LIFE BEHIND THE CEMETERY GATES

A beautiful sunny spring afternoon on 25th September 2011 saw a group of 16 people join Gus Allen for a leisurely stroll around the cemetery to learn about ‘Life Behind the Cemetery Gates’.

Gus lived in the old Curator’s house with his family from the age of four until he was thirty. They moved there from Oakleigh when his father took over the running of the service station on the corner of Hotham Street and Dandenong Road, his father tempted both by the proximity to the station and the fact that he wouldn’t have to mow any lawns!

Gus had stories to tell not only about his own family but also about the occupants of various graves. We learnt that family acquaintance, ‘Jocka’ Roach, had made no provision for his funeral but a quiet word by Gus’ father to ‘the powers that be’ lead to a plot being found not far from the main entrance.

Gus recalled Albert Howarth, a stone mason whom he chiefly remembers because of his 1926 Buick – a beautiful car! Howarth worked for Aubrey Boothman (Uncle Aub to Gus) who owned a stone-mason’s yard in Hotham Street, employing nine people, and who is buried in the cemetery with his wife, Iris. Gus pointed out that the inscriptions on the grave-stones were all done by hand, with holes being drilled with a hand drill and the lead then beaten in.

It was interesting to learn that vandalism in the cemetery is not a new thing. Gus recalled that when vandalism was occurring in the 60s and 70s, he and two mates decided one Saturday night to do their checking out of what was happening. Sitting with a few stubbies in the summer house they were shocked to be confronted by a local policeman with a gun! Several years later this policeman came to a sticky end when he was found up a ladder robbing a house when he was supposed to be on duty.

Gus recalled the annual Albert Jacka ceremony, held in January when it was always hot (and still is!) , followed by cucumber sandwiches and a glass of wine at the Town Hall and the 150th Centenary celebrations when, after the tree planting by visiting dignitaries, he was invited to plant the tree which, somehow, was left over.

Howarth’s parents are buried in the lawn cemetery near Dandenong Road, at almost the exact spot where the backroom of their house was. It was here that Gus told us of his father’s checkered career (which included working as a chauffeur and playing the drums at Wirth’s circus and in various dance bands before taking over the running of the service station) of Mum and Dad dressed up to go to the Mayoral Ball – and Mum hitching a lift home in a truck after a tiff – of the pig that fell off the back of a truck and found its way into the cemetery (and into the cook pot!), the cockatoo that would call out ‘Hello Dear’ at funerals, Sunday mornings at 11 o’clock when the bar in the dining room became a meeting place for people his father had invited, and VIP day at the end of the war when the trams in Dandenong Road were a riot of colour. We learnt that the massive pine under which we were standing was originally a tiny Christmas tree bought one Christmas and left outside until the tub rotted and the tree took root.

Gus has been a member of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery since the organisation started and recalled some memorable moments from our activities: the moonlight tour when fruit bats startled everyone by flying en masse out of a tree and excursions to other cemeteries, some highlights being the grave of Sir John Monash at Brighton, built on the only slight rise in the cemetery, and the grave at Box Hill of Cyril Callista, who discovered the formula for Vegemite.

* Photographs on page 2...

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The Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust took over the management of several cemeteries early last year. The cemeteries under their management now include:

- Brighton General Cemetery
- Bunurong Memorial Park
- Cheltenham Memorial Park
- Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery
- Dandenong Public Cemetery
- Melbourne General Cemetery
- Springvale Botanical Cemetery
- St Kilda Cemetery

Recently, the SMCT announced the appointment of Celestina Sagazio as their Heritage Management Advisor. At the Annual General Meeting of the FOSKC, Celestina was introduced to our members present. She also spoke to the incoming committee about her appointment and her vision.

**Recent FOSKC Tours...**

- **Above**: Some of the children at the Halloween tour, 30 Oct 2011.
- **Below**: Group on the All Souls Tour, 6 Nov 2011.

**Recent FOSKC AGM**

At our last Annual General Meeting, two valued committee members decided not to renominate for the new committee. Our thanks are extended to Elizabeth Hore and Tina Phillips for all their efforts on the committee. Elizabeth has been a Secretary to the group as well as Membership Secretary and Newsletter Co-ordinator. Tina organised our Facebook link, our Internet booking link on our web-site and has developed the Halloween Tours of the cemetery in recent years. Both of these former committee-members have also hosted several different cemetery tours, which we hope they can continue to do. Dorothy Lobert and Lyn Annetta were elected to the committee.

The current committee now consists of:
- Kay Rowan (President),
- Mary Reid (Secretary),
- John Hulskamp (Treasurer),
- Pearl Donald,
- Glen Turnbull,
- Dorothy Lobert and
- Lyn Annetta.
IT’S ALL IRISH TO ME...

By Terry Francis.

My Great-Grandfather, Edward Joyce was just 10 years old when he came to Australia with his Uncle, Edward David Joyce, in 1851. Edward’s father Martin was a farmer in Watergrasshill, Cork. Edward was to become very successful. He worked in Customs, became a councillor with Sandridge-Port Melbourne, and was elected Mayor in 1871. He wrote in the local paper under the pseudonym of The Ancient Mariner. He built the family home in Station Street, Port Melbourne, and it is still standing.

When I started on my journey of discovery to the past, I knew nothing of my father’s paternal side of the family. But what I discovered is an amazing story of family connections and compassion, hard work, wealth – and an incredible surprise at the St Kilda Cemetery that connects back to my G-G-G-Grandparents!

I found the Irish connection when I began collecting the BDM Certificates. I read the Birth Certificate for my grandfather, David Joyce, and discovered that his father was Edward Joyce, Customs Officer, from County Cork, Ireland. Edward was married to Ann Joyce (formerly Twomey), also from County Cork. They had listed five children (2 living and 3 deceased).

The next certificate was the marriage of my grandparents. Listed as a witness, was James Cullen. This meant nothing at the time, but was certainly going to be an interesting connection.

So it was time to broaden the search, and that led to the Marriage Certificate for Edward Joyce and Ann Twomey, where Edward was listed as a Widower! His first wife was Mary Ellen Meehan, and they had seven children! Mary Ellen had died in December of 1874, and Edward married Ann Twomey in April 1975, when she became the instant mother of five surviving children. Mary was just 29 when she died. Ann and Edward were to have six children of their own.

This was when I found my way to St Kilda Cemetery. I had been given directions to gravesite by the lovely people at the Necropolis. My hopes were not high, as I’d been disappointed by shattered graves at Melbourne General, and unmarked graves.

To my absolute delight, I found a huge double plot for the Joyce Family. The Headstone was standing proud, surrounded by a metal fence that was completely intact. The headstone listed Edward’s first wife Mary Ellen, three of their children Rose, James, and May, and Edward Joyce and Anne. After further discussion, I found that there were another 5 souls buried in this plot!! Three of them were children of Edward and Ann. Two others had the surname of Cullen. (James Cullen had been a witness to the marriage of my grandparents).

The next wonderful discovery was to find that Anne Twomey had a sister Catherine Twomey. They had come to Australia on the SS Great Britain in 1862. Catherine had married Thomas Cullen, and the two children who were buried in this large plot were their children.

And the final link was the discovery that Mary Ellen Meehan, and Catherine and Anne Twomey, were cousins!

John CONNELL and Catherine
Ellen Connell m William Meehan
Mary Ellen Meehan m Edward Joyce
Rebecca Connell m David Twomey
Catherine Twomey m Thomas Cullen
Anne Twomey m Edward Joyce
David Joyce m Clare Stuckey
Keith Joyce m Agnes Scafton
Teresa Mary Joyce (Me) aka Terry Francis

- Family Grave at RC B section, numbers 0155 & 0157
Early Death of a Headmaster

By Glen Turnbull.

Alexander Pyne was appointed Headmaster of Melbourne Grammar School succeeding Edward Ellis Morris in 1882. Pyne arrived in Victoria in the month before he commenced in the role, arriving on the ship S.S. Orient in December 1882. He was the son of the Rev. Alexander Pyne, who served as a clergymen in various parishes, including Camperdown and Creswick in Victoria as well as Ogbourne St. George in Wiltshire, England.

Mr Pyne was educated at Christ's Hospital, then Pembridge College, Cambridge graduating in 1874 with a B.A. Pyne's first position was as an assistant master at Weymouth School. After 6 months, he moved onto the Newton Abbot Proprietary College in Devon as second master. He remained in this position for 7 years and acquired a high reputation as a teacher and as master of a boarding house.

In September 1882, he left England to commence his work as Headmaster of Melbourne Grammar School. He reigned for only two years as he died after a brief illness in February 1885.

Judging from the ideas he entertained at Melbourne Grammar, his early death was a great loss to the cause of education. During his brief term of office, the cadet corps and the field club were initiated, the cricket pitch was properly formed and the cricket pavilion constructed and arrangements were almost completed for the opening of the new preparatory school. His leadership also included the establishment of instruction of gymnastics as part of every students school work and he managed to increase student numbers by 50% in his two years at the school.

Pyne's health was never robust since he arrived in Melbourne. He spent part of his last school holidays at Beechworth and then at Macedon, where he was very ill. As his health improved slightly, he was taken back to the schoolhouse. As Pyne was unable to start the term because of his condition, a locum was appointed in his place, which was Rev. Beaty-Pownall. Unfortunately, Alexander Pyne died at the Melbourne Grammar school house on 6 February 1885. He was only 34 years old. He is buried at St Kilda Cemetery at COE A 0201.

All of next years tours will be featured in the February 2012 edition of the Cemetery Conservations Newsletter.

General tour details:

- All tours of St. Kilda Cemetery leave from the main entrance gates on Dandenong Road, St. Kilda East.
- Tour cost: $10.00 for adults (except where indicated).
- Members of the Friends of St. Kilda Cemetery and children (under 18 years) are free.
- Bookings: Reservations for all tours are essential. Numbers are limited.
- Book now on (03) 9531 6832 or 0422 379 053 to avoid disappointment.
- Tours usually run for about 90 minutes.
- Tours are offered in all weathers, so please dress appropriately for the conditions. There is little shelter or shade within the cemetery. Tours proceed at a leisurely pace and keep to the safest paths, but those who may have difficulty walking on uneven ground should use their discretion.

*Above: Portrait of Alexander Pyne B.A.*

*Below: Group of students and master from about 1882. Sourced from the Melbourne Grammar School Archive.*