

Buried Treasures

Dick Lee: "The game's greatest centre forward"



Walter Henry "Dick" Lee, 1889-1968

Walter Henry "Dick" Lee was a one of Collingwood Football Club's best known players 100 years ago. He was known by many as "the game's greatest centre forward".

The long list of Lee's official achievements include being Collingwood's leading goal kicker for 11 years, the VFL's leading goal kicker 8 times, a Collingwood FC life member, Champion of the Colony, team captain for several years, playing with the premiership team in 1910, 1917 and 1919, being admitted to the Collingwood FC Hall of Fame in 2004 and the AFL Hall of Fame in 1996.

Hec de Lacy, the famous Sporting Globe football writer in the 1940s, wrote often about the successes and abilities of Dick Lee. He wrote that Lee was football's greatest mark, being a better mark than even Roy "Up There" Cazaly, Laurie Nash, Bob Pratt, Jack Regan, Gordon Coventry and Herb Matthews.

In referring to Lee's particular kicking style, de Lacy described him as "the first player to exploit the accuracy of the drop-punt". Jack Dyer admitted in a newspaper article in 1948 that he'd learnt his own "stab-punt" approach by watching Dick Lee and Collingwood players.

Harry Curtis, the Collingwood Football Club president at the time described Lee as "the gamest man that ever pulled on a football boot"... "To me he was the un-disputed champion of the League and the greatest forward we have produced in Australian football."

Dick Lee is buried at Coburg near the James St/Bell St corner. His grave is marked with a sign and is featured in the Friends of Coburg Cemetery's self-guided heritage walk. Grab a map at the rotunda to find Dick Lee and other interesting "residents" of Coburg Cemetery.

Thanks to Jim Johnson for this story.

Diary Dates:

CEMETERY TOURS

22 JULY - 2PM.

STREETS AND STATIONS - THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE NAMES

So who was Dare of Dare street? Jewell of Jewell Station? What about Anketell Street? Spry Street? Walker Arcade? Wander with us around Coburg Cemetery to hear some of the stories of the people behind the names of nearby streets, stations and parks

16 SEPTEMBER - 2PM.

HEADSTONE IMPRESSIONS

Get crafty and learn how to rub an impression of some of the beautiful stone carvings found in Coburg Cemetery. Grown-ups only. All materials provided. This event will be strictly limited and booking is essential.

11 NOVEMBER - 2PM.

THE ANZACS

Commemorate the centenary of the end of the biggest war the world had ever seen and hear the stories of local soldiers and their families.

Cost: \$10 or \$2 for FOCC members.

Bookings:

focc.group@gmail.com

AGM

The FOCC AGM will be held at 1pm before the "Streets and Stations" tour on 22 July on site at Coburg Cemetery Please come along and have your say about our future activities

PHOTO SHOOT

We need a crowd! 9am, Saturday 26 May. Feature in professional photos to be used in future GMCT and FOCC publications. Email us for details: focc.group@gmail.com



Tawny frogmouth sighting

A tawny frogmouth delighted visitors on the recent 'Dead of Night' tour, perching on a column above Nuts Renny's grave as we gathered around in the dark. Several sightings of owls and frogmouths have been reported lately, with the dark, thick grove of cypresses in the cemetery providing perfect protection for birds and animals that we rarely see in daylight.

(Photo: Wikipedia)



Baden Barwise — A little life cut short



Baden Powell Barwise poses here with his younger brother Horace.

Baden and Horace are two of the sons of Henry Barwise and Florence Pearce. Baden was born in Prahran in 29 May 1911 and was their first child.

WWI started when Baden was only a toddler and in January 1917 his father joined the forces to help protect his country and possibly be able to bring in a steady income. Baden was only five, Horace was four, and, after Henry had left to go to war, Florence found she was pregnant again.

In May of 1918 Baden was admitted to the Alfred Hospital suffering with diphtheria. He had been ill for three days already. The hospital admission book lists fifteen others on the same page as Baden. Fourteen of them had caught this nasty, infectious disease that was sweeping through Victoria.

Two days later Baden passed away. He was buried at Coburg Cemetery on 13 May 1918, only two weeks from his seventh birthday.

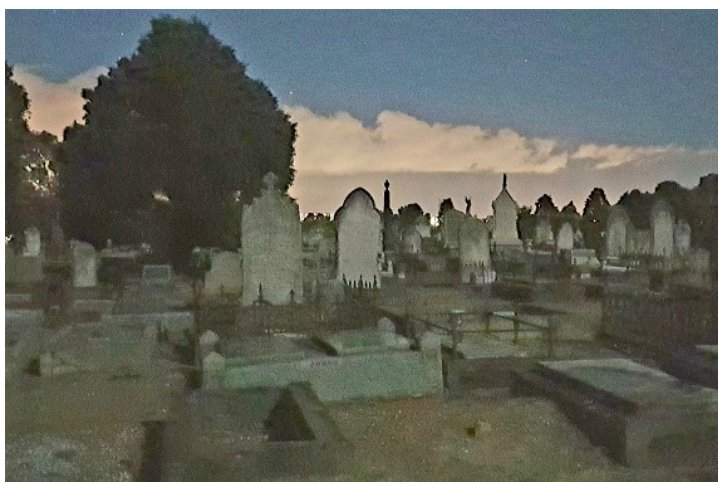
This tragic death created a downward spiral for his parents who never recovered from the loss of their first born.

Thank you to Carmel Reynen for image and story.

Tours bring the community into the cemetery

Four times a year (or thereabouts) the Friends of Coburg Cemetery runs tours. We talk about the dead and buried, the environment, the land, the history of the area, of individuals and of the community. We tell stories that are funny, sad, sleazy and unsavoury. We look at beautiful angels, crumbling graves and soaring trees. Sometimes we spot hawks, owls and foxes. We usually finish up with tea and cake and story-telling.

Our most recent tour, The Dead of Night, saw thirty people wandering through the graves under a clear night sky and a bright moon. We talked about twelve interesting characters: a gangster, a murdered policeman, a famous theatrical duo and a friend of Ned Kelly's.



The Dead of Night tour was a spooky wander under a gorgeous night sky



One of our most popular tours in 2017 was inspiration for crime novelists. The Lawyers, Guns and Money tour featured local crime author Shane Maloney talking about a gangster shootout in the 1920s.

Coming up in the second half of 2018 we'll be running an alternative to the usual tour format: a crafty session taking rubbings of carvings on headstones.

We'll be finishing 2018 with a tour about local ANZACs and their families, 100 years after the end of WWI.

If you're a FOCC member, tours are only \$2. Otherwise they cost \$10. This covers the 90 minute tour, a delicious afternoon tea and sometimes we have a booklet or information sheet to hand out.

The money we raise from these tours pays for the FOCC website, incorporation fees, brochure and newsletter printing, advertising costs and also that afternoon tea I mentioned!

You can find details of our 2018 scheduled tours on the front page of this newsletter, on our website (www.friendsofcoburgcemetery.com) or email us on

Sunshine railway disaster of 1908

Last month it was 110 years since 44 passengers died and 431 were injured as the Bendigo train crashed into the Ballarat train at Sunshine station.

Eighteen year old Annie Tucker and her mum, Margaret, died amongst the chaos, leaving her dad and brothers to search the rubble, the hospital and finally the temporary morgue at Spencer Street.

Annie and Margaret's grave at Coburg Cemetery is marked on the Self-Guided Heritage Walk map and brochure available at the rotunda.



Forgotten or just unmarked?

Coburg Cemetery has many graves with no stones or markers, no indication of who is buried there, how they lived their lives, how they died and who loved them in between.

One of these is the grave of Maria Ann Pettifer. Unmarked except for a small, blank, temporary paver, Maria's grave gives no hint that she had lived a long and eventful life, leaving behind a large family, some of whom remain in touch, sharing family tree information and old family photos at yearly family gatherings.

Maria was born in 1865 to a couple from the Channel Islands who married in Fitzroy in 1858 and headed straight to the Victorian goldfields. At Whroo, near Rushworth, the pioneering LeRoy family settled and expanded. One child drowned in a river as a teenager, one became a teacher, others became goldminers or married goldminers and several of died in infancy. Maria grew up, married James Pettifer from another of the Whroo pioneer families, and had seven children. Those children had at least 13 of their own who have, in turn, increased the family tree down the line.

After James died in 1924, Maria moved to Melbourne. Thirty-three years later, when she died at 92, Maria was living in a bluestone house on Lygon street with her twin daughters Caroline and May who are buried side-by-side in Coburg Cemetery's lawn section.

The newspaper obituary described Maria as the last surviving member of an early pioneer family.

It reported she'd been a healthy, active woman who broke her leg at 92 and contracted pneumonia before she died.



Her funeral was at the church opposite her home *Maria Ann LeRoy grew up on the goldfields at Whroo, near Rushworth* in Carlton where she had been a member for many years.

The picture below shows Maria (seated in the centre, wearing a black hat) surrounded by her smiling, extended family at an annual reunion in the Fitzroy Gardens sometime in the 50s. Some of that family still meet annually. Many remember Maria. Few remember why she has no gravestone or the identity of the infant buried in the same grave.

Maria's story goes to show that you can't assume that just because a grave looks like a forgotten patch of gravel there's not a remembered, loved ancestor 'resting' below.



New niche walls under construction

The old, wobbly niche walls are gone and their contents put away for safekeeping while the new walls are being built.

We have been discussing options with GMCT for some time, considering how to notify families and where to put them. The final decision was to build them the same spot as the old, close to the Bell Street fence. These shiny new, grey granite walls will have stylised leaf motifs. The remains and plaques will be reinstated in the same positions with no cost to families.

Some of the newly planted trees along the fence line have been removed during the construction but we are expecting them to be replanted once the construction work is



A Word from the President

Until recently we have had to work really hard to get enough publicity to fill a tour. These days we seem to hardly have to lift a finger! Our Facebook page has a couple of hundred followers, our mailing list is growing and community organisations have been promoting our activities.

The recent night tour was so popular it filled up within a fortnight. We have had queries from the media (instead of the usual spamming/nagging/begging that we have done in the past) and sometimes people tell us they've heard about the Coburg Cemetery tours and really must come along sometime.

Maybe it just took time for the word to get out. Or maybe we are just getting better at this stuff!

Hope to see you one of our tours or activities this year. Meanwhile, stay warm! Julie

Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc.

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Established 2011

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Get involved!

We are a small group with some big ideas!

If you'd like to get more involved we are looking for people to:

- Prepare and edit this newsletter
- Maintain the website and Facebook page
- Liaise with community groups
- Conduct grave searches and photograph headstones
- Research, prepare and/or conduct tours
- Prepare grant applications
- Undertake administrative tasks
- Promote FOCC activities
- Coordinate clean-ups and plantings
- help in any way you can!

Contact us to find out more:
focc.group@gmail.com

RESEARCHERS WANTED

HELP! We always need researchers to source information for our tours. If you have access to the internet and ancestry.com and can spare a few hours a week, email us on focc.group@gmail.com.