



Cemetery Conversations

The Newsletter of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery Inc.

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May 2006

The Remarkable Richard Davies Ireland

Tucked away beneath a spreading Flowering Gum tree in the Church of England section of the cemetery (CofE "B" 97) is the unremarkable grave of an extraordinary figure in the legal and political history of Victoria.

Richard Davies Ireland was born in 1815 in Galway, Ireland. He was educated at Trinity College Dublin and was called to the Bar in 1838. The lack of local work prompted Ireland and his family to migrate to Victoria in 1853.

Ireland was admitted to the Victorian Bar in 1853. He won recognition for his brilliant defence of Raffaello Carboni and the Eureka Stockade rebels in 1855 on charges of treason. For over two decades he was acclaimed as Victoria's leading criminal lawyer and was made a QC in 1863.

Ireland was also active in politics entering the Legislative Assembly in 1857. At various times in the 1850s and 1860s he was the member for Castlemaine, Maryborough, Villiers and Heytesbury and Kilmore. It was said in his obituary in *The Argus* that "no public man in Victoria has wooed the sweet voices of so many constituencies or fought so many contested elections". While in parliament he served as Solicitor-General and Attorney-General.

One extraordinary aspect of Ireland's life was his role in a divorce case involving Robert Molesworth, a judge of the Supreme Court. To quote Paul de Serville in *"Pounds and Pedigrees"* (1991);

"The Molesworth's had married in 1840, when Henrietta Johnson (a daughter of the vicarage) was seventeen, half the age of her husband. Quite why two such different people married does not appear to have been explained...Molesworth was industrious, conservative, not prone to sociabilities, and an older man...His wife regarded him as jealous and possessive. Mrs Molesworth was high-spirited, gregarious, attractive, and, in the opinion of her husband, wilful and unfaithful.

The marriage collapsed in 1855 after Molesworth accused his wife of adultery with Richard Davies Ireland...Molesworth gave his wife an allowance

provided she left the colony and behaved with decorum. She returned to the colony, and there was a violent scene between the estranged couple as she sought to argue for an increased allowance.

After the enactment of the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act in September 1861, Molesworth sought a divorce on the grounds of his wife's adultery with Ireland, but because of a technicality the case was dropped and it was not until 1864 that the case came before the Chief Justice, Sir William Stawell, and a special jury. Mrs Molesworth petitioned for a separation on the grounds of cruelty and the judge cross-petitioned on the grounds of her adultery.

"...no public man in Victoria has wooed the sweet voices of so many constituencies or fought so many contested elections".

Adultery with Ireland was not proved [although the jury found that Ireland had been 'unduly familiar' with the judge's wife] but a case was made that Mrs Molesworth, under an assumed name of Mrs Smythe, had borne a son to an unknown (or unnamed) man in England in 1861.

Mrs Molesworth, who was considered to have been too bouncy in the witness box for her own good, lost her petition, and...suffered the public airing and destruction of her reputation. The judge won his divorce but he did not escape criticism, and it was suggested that had he paid her a larger allowance the matter (a private domestic affair) need never have entered the public domain".

The Australian Dictionary of Biography sums up Ireland's character as "charming, convivial, a clever mimic and dramatic raconteur, he was reported to have spent four fortunes before his health failed".

Ireland died on 11 January 1877 at South Yarra, predeceased by his wife Sophia Mary, née Carr. (Source: ADB Vol 5 (RI); de Serville, P., "Pounds and Pedigrees The Upper Class in Victoria 1850-1880" (1991) p127; *The Argus* 12 Jan 1877 p5). ♡

Richard Ireland's grave will be visited on the forthcoming "Bobbies, Barristers and Beaks" tour to be held on Sunday 21 May 2006 at 2:00PM. ♡

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Stanford of Windsor

William Walter Tyrell Stanford was born in London in 1839. He came to Victoria in 1852 and went to the Bendigo diggings. In 1854, he was convicted of horse stealing and sentenced to ten years' gaol. In 1860, Stanford was released but re-offended. He was found guilty of two charges of highway robbery and one of horse stealing and again spent an enforced holiday at Pentridge prison.

While serving time in Pentridge, the prison Chaplain discovered Stanford's artistic talents and organised for the sculptor Charles Summers to visit and provide Stanford with some elementary lessons in modelling. Stanford was later given access to local bluestone



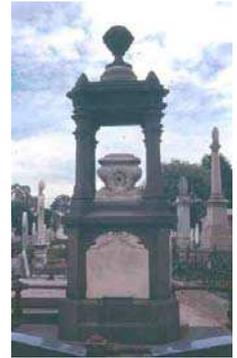
Stanford fountain

Photo courtesy Geoff Austin

from the prison quarry and began to construct a fountain which stands today in the Gordon Reserve in Spring Street, immediately south of Parliament House. For his efforts, Stanford, was given an early release from prison in 1871.

Stanford set up as a sculptor and monumental mason at Windsor. In 1872 he married Mary Anne Protty who predeceased him in 1878. In her memory, he erected a fine bluestone and marble monument at Melbourne General Cemetery. In 1879, he married Mary Anne Bienvenu.

Stanford's business was successful and he made a reputation for his carved headstones. In 1880, at the premature age of 40, Stanford died of 'ulceration of the stomach'. He was survived by his second wife and their three month old daughter. Stanford was interred in the family plot at Melbourne General Cemetery. (Source: ADB Vol 6 R-Z (WS) 🍷)



Grave of Mary Stanford

Photo courtesy Geoff Austin

STANFORD'S ST. KILDA LEGACY

There are a number of monuments in St. Kilda Cemetery which were produced in Stanford's Windsor business.

Probably the most substantial and complex example of his work at St. Kilda is the monument to publican and Mulgrave (Oakleigh) Shire Councillor Thomas Irwin, which is located in the Church of England "B" section immediately adjacent to the main central pathway. The monument includes an intricately executed figure of angel carved in marble. The marble figure contrasts with the dark bluestone upright slab to which it is affixed.

Stanford was quite adept at combining the use of both marble and bluestone in the one monument. This use of two materials is a feature of a number of his works including his own family monument in Melbourne General Cemetery. Because bluestone is extremely hard, especially compared to sandstone or marble, it is rarely used for intricate carvings. Yet Stanford mastered the technique of making detailed carvings from this durable stone.

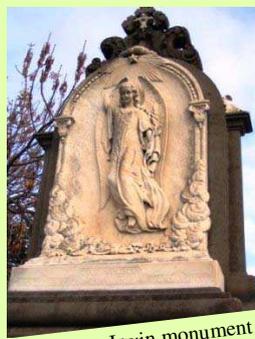
However, it was the standard Carrara upright marble slab which provided the 'bread and butter' work for Stanford's business (as it did for most monumental masons' yards in the late 19th and early 20th centuries). These monuments were imported in large quantities from Carrara, Italy and were already pre-cut and shaped. The job of the monumental mason was essentially to add an inscription to the stone and to erect it. The job entailed little creativity.

Most Melbourne families were satisfied with such monuments. They did not possess the wealth that was required to purchase a distinctive and one-off design. Moreover, most monumental masons would be stretched in terms of their creative talents to produce a unique design of style or elegance. But this was not true of the work of Stanford who was a gifted and talented sculptor.

One of the simple marble monuments at St. Kilda is the headstone to John Altham, a young baker who lived at Chapel Street, Windsor and who died as the result of injuries sustained in a horse race at Bacchus Marsh in 1876. Stanford included a carving of a horse on what is otherwise a typical Carrara marble headstone.

Stanford died at the prematurely young age of 40. For such a young man, he had lived an extraordinary life. His legacy is the wonderful fountain in Gordon Reserve plus the various cemetery monuments at St. Kilda Cemetery and elsewhere.

When exploring your local cemetery, look for the names of the stone masons that frequently appear on the bottom of monuments or elsewhere on the grave. You may be lucky enough to find a reference to "Stanford - Windsor". If you come across a Stanford design that is particularly unusual or noteworthy, you may wish to provide the details for *Cemetery Conversations*. 🍷



Irwin monument

Photo courtesy Geoff Austin



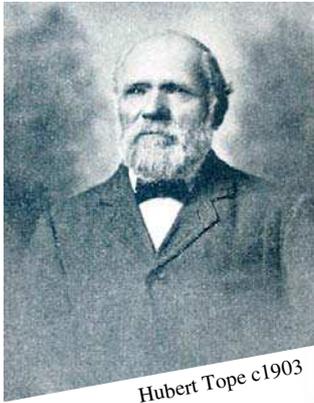
Altham monument

Photo courtesy Geoff Austin



H. Tope & Co

There was a time when it was common for any number of monumental mason firms to operate opposite a cemetery. Not that the tyranny of distance made any difference to the reach of the mason as a visitor to any country cemetery would testify. George Dawe at Melbourne General, G. Rice at Burwood, Johnston & Co at Box Hill, Thompson & Haverfield at Brighton, and Scott & Co at Fawkner are but a few examples. Likewise at St. Kilda Cemetery where two firms operated in close vicinity - Adamant on the north side of Dandenong Road, and H. Tope & Co, on the south-west corner of



Hubert Tope c1903

Hotham and Dandenong Roads.

"Messrs. H. Tope & Co...this well-known business was established in 1876, and since then has rapidly worked its way into a foremost position".

Hubert Tope (1837-1914) was born in Devonshire, England on 1 March 1837, and according to the "Cyclopedia of Victoria" (1904), served his apprenticeship in Boston, USA before emigrating to Victoria in January 1859. For a number of years, Tope worked with the firm Huxley and Parker before commencing his own business initially in City Road, South Melbourne. Firms like A. Hartigan, and W. Hawken, both in Park Street and Charles Heath at various times all established works in South Melbourne.

"The firm have designed and carried out most of the principal monuments and decorations in the St. Kilda Cemetery...including the late Alderman Moubray, Sir Archibald Michie, Edward Farmer,

John Finlay, George Brunning, etc., all of these being remarkable for the taste displayed in design, and for the delicacy of finish".

Tope was later to form a partnership with Nathaniel Dear (c1848-1903), a local 'grave decorator' and long-time antagonist of the secretary-manager Charles Truelove (1850-1909). Tope and Dear were the lone voices against the questionable practices of Truelove and were ultimately vindicated, but not before the 'horse had bolted'!

In March 1905, Tope provided evidence to the St. Kilda City Council contending that "by a subterfuge, the trustees continued to sell ground as a transfer from one of their number" in spite of the Order-in-Council directing that no more ground should be sold.

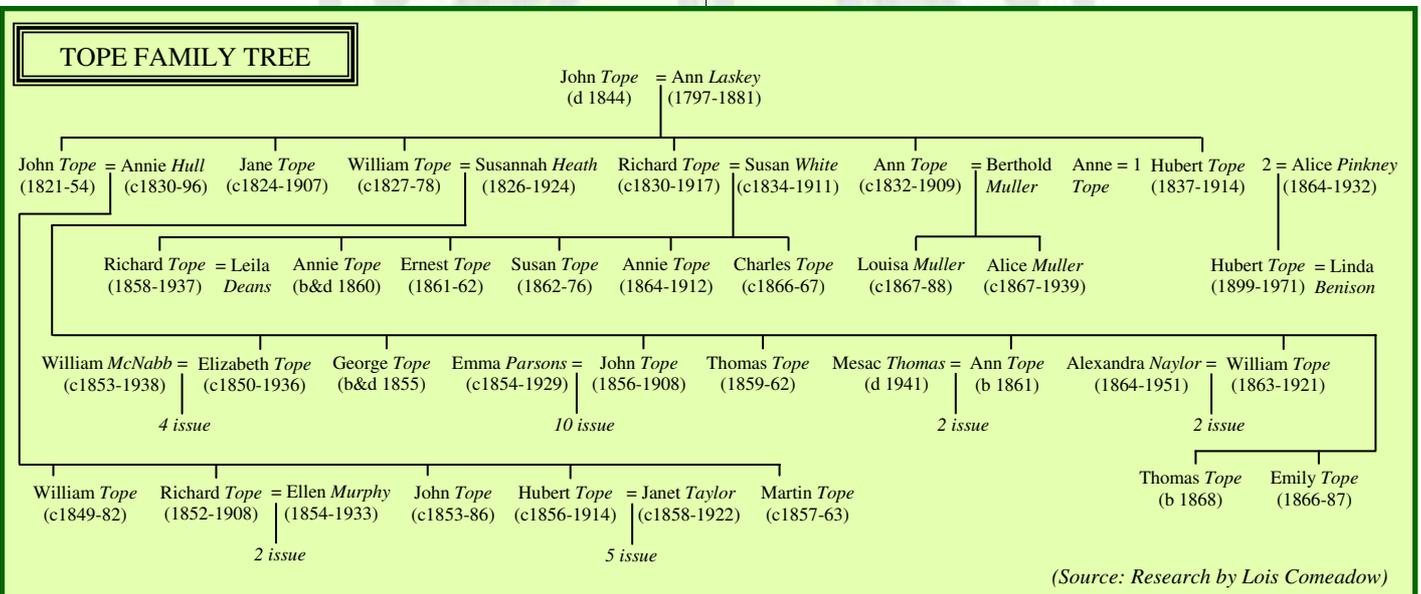
"The stone-yards, adjoining the works, are well stocked with granites and marbles from all parts of the world, and none but the most skilled workmen are employed in carrying out the orders entrusted to the firm".

One of those skilled workmen was the manager Edward Boothman. On Tope's death on 7 December 1914, Boothman was bequeathed the goodwill of the business and continued to operate, advertising as "E B Boothman late H Tope & Co". It was Tope's son, Hubert Charles (1899-1971) who would eventually inherit the property on his mother's death in 1932. This suggests Hubert jnr was collecting the rent from the Allen family after the service station was built on the site in the 1930s until Tope's death in 1971.



Fit for a Mason. Grave of Hubert Tope (CofE "B" 325B)

(Source: Smith, J., "Cyclopedia of Melbourne" (1904) p210; Port Phillip City Archives file on St. Kilda Cemetery (H Tope statement, March 1905); Research by Lois Comeadow).





Around the Graves

Forthcoming Activities

Work is progressing at a steady pace by Lodge Bros. on the Stamoulis memorial within the new Pavilion Lawn area. When completed, the memorial is expected to add a new element to the character of the cemetery and rival some of the best monuments in Melbourne.



Pavilion Lawn area

America's funeral directors are taking advantage of a lucrative new perk: *the frequent dier program*. Undertakers who ship coffins by air are rewarded with air miles in the same way as living, breathing passengers. (Source: *The Age* 25 Jul 2005 p1)

There's movement at the station, for word is passing around that we should see a new Friends' Group soon involved with the Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery. Boroondara is arguably, along with St. Kilda and Melbourne General, one of Melbourne's three most significant cemeteries. We hope to have more info in our next edition of *Cemetery Conversations*.

The Victorian Law Foundation is organising Law Week from 21 to 27 May 2006. A quick look at the list of activities on their website - <http://www.victorialaw.org.au/LawWeek/default.asp> - shows a number of cemetery tours are taking place. The Law Week organisers have been generous supporters to the Friends over the years, so we urge all members to consider participating in the planned activities. ♡

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NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to two new members who have joined since February:

*Renata Climie of Hampton East and
Lorraine Harvey of Parkdale.*

Do your bit for the Friends and sign up a new member today. ♡

Barristers, Bobbies & Beaks

Sunday 21 May 2006 at 2:00pm

St Kilda Cemetery contains Attorneys-General; judges of the County and Supreme Courts and many lawyers associated with famous legal cases including the trial of Ned Kelly. The tour will also feature a number of police officials and is held in conjunction with Victorian Law Week.

Monuments and Monumental Masons

Sunday 4 June 2006 at 2:00pm

This is a cemetery tour with a difference. Find some of your questions answered: What do symbols such as broken columns, roses, anchors and suchlike mean? What was a grave decorator? Why do the iron railings around old graves look familiar? Where did the marble and granite come from? Who were the local stone masons? Come along and find the answer to some of these and other interesting trivia about graves.

Murder Most Foul and Other Tragic Tales

Sunday 17 September 2006 at 2:00pm

Hear stories of murder, mayhem and other tragic tales on this walk through St. Kilda Cemetery.

Keilor Cemetery Tour

Sunday 1 October 2006 at 2:00pm

Keilor Cemetery celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2006. In 1867, an old man named John Fairweather went missing from Ball's farm near Keilor. Find out what happened to John as the lovely Christine Laskowski takes us on a tour of pioneers living in Keilor at the time. Keilor Cemetery is located on the corner of Cemetery Road and Ely Court (Melways 15 C9). Numbers are strictly limited and pre-booking is required by ringing 03 9531 6832. Tour cost is \$7.00. (NB - No member discount).

Steeplechases, Stallions and Steeds

Sunday 5 November 2006 at 2:00pm

Spring is racing time in Melbourne. This tour will visit graves with an equestrian theme. Hear stories of steeplechases, stallions and steeds as well as the tragic accounts of the deaths of a number of 19th century jockeys. ♡

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