



Buried Treasures

Newsletter of Friends of Coburg Cemetery
Inc. (A0057103A)

Issue Two, September 2012

Welcome

So many good things have been happening at Coburg Cemetery that it's hard to know what to mention first.

Friends of Coburg Cemetery and GMCT have been working together to achieve many things: removing trees posing threats to monuments; replacing the front fence; upgrading toilets; building a visitor's rotunda; creating new garden beds; preparing a heritage walk and refurbishing pathways at the front of cemetery.

There is always room for ongoing improvement, and you are all welcome to actively participate in future solutions, and join our partnership. One way you can do this is to let others know what we are doing and to contact us with your own ideas and feedback. (Contact details are on page 8.)

In the last issue, we reported on the highly successful launch of our self-guided heritage walk and we are pleased to announce that in October 2012, during History Week, we will be conducting a guided walk that will explore in more detail the amazing lives of a number of our pioneers. We hope that you will be able to join us on the day. Please let others know about the event. What could be better than a spring-time walk around the cemetery with like-minded people!

We continue to plan future events, including another guided walk in March 2013 (Women's History Month) celebrating the lives of some of the amazing women buried in the cemetery. We are also collaborating with Coburg Historical Society and a number of schools in the area in a major research project focussing on Coburg and the First World War, but more on this in the next issue.

In the meantime, enjoy Issue Two of 'Buried Treasures'.

Cheryl Griffin (Editor)

Coming soon: Guided Heritage Walk of Coburg Cemetery

Come along to a fun afternoon learning about pioneers and politicians who lived and died in Coburg.

Sunday 14th October 2012
2pm - 4pm

\$10 (\$2 for members)

Easy walking access.

Bookings essential. Contact wtodd@gmct.org.au or
(03) 9355 3146



Grave of Abel Greenwood, one of the pioneers of Coburg featured in our heritage walk.

Image courtesy David Down

St Matthew's Cemetery

In the first of our series of articles on interesting cemeteries around Australia and beyond, our President, Julie Stratford, reports on her recent visit to the charming St Matthew's Cemetery in Quebec City.

Walking around the old city section of Quebec you could be forgiven for thinking you were in Europe. Apart from north American accents and an inexplicable local dish that seemed to me to be just chips and gravy, the 17th Century terraced architecture, French signs and hearing 'bonjour, bonjour' made me feel I'd skipped over Canada and accidentally crossed the Atlantic. Stumbling across the churchyard cemetery of St Matthew's added to the feeling of being a long, long way from Melbourne. Here was a green and leafy park with crumbling gravestones and green maple canopies; parents and children picnicking on the grass, office workers sitting on tombs with their sandwiches, smokers relaxing on park benches and tourists reading under trees.

Opened in 1772, this protestant, English-language cemetery contains remains and monuments to some of the many people who built Canada. As I walked through its iron gates, this cemetery struck me as clean, loved, green and pretty. A sign at the entrance announced it had been renovated in 2010 and that only 314 of the

possibly 10,000 gravestones remain. An illustrated audio tour on an iPod was available in the old church or the app could be downloaded onto my smart phone. I didn't hesitate.

Growing from a village of French adventurers, missionaries and fur traders in the early 1600s, Quebec City has evolved into something beautiful. The stories of the people who created this city are fascinating, harsh, sad and yet familiar. Guiding me through the cemetery with stories of Scottish soldiers, English sailors, businessmen, fur traders, ship builders, politicians and gentlemen, I heard about Quebec's history of war and conquest, business success and abject poverty, infant mortality and murder, difficult living conditions and the development of a thriving European-style city.

St Matthew's closed in 1860. Nearby residents complained that the overcrowded cemetery would bring disease. Over the next 130 years families moved on and forgot their dead while the community let the tombs and stones crumble. Until a few years ago the cemetery was unloved and ugly. Reports of vandalism and misuse led to the city council and a team of volunteers turning this space once again into a valued, important part of the city.

I loved the beauty of this cemetery. I loved learning about the history of these people and their lives lived long ago. I loved how this cemetery is so clearly

appreciated by lunching locals. The audio tour is professional and fascinating and free. All this, enhanced by a gorgeous blue sky and the sun shining through the elms, made this cemetery visit one of the highlights of my Quebecois adventure.

Some of those featured in the tour include:

- Thomas Scott, writer and brother of Sir Walter Scott
- Successful shipbuilders Alexander Munn, Patrick Beatson and John Bell
- Samuel Casely, murdered sailor
- Jane Babby and the twins she died giving birth to
- Robert Wood, rumoured to be the illegitimate son of Prince Edward, Queen Victoria's father
- Andrew Stuart, a judge and politician and brother to a Baronet
- Peter Hunter (d.1805) Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada and brother of famous Glasgow doctors and scientists William and John Hunter
- Elizabeth Holmes Finch and her three infant sons
- Joseph Frobisher, fur trader, land owner, parliamentarian and Justice of the Peace

Quebec City



Images courtesy Julie Stratford

A winter visit to

In the second of our series of articles on interesting cemeteries around Australia and beyond, members Marilyn Moore and Tim McKenna report on their recent visit to Blackwood Cemetery.

On a cold, showery Sunday in late July this year we drove to the small and sleepy settlement of Blackwood, a former gold mining town near the Lerderderg River and within the Wombat State Forest.

When we arrived we looked for an information centre, without success.

So, we decided to walk up Byres Road past the rebuilt brick Mechanics Hall, the Uniting Church, the renovated Catholic Church and Anglican Church (1863), all wooden structures. Although the Byres Road signpost opposite the hotel had not indicated there was a cemetery on Byres Road, Tim thought he remembered seeing one on a Blackwood Vic Roads map, so we kept walking. We found the cemetery on the opposite side of the road to two dwellings and located on a ridge with the land falling gently to the rear and fairly steeply to both sides. It was fenced and at the end of two rows of camellias planted on the road verge was a chain wire and tubular iron double entrance gate. Just inside the main gate were some large trees. The grass was low and the cemetery was very neat despite some fresh partly eaten flowers being scattered around one or two graves and many animal droppings.

Just inside the entrance gate was the grave of Little Doaty, which dated from 1878. It was edged with a low wooden white picket fence and had several bunches of artificial flowers on it. Our curiosity was aroused. Who was Little Doaty? A subsequent internet search has revealed she was Josephine Margaret Rowan who died at 4 years of age and was either drowned or died of diphtheria. (A history of Blackwood supports the latter cause of death.) The rest of the ridge was dominated by a huge Rogers family monument topped with an angel and with four angels on each corner of the grave. (Matthew Rogers was a stonemason and gold miner.)

There were many graves dating back to the 1870s and mostly they had the original intact ornate metal fences and headstones. A plaque on one stone marked the grave of the first man to find gold at nearby Golden Point in 1855, Edward Hill. The Frenchwoman, Madame Bonford, who won the contract to construct a water race for the gold prospectors, was buried in the cemetery, as was Bridget Cruise who had the Corner Blackwood Hotel, built in 1868. Newer graves had sawn rock headstones with surnames in red and black inscriptions into the smooth rock face. There was the grave of an 'adventurous photographer' Philippe Lachat (1945-2005) marked by a large stone with plaque and artifacts. Metal plaques also marked more recent graves. My first impression from headstone and plaque inscriptions was that the first settlers of the district must have been overwhelmingly of Anglo-

Saxon or European background.

A well maintained, sizeable, wooden rotunda with wooden seat was located at the main gate. In the open and on the ridge further away from the gate was another wooden seat.

We learned later from a Blackwood Hotel staff member, Ange, that one resident volunteer maintains this lovely old cemetery. The animal droppings are from kangaroos, which munch on the fresh flower stalks and help to keep the grass low, too. She told us about Chinese graves, marked by small headstones set in a line, dating from the 1860s gold rush days, located at the very back of the cemetery. We had not seen them in the rain during our first visit, so we returned and Tim photographed them. Perhaps they had been buried in a stranger's section, as they are in Coburg Cemetery. There was also one Anglo-Saxon grave located in the forest, far to the rear of the Chinese – a Frances Long – and we wondered why this grave was located there.

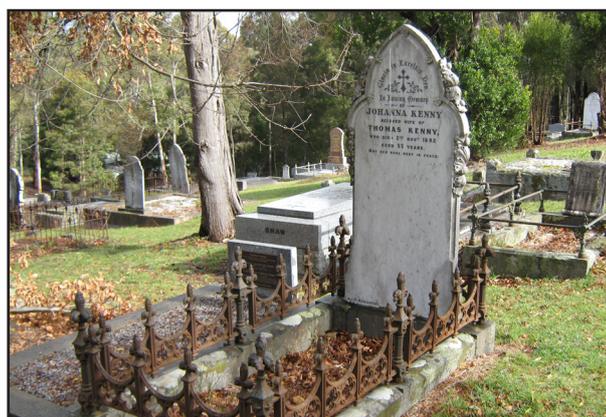
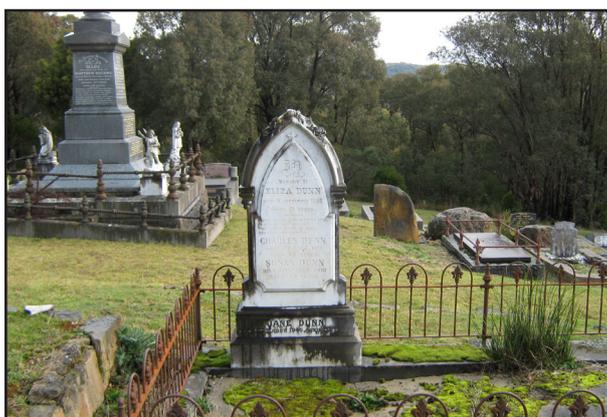
The relatives of those buried in Blackwood Cemetery would be glad to know that their loved ones have been laid to rest in such a quiet and serene spot. Our visit to the cemetery left us with some mysteries and a reason to read more about this historic place and its cemetery's occupants.

Marilyn Moore 2012

Blackwood Cemetery



Images courtesy
Tim McKenna



Around Coburg Cemetery



Can you identify the shrub growing in the grave shown at left? If so, let us know.

Don't forget to contact us if you are interested in preparing an inventory and map of the plants in the Cemetery.

Image courtesy Cheryl Griffin

Wood family



Alice Wood and her four soldier sons (left to right): Carl, Charl, Stan and Edwin. The boys were the youngest in the family, the first five children being girls. All the boys survived the war.

Image courtesy Ian Wood

My grandfather Edwin Wood was born in Kent in 1849. He migrated to Australia and married Alice Hewitt in 1878 at St John's Church of England in Heidelberg.

Alice was the daughter of George and Sarah Hewitt, who married in Dublin in 1851, came to Australia and settled in Bendigo.

Edwin Wood became a prison officer and was living at 60 Urquhart Street, Coburg in 1880. Alice Marion, their first child, was born in 1880.

Alice and Edwin in due course had a family of nine children. My father Charles Phillip Wood was the youngest of the nine.

Edwin Wood was Governor of the Sale goal in 1897, where my father was born. Following his service at Sale, Edwin was

appointed to Bendigo. He was then appointed to become Governor of Pentridge Gaol, but died suddenly in Bendigo, aged 51, before taking up his new position.

His widow and her nine children settled in Coburg. Alice established a drapery business in Sydney Road, Coburg. Two of her daughters (Myra and Edith) later established a lingerie and hat-making business in Sydney Road.

Edwin's widow remained in her home in Waterfield Street with Edith and Alice Marion (known as 'Lal'), who was a music teacher. They remained in their home in Coburg until their deaths. Charles Phillip (my father), who was the youngest child, operated a pharmacy in Sydney Road until 1938, when he relocated to Box

Hill. Bill Langtry purchased the business in 1938. Alice eventually had 16 grandchildren.

I lived in Coburg until I was 8 years old, when my father (Charles) moved to Box Hill. Alice and Edwin's grandchildren all did well in various fields, the most notable being Professor Carl Wood, IVF pioneer, who died in 2011.

None of their sons is buried in Coburg Cemetery, but Alice and Edwin Wood and their daughter Alice Marion are buried in the Church of England section, Compartment P, Grave 207 and their daughter Edith is buried in the Church of England section, Compartment B, Grave 672.

Ian Wood

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 54
Brunswick East 3057**

For more information, contact us via email: wtodd@gmct.com.au or write to us at the above address.

Johnston or Johnstone?

What's in a name?

When Barb Wilcock visited Coburg Historical Society's Bluestone Cottage in August, she came in search of information about her great-grandparents, Sarah Jane and Andrew Johnston. Between about 1900 and 1917, Andrew Johnston was the proprietor of the Thistle Cycle Works at 290 Sydney Road, Coburg. Later, when cars became more popular, he opened a garage and serviced cars.

His wife, Sarah Jane, died in 1912, at the age of 39, when Barb's grandfather William Henry was only about eight years old. Sarah Jane is buried at Coburg Cemetery in the Presbyterian section, Compartment P, Grave 337. In the same grave is her mother-in-law Margaret Ann Jenkyns who migrated from Scotland in 1885 with three of her sons. Sarah's daughter-in-law Gladys Amelia, wife of her son Andrew George (known as George) is also buried there. Sarah's eldest son, Donald William, died in The Great War at the Battle for Krithia on the 8th May 1915, and is memorialised in the same grave.

Barb has now read the notes from Dr Richard Broome's interview with Sarah's daughter Louisa and has discovered that Sarah died of consumption and that for the preceding twelve months she had lived and slept in a tent in the backyard, this being a common treatment of the time. As Barb says, 'it seems a very harsh thing to endure, especially when you were ill in winter.'

Barb's search for her family's graves has been made more difficult because in the generation between her great-grandfather Andrew Johnston and her grandfather William Henry Johnstone, many of the Johnstons acquired an 'e' on the end of their surname. Sarah Jane and Andrew were definitely without an 'e', but their youngest son, her grandfather William Henry, signed an 'e' at the end of Johnston on both his marriage certificate and will. When Donald (Andrew and Sarah's eldest son) enlisted in the AIF in 1914 he signed his surname without the 'e', but in the electoral records of 1931, 1936 and 1937 Andrew George (Andrew and Sarah's third child) is listed as Johnstone.

As Barb says, the change of spelling makes research difficult, but it is actually another interesting dimension to the story that numerous families must have experienced.

Cheryl Griffin, using information received from Barb Wilcock



Images courtesy Barb Wilcock



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Friends of Coburg Cemetery Inc. (A0057103A)

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Copy deadlines for 2012:

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