)

- 24 March:** Remarkable Women Tour (sold out)
- 21 April:** Open Day and mini tours. See website for details.
- 1 May:** Remarkable Women Virtual Tour at Coburg Library
- 19 May:** FOCC Open Day
- 16 June:** FOCC Open Day
- 14 July:** FOCC Open Day
- 18 August:** FOCC Open Day
- 15 September:** FOCC Open Day
- 20 October:** FOCC Open Day
- 31 October:** Halloween Night Tour
- 17 November:** FOCC Open Day



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Friends of Coburg Cemetery
Inc. (A0057103A)

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friendsofcoburgcemetery.
com](http://www.friendsofcoburgcemetery.com)

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be sent to The Editor, Friends
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Box 329 Carlton South 3056 or
emailed to
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Copy deadlines for 2013:

Friday 24 May

Friday 23 August

Friday 22 November