



Cemetery Conversations

The Newsletter of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery Inc.

Issue 24

November 2006

The Knight That Got Away!

Over twenty-five knights of the British Empire lie buried within the St. Kilda Cemetery. For a brief time in the mid 1880s, St. Kilda was also the burial place of the brilliant military engineer, Sir Peter Henry Scratchley.

Peter Henry Scratchley was born in Paris on 24 August 1835. He was educated in Paris and later at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, England. He graduated from the Academy in 1854 just in time to see service in the Crimean War where he served in the Royal Engineers.

In 1860, Scratchley arrived in Victoria with a detachment of engineers to begin work on the harbour defences for Melbourne and Geelong. Lack of funds prevented most of the construction work. In 1863, to the regret of the Victorian Parliament, Scratchley returned to England taking with him his new bride Laura Lilius, the sister of Thomas Alexander Browne (the novelist, 'Rolf Boldrewood').

Despite his work in England during the 1860s and early 1870s, Scratchley maintained an interest in the colonies and particularly the defences of Melbourne and South Australia. He returned in 1877 becoming involved in the defence of all six colonies and New Zealand. His plans were generally implemented and by 1885 he was satisfied that all "*the colonies, excepting New Zealand, are fairly well prepared*".

In 1882, Scratchley retired from active military service but was retained as a defence adviser for Australia. In 1884, he was made special commissioner for the new British Protectorate of New Guinea and in June 1885 he was knighted. Scratchley's attitude towards New Guinea was enlightened. He believed that the locals had been maltreated and was convinced that "*New Guinea must be governed for the natives and by the natives*". Unfortunately, his administration was cut prematurely short after he contracted malaria and died at sea in north Queensland on 2 December 1885.

Scratchley's body lay in state in his St. Kilda home before being buried at St. Kilda Cemetery on 16 December 1885 in the Wesleyan "B" Compartment. However, Scratchley's occupation of the plot at St. Kilda was brief for the records state that his body was removed for transfer to Woolwich England on the morning of 30 April 1886. According to the Australian Dictionary of Biography his remains were re-interred in the Old Charlton Cemetery, England. Fittingly, this cemetery is close to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich which Scratchley attended.

Scratchley's name is perpetuated by Fort Scratchley at Newcastle, NSW and Mount Scratchley in the Owen Stanley Range in Papua New Guinea.

A photograph held by the National Library of Australia and depicting Sir Peter Scratchley's casket lying in state at his home in St Kilda can be viewed online at <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an23638479>.

(Source: R. B. Joyce, "Scratchley, Sir Peter Henry (1835 - 1885)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 6, Melbourne University Press, 2006* URL <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A060113b.htm>)

Sir Peter Henry Scratchley's temporary resting place at St. Kilda Cemetery is just one of the graves that will be visited during the Epitaphs and Oddities tour on Sunday 3 December 2006 at 2:00pm.

DON TAGGART, OAM.

The Committee was saddened to learn of the recent death of Don Taggart OAM. Don was the President of the St. Kilda Historical Society from 1975 to 2000 and a passionate advocate for the history and heritage of the area. Don was a keen supporter and member of the Friends. He was recently and aptly described by Meyer Eidelson, the current President of the St Kilda Historical Society, as a man of "*integrity, gentleness, honesty, never failing courtesy and good humour*". In memory of Don, the Historical Society has agreed to establish the "Don Taggart St. Kilda Prize" for local primary schools.

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Profiles of the Past: James Nicholson

St. Kilda Cemetery is the resting place of the well known music dealer George Leavis Allan, founder of Allan's music stores. Less well known today was his contemporary James Charles Wilson Nicholson who is also buried at St. Kilda (Church of England "A" Grave 044/048). Researcher, Helen McGrath takes up his story.

James Charles Wilson (CW) Nicholson was born in Bradford, England in 1837. Son of John Nicholson, founder of Nicholson & Co organ builders and pianoforte manufacturers, he apprenticed at the age of ten. His mother was a music and piano teacher from London.

The original Nicholson & Co, first established in the early 1800s in Rochdale in the UK, still operates today. They are renowned all over the world for their magnificent organs, still being built in the company headquarters at Worcester. Original organs built in the 19th century are still to be found in Australia.

In September 1859 at the age of 22, James married Diana Rushworth and in the December sailed to commence his new life in Australia. His father had arranged his immediate future in this country, as an employee with Mr Wilkie of Melbourne. They were business associates. Wilkie owned a musical instruments business in Melbourne which was later taken over and to become Allan's Music.

After ten years utilizing business and construction skills learnt at his father's side, he then spent three years as Manager of W H Glen, another well respected music house in Melbourne. By 1873 events were about to occur which would change the face of Melbourne and its population. There was talk of Melbourne staging an International Exhibition, and of a great building and parklands to be constructed in which to house the world's finest wares. It was to be called The Royal Exhibition Building.



Wilton, Church Street Brighton. Built by J C W Nicholson and subsequently occupied by W A C and Emma a'Beckett.

Nicholson was an astute and forward thinking individual. Seeing a more profitable future looming for Melbourne as a result of this proposed exhibition, in 1873 he and another employee from Wilkie's, a man named Elmas Ascherberg, struck out on their own, establishing a music house in Collins Street Melbourne, next to the famous Block

Arcade. It was named Nicholson & Ascherberg.

A depiction of this establishment was made famous in an etching of renowned Australian artist S T Gill's "Doing the Block". This partnership flourished until 1878, when Ascherberg decided to return to the UK due to ill health. Nicholson had been planning and preparing for the future, in more ways than one.

In 1878, Nicholson relocated to his new and opulent purpose built, six story establishment at the "Paris" end of Collins Street, where he would succeed in creating the biggest and most well known Music House in the country. He became a household name, pioneering the new idea of time payment and the policy of a complete service for the public, all housed under the one roof. There were Sales, Repairs, Teaching rooms, Concert rooms, Spare Parts, Booking Office and more. By 1880, every major city in the country except Adelaide and Darwin had a Nicholson & Co store and nearly every household had a Nicholson piano. Given the immense size of this country, this was a remarkable accomplishment. He only carried the best quality product and to ensure this, he travelled the world personally selecting his stock directly from the manufacturers.

In 1894, with the economic gold boom fading and the business community in a slump, Nicholson closed his Melbourne store and relocated his headquarters to the flourishing Sydney establishment. His wife had passed away in 1890 and his only daughter had moved to the UK and married. His only son was living in Sydney and managing the Sydney store.

In 1898 James Nicholson remarried Alice Letitia Kerr. In 1900, he purchased ten of Tom Roberts' portrait panels, those depicting famous musicians and actors of the day, and not long after commissioned him to paint a life size portrait.

After his death, his second wife donated the portrait to the Musical Society of Victoria (it is now held by the Queensland Art Gallery) in memory and in honour of Nicholson's long-standing relationship as their major benefactor. For most of his years in the music business in Australia, he had audited their books, provided full access to his immense music library, the largest in the southern hemisphere, some 12,000 pieces and growing, allowed use of his warehouse for rehearsals and funded their activities.

Nicholson & Co were also one of the founding members of the Australian Performing Rights Association, APRA, and as such have cemented their place in the foundations of a fledgling music industry that has grown to be what it is today.

Nicholson was a giant in the burgeoning music industry of this country, responsible for much of our musical development. His philosophy to make music accessible



Photo courtesy Helen McGrath



The Nicholson family grave. Church of England "A" Grave 044/048.

to all, rich or poor made him a household name.

Nicholson died in September 1907 at a hospice in Randwick, Sydney, after an operation from which he did not recover. He is buried at St. Kilda cemetery in Melbourne with his first wife Diana and his sister Frances.

The business continued under the stewardship of his son

Louis Edwin until 1939, when it was sold to Allan's Music, oddly enough, coming full circle. It continued to trade under the Nicholson banner until it was once again sold, this time to Palings, when it no longer traded under its own name and ceased to exist.

Nicholson's legacy can still be seen in a tangible form today - a unique concert grand piano especially commissioned by Nicholson in 1879 from Carl Roenisch, Pianoforte manufacturer from Germany. The piano has recently been deemed so important by the Federal Government that steps have been taken to preserve it for future generations. It has been classified by the Federal Government to be of such "significant historical and

social importance to Australia's musical and cultural heritage" that it has been given a Class B classification ensuring that it does not leave Australia. Significant Federal Government funding, along with a major financial contribution by Pioneer Australia, has enabled its acquisition by the Australian National University in Canberra. The piano is now housed at the University's School of Music Keyboard Institute as the centrepiece of its Historical Instruments Collection.

(Sources: Digby, E (ed), "Australian Men of Mark" (1889); Game, P., "The Music Sellers" (1976)

Friends of Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery Inc.

Artists and Their Patrons

Sunday 19 November 2006 at 10:00am at the Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery.

Join the Friends of Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery Inc. on this tour of the Cemetery featuring artists including Louis Buvelot, Alice Bale, Violet Teague, Jessie Mackintosh, Charles Nuttall and Georgiana McCrae.

Cost is \$15.00 and bookings are essential on 03 9817 4896 or 03 9762 5543.

Meet at the Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery Gatehouse (Melways Map 45 F5). Book now to avoid disappointment.

To learn more about the group, visit www.fobkc.org



Crawford Pasco and The Port Phillip Water Police

Many St. Kilda Cemetery visitors will be familiar with Commander Crawford Atchison Denman Pasco, RN who is buried in Church of England "A", Grave 83A. It was Crawford Pasco's father, Rear Admiral John Pasco, who had signalled the famous message "England expects every man will do his duty" at the Battle of Trafalgar.

A new book - *Law on Water - Water Police of Port Phillip (1838-1900) and their Administrators* - provides further information on Crawford Pasco and his role in reforming and managing the Port Phillip Water Police.

Commander Crawford Pasco, RN was officially appointed Superintendent of Water Police on 15 February 1853. His administration of the Water Police followed some very unprofessional, and in some cases drunk, administrators. He set about establishing a professional administration and a uniform for the Water Police. One of his first duties was to provide a report on the state of the Water Police at Melbourne and Geelong which revealed a Hobson's Bay Water Police strength of 64 officers and crew with their headquarters on board the Guardship in Hobson's Bay.

A detachment of Water Police comprising a Deputy Inspector and two boat crews were also stationed at Point Henry for the protection of shipping at Geelong; housed on board a Government schooner.

Such were Pasco's capabilities that by March 1853 he filled the roles of Water Police Magistrate, Water Police Superintendent and Visiting Justice of Penal Establishments in Hobson's Bay and Williamstown.

Many instances of Pasco's humanitarian and efficient administration are covered in *Law on Water - Water Police of Port Phillip (1838-1900) and their Administrators*, by Shirley Videion. The book is priced at \$29.95. Shirley can be contacted by phone on (03) 9592 9426 or email svideion@melbpc.org.au



The Tragic Death of Poor "Dicky" Rowe

With the Spring Racing Carnival currently in swing it is timely to reflect on the risks to jockeys whenever they go out to race. Richard "Dicky" Rowe was a young jockey who suffered fatal injuries following a fall at Randwick, Sydney in September 1885. He is buried at St. Kilda (Roman Catholic "B" Grave 362). The following extract is from his obituary in the *Sportsman* of 23 September 1885:

"On the 19th September, from the effects of a fall from his horse at Sydney, Richard Rowe, Trainer, of Sussex Cottage, Caulfield. So runs the melancholy record of the death of poor Dicky Rowe, whose name was a household word on the Victorian Turf, not that ever Rowe had the justice done him that his talents deserved.

His successes with horses during a long career were something phenomenal, and he will ever be remembered as the man who first brought Archie into prominence, he having trained and rode the son of Rapidity and Eugenie for the Normanby Stakes, which he won on the 1st January 1883 ...

His name came most prominently before the public when he won the Double at Geelong with Robin, and subsequently, under Mr F C Goyder, the fame of the mighty Sussex was established throughout the length and breadth of Australia.

The cause of Rowe's death was a fracture of the skull occasioned by being thrown off Grattan, whom he was schooling over a hurdle at Randwick last Thursday, and coming into collision with a post. He was picked up insensible and removed to the Sydney Infirmary, but never rallied ...

Rowe was universally respected, and, on the intelligence reaching Flemington, many and sincere were the regrets expressed at a sterling sporting man, and a clever Steeplechase Rider and Trainer, being so hastily summoned away to his rest. His remains will leave his late residence, Sussex Cottage, Caulfield, this (Wednesday) afternoon at half past 3 o'clock, to be interred in

the St. Kilda Cemetery."

Richard Rowe's grave at St. Kilda Cemetery is just one of the graves that will be visited during the tour on Sunday 5 November 2006 at 2:00pm

(Source: URL <http://home.primus.com.au/bonzaideas/MyFamilyTree/GILL/RichardsObituary.htm>) 🐾

NEW MEMBER

We extend a warm welcome to David Osborne of Carrum Downs.

New members are always welcome. 🐾

Forthcoming Activities

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.

Epitaphs and Oddities Sunday 3 December 2006 at 2:00pm

As well as recording important historical information, epitaphs can often be interesting, amusing or sad. This tour will visit some of the more memorable gravestone inscriptions at St. Kilda Cemetery as well as some of the more unusual and odd monuments and graves.

Albert Jacka V.C. Commemorative Service Sunday 14 January 2007 at 2:00pm

Albert Jacka was the first Australian to receive a Victoria Cross in World War One and has been the subject of a recent biography by Robert Macklin entitled *Albert Jacka VC: Australian Hero*. First held by members of the 14th Battalion Association in 1933, the Albert Jacka commemorative service has been held every year since his untimely death on 17 January 1932. The commemorative service has experienced renewed interest since the early 1990s through the efforts of the City of Port Phillip, the Naval and Military Club of St. Kilda and the descendants of the 14th Battalion. 🐾

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