



Newsletter of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery Inc.

Issue 1: March 2020

President's Word 1
Suspending activities 1
Thomas Ellis 2
Moses Taverner, Shoemaker 5
Albert Jacka Service 6
Thank you 6
Recently received 6
Ships, disease and quarantine 7
St Kilda Cemetery Map 8

Committee

President

Gabriel Hermes
0451 831 102

Secretary and Tour Leader

Claire Barton

Treasurer

Robin Douglas
0407 542 607

Committee member

Geoffrey Paterson

Newsletter Editor

Geoffrey Paterson
0448740195
gkp@netspace.net.au

Contact Us

- St Kilda Cemetery is on the corner of Dandenong Road and Hotham Street, East St Kilda
- Email: info@foskc.org
- Mail: PO Box 261
St Kilda, Vic. 3182
- Web: foskc.org



Residents and Friends
of St Kilda Cemetery

Tours

Please email above or phone Gabriel Hermes on 0451 831 102
Registered No A0038728J
ABN: 69 718 923 799

President's Word

Elizabeth Hore, with passion and dedication as President of Friends of St Kilda Cemetery for many years, has decided to retire and pursue more of the family life.

The remaining Committee has searched for new members and we were very happy to have Geoffrey Paterson join the team.

All positions were then rearranged as follows: President Gabriel Hermes, Secretary Claire Barton, Treasurer and Public Officer Robin Douglas, and Geoffrey Paterson as Newsletter Editor. Three normal committee member position are still available.

Positions are up for reelection after July 2020.

Gabriel Hermes

Suspending activities

The Victorian Government has declared a state of emergency due to the corona virus. The Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust has therefore decided, for safety of everybody not contracting this transmittable virus, that all tours at the cemetery are to be cancelled at once till further notice. It possible it could continue later. We shall have to wait and see. Keep well.

Thomas Ellis 1834–1921

Church of
England C752

Prahran mayor



Stonington History Centre

Thomas Ellis was born in Camberwell, Southwark, Surrey, on 10 April 1834. Little is known of his parents, John and Mary Anne (née Snow) Ellis, other than that John worked as a painter,

decorator and paperhanger.

Thomas's parents were married on the 22 November 1823, and produced seven sons and four daughters. Several of their sons followed their father's occupation. They were a close-knit family who lived humbly. Thomas's father died in 1844 at the age of 41 years, leaving Mary to carry on the painting and decorating business, as well as caring for her large family. A month prior to John's death, the five youngest children, including Thomas, were baptised in Christ Church Camberwell, Southwark. Shortly after his father's death, Thomas commenced his apprenticeship in the family trade.

Thomas met and ultimately married Sarah Jane Body on 7 June 1856 in St Giles' Anglican Church, Camberwell, Surrey. They settled nearby, and first daughter Sarah Jane was born in 1857, ultimately producing 13 children in all.

Around the time of their marriage the English newspapers began publishing stories of the exciting gold discoveries in the Colony of Victoria and to Thomas and Sarah the germ of the notion of migrating to the colonies was born. The thought of the growing wealth in Melbourne was continually discussed; the image of that antipodean city glittered on the horizon and was never far from Thomas's thoughts. In his opinion, with the burgeoning growth of the colonies, new settlers would be building homes and his skills, as a qualified tradesman, would be in demand. Finally after much soul-searching, the decision was made and Thomas made his way to the London offices

of Houlder Brothers and Co (Australian and New Zealand Line of Packets) and booked third class passage for himself, Sarah and their five youngest children. The family left Tilbury Docks aboard the *L. A. Bang*, on the 25 November 1865 bound for Melbourne. Prior to sailing, the *L. A. Bang* had undergone repairs and as they settled into their trip it became apparent that the two masted sailing ship was still in need of maintenance. Thomas offered his services to the Captain as a carpenter in return for a part rebate on the family's passage.

Their long and monotonous voyage was without any drama; in fact in the warmer tropical waters Thomas made a habit of lowering himself into the water, by means of a rope, to enjoy a refreshing swim. As they inched their way closer to their destination the excitement built and finally after 188 days at sea, the *L. A. Bang* berthed at Sandridge on 3 June 1866. Passengers gathered on deck straining to see through the morning mist and smoke haze that hovered above the young settlement. Thomas 32, Sarah 35, and their children, Sarah 8, Kate 6, Thomas junior 3, Martha 2 and baby Emily, disembarked, filled with anticipation to begin their new life.

Melbourne was not exactly what the young couple had envisaged, yes there was wealth especially amongst the squattocracy, but there were many disillusioned miners returning from the goldfields with empty pockets. During the gold rush the population of Melbourne increased enormously and the Victorian population grew from 97,489 in 1851 to 364,324 in 1855.¹ Thomas saw this as the biggest and brightest opportunity of his working life, and he was consumed by enthusiasm at the thought of establishing his own painting and decorating business. Hence, within the year he had settled his family comfortably in Chapel Street South Yarra, opened the doors of his own business and commenced working towards his dream.

Through enterprise, diligence, and hard work, Thomas's business grew rapidly, although timing and good fortune were also crucial factors in its growth as, at that time, *Marvellous Melbourne* was on the move. Buildings such as the Melbourne Town Hall, the Exhibition Buildings, Wilson Hall, the Independent Church, Scots Church, the Bank of Australia, the Bank of N.S.W. and Trades Hall were beginning to grace the Melbourne skyline. Much to Thomas's pride was his involvement in decorating *Stonnington* and the Melbourne Public Library.

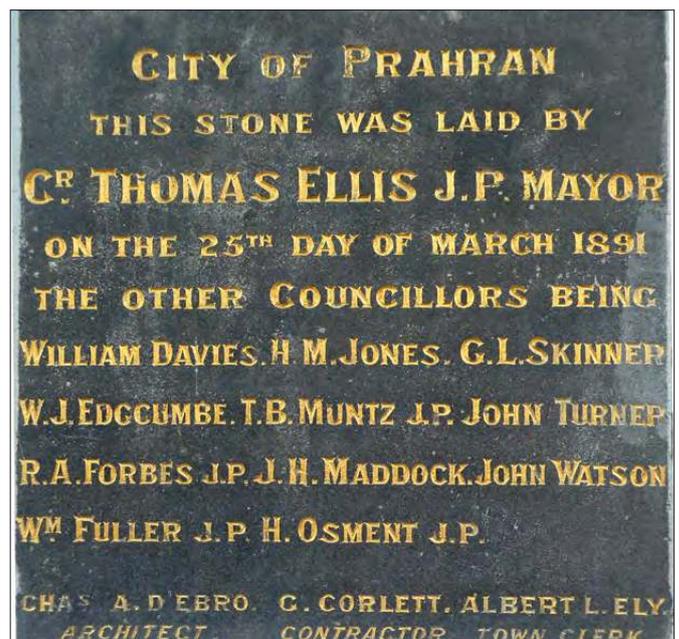
Thomas's workforce had grown to employ 70 tradesmen and to satisfy the demand for qualified tradesmen he began scouting the United Kingdom to bolster his workforce. In 1882, he demolished his original premises and erected four substantial shops and dwellings in their place. Interestingly, the shops also sold retail goods pertaining to painting and decorating. Around this time, his main office and business moved to the corner of Chapel and High Streets, Prahran. Similarly he erected his residence at 4 High Street, Windsor.

Thomas Ellis's success is closely associated with the growth of Prahran. In 1849, Prahran was described as a place of 'bush of big trees full of birds, kangaroos, possums and wild fowl'. Much of the area was swampy; in fact the site of the Prahran Town Hall was described as a long lagoon filled with waterfowl. The sale of crown lands gradually began, for example *Como Estate* was advertised in 1851.

By April 1855, Prahran was proclaimed a municipal district with early industries including brickmaking, wood carting and market gardening. Shops were beginning to open in Chapel Street to service the growing local community. The first bridge across the Yarra connecting Prahran and Richmond was constructed in 1857. Water was originally supplied from the Yarra River, but as the population grew and industry, such as tanning, developed, water supply and water quality was compromised leading to the construction of a piped supply from Yan Yean in 1857.

On the 27 May 1879, Prahran was proclaimed a City, accompanied by great celebrations; in the evening a torchlight procession took place, the mayor proclaiming Prahran a City from a drag (a sporting coach with seats inside and out, usually drawn by four horses) in front of the Town Hall. Chapel Street was crowded with excited residents celebrating the joyous occasion, followed by a banquet to honour the event.

By 1887, not all Prahran residents were happy; there was strong feeling amongst the communities of Toorak and South Yarra for the need to separate from the City of Prahran. After considerable lengthy and heated debate, the council managed to quash the movement, which in a short time led to the city being divided into four wards; Prahran, Windsor, South Yarra and Toorak. In 1888, the first election under the ward system, Thomas Ellis stood for election as a councillor in the City of Prahran and was duly elected as a representative for the Prahran Ward. Within two years, Councillor Ellis was elected as mayor on 18 August 1890 for a term of twelve months with a mayoral allowance of £300 and was appointed as a Justice of the Peace by virtue of his office. During Ellis's term of office interesting



events were taking place. These included the commencement of sewerage in an endeavour to improve hygiene and control sporadic outbreaks of typhoid, scarlet

fever and diphtheria. The introduction of electric lighting in Chapel Street and Toorak Road. As well as gas lighting for various streets throughout the city, 'the street lamps were to be lighted every night'. Construction of tramway lines along Dandenong and Malvern Roads and High Street also commenced as did the building of the new Prahran Market. Here I am proud to say that my great grandfather Thomas Ellis laid the granite foundation stone on the 25 March 1891.

While serving as mayor, a disastrous flood occurred in the Chapel Street north area after a week of continuous, heavy rain.

On the night of 12 July 1891, despite warnings given to local residents of the likelihood of serious flooding, the inevitable happened and 1035 households were inundated by swirling floodwaters. The Prahran City Council quickly moved into rescue mode and settled the victims into the shelter of the Town Hall and the School of the Arts. Blankets, clothing, and hot food was provided to comfort the victims. It was also a case of many volunteers helping in whatever way they could in such an emergency. Mayor Ellis together with two other councillors formed a sub-committee efficiently contacting all real estate agents in the area to secure suitable rental housing to accommodate the homeless. At the same time fellow Prahran residents donated money enabling the destitute families to purchase furniture and other necessary items. The overall result of the flood led to the widening of the Yarra and the implementation of the Yarra Improvement Scheme.

At the conclusion of Thomas role as mayor, he was generously thanked and congratulated for the admirable manner in which he had conducted himself, with special reference to the recent floods. The following year the Council named Ellis Street in Thomas's honour.

Meanwhile, Thomas's business interests continued, this time with an unsuccessful venture into manufacturing butter coolers with a view to exporting butter to England and the Continent. Thomas had also been in the habit, whenever the capital was

available, to purchase rental properties. At the height of this activity, Thomas had acquired thirty rental properties which for a short time proved to be a successful venture. Thomas was buoyed by the boom of the early 1880s economy. Land speculation was his next venture and, on the strength of a bank loan, he purchased substantial areas of land in Elsternwick, Malvern and Clayton. The land was to be subdivided and sold at auction to home buyers. Such speculative behaviour was by no means unique to Thomas. Throughout this buoyant growth period both government and private enterprise recklessly borrowed capital to invest in all manner of development. The colonial government raised loans in London in excess of their requirement and payment capacity to build railways, roads, schools and other public works. Private investors followed suit purchasing land for development way beyond its real value.

The inevitable happened and in March 1892 one bank failed and by the end of May thirteen banks had closed their doors. The bottom literally fell out of the economy and a dark period of depression enveloped Marvellous Melbourne. Like so many swept up in the frenzy of speculation, Thomas was brought to his knees. All his rental houses were sold to cover his real estate commitments (to no avail) and finally the painting and decorating business was also lost. In 1899, at the age of 62 years Thomas Ellis was declared bankrupt. To rub salt into the wound, that same year, Thomas's wife Sarah, aged 68, sadly died. Despite losing virtually everything Thomas Ellis somehow managed to continue his work as a painter/decorator in much reduced circumstances. His last known business address was in High Street Armadale where he continued until his retirement in 1904/1905.

Thomas, it would seem, was not able to recover from the spectacular economic crash, the loss of his business, and the death of his wife. On retirement, he purchased a block of land in Paxton Street, East Malvern, built himself a comfortable

home and started a poultry farm, which he eventually had to give up owing to poor health. From then on, he lived with his daughters, taking turns with each.

Thomas's vision as a young man was clear and true. He recognised the advantage of migrating with his family to the exciting new colony of Victoria and for thirty years both he and his family prospered. Perhaps his success got the better of him and, undoubtedly, he stretched himself too far. Perhaps it was bad timing and poor speculation, nevertheless Thomas Ellis made his mark.

Amongst his immediate family he is remembered warmly as a great family man, indulgent and generous with his many grandchildren. His family Christmas parties were legendary, every grandchild receiving a gift from their Grandpa Ellis and the adults enjoying the ritual of the traditional English game of snapdragon.

Moses Taverner, Shoemaker, 1874–1900

Baptist
Compartment C
Grave 07

English census records of 1851 inform us that Moses' father was a mason in the Marylebone area of London.

Moses had been widowed after four years of marriage to Elizabeth Crump between 1846 and 1850, the couple having no children.

Within a year in 1851, Moses had met Hannah Noakes and the couple were married in St Marylebone, London. They set sail for Australia, arriving in Port Phillip Bay on the *Himalaya* in October 1852.

Unlike his father, Moses was a shoemaker. The couple peregrinated in the Prahran and Windsor area. Although shoemaking was a common trade in the area, I could find no advertisement for his skills. The 1856 electoral roll shows a Frederick Street, Windsor address.

They lived a very quiet life in their chosen location. Their name is not mentioned in any local church records, council meetings or local papers that I could find.

His annual summer picnic to Hampton beach and yet another to Wheeler's Hill in a four horse drag were all specialities of Thomas Ellis. He is truly remembered with deep affection.

Thomas Ellis died aged 86 on 12 January 1921. Sarah Ellis died on the 19 October 1899 aged 68 years. Thomas's estate for probate was valued at £326.00. Thomas and Sarah Ellis lie in the St. Kilda Cemetery.

¹ *Victorian Year Book 1882–1883*.

References

Thomas Ellis and Family 1866–1966.

J. B. Cooper, *The History of Prahran: from its first settlement to a city*.

Modern Printing Melbourne, 1912.

**Contributed by Janet Douglas
Great granddaughter of Thomas and Sarah Ellis**

The couple had two children, Frank in 1857 and daughter Annie in 1862. By some misfortune, Frank died at an early age of 18 in 1875. Daughter Annie met and married James Brydon Stevenson at St Matthews Church in 1887. James was the second son of James Stevenson, from Lanark, Scotland.

The funeral notice for wife Hannah in the local paper, makes mention that their house was named *Lanarkshire*. After her death, Moses moved to Green Street, and lived there till his own death. Moses' probate documents mention him being a *gentleman*, and that his daughter and son-in-law were executors of his will.

Annie and James seem to have been childless. Moses left all his worldly goods to Annie and James, his real estate was valued at £6,080 and personal effects £10,945/10/10.

Claire Barton

Albert Jacka Memorial Service

Committee Members of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery were amongst the local history groups who attended the annual Albert Jacka Memorial Service on Sunday 12 January 2020.

The occasion was well attended and included descendants of the 14th Battalion. The Catafalque Party, 2/10 Light Battery and invited guests, assembled at the cemetery gates and proceeded down the pathway to the grave site.

Members of the Jacka family were in attendance. Councillor Marcus Pearl and State President of the RSL Dr Robert Webster OAM both spoke. Dr Webster gave a moving and informative speech about Jacka before wreaths were laid.

The ceremony concluded with the RSL Ode and a minute silence.

Thank you

Friends groups from St Kilda, Brighton, and Cheltenham Cemeteries recently attended a lunch at Springvale to thank and farewell Dr Celestina Sagazio, Historian and Manager of Cultural Heritage, and welcome Kelly Hoskin to the position of Strategic Engagement Officer. Both are pictured here.



Become a member of Friends

Membership costs \$15 and includes free tours throughout the year and Newsletters. Email info@foskc.org for a membership form.

The St Kilda Historical Society were also in attendance. The council put on afternoon refreshments at the St Kilda Town Hall.

Claire Barton



Left to right: Claire Barton, Gabriel Hermes and Friends member at the Albert Jacka Memorial.

Recent Arrivals

The Friends have recently received these publications.

- *Victorian Historical Journal*, 90:2.
- *Brighton Historical Society Journal*, Spring 2019.
- *Local History News No 83*, Malvern Historical Society.
- *Brighton Cemetery Happenings*.
- *Federation of Australian Historical Societies e-Bulletin*, No 193.
- *A stab in the dark: Sisters of Crime Newsletter*.
- *Raves from the graves*, December 2019.
- *The Cemeterian*, March 2020.
- *PMHPS Newsletter*, March 2020



Printed copies of our newsletters are provided courtesy of

SCOTSBURN NURSERIES
www.scotsburn.biz

The Friends of St Kilda Cemetery thank Scotsburn for their kind assistance.

Ships, disease and quarantine

Recent media reports of ships, disease, and quarantine is mirrored in a memorial in the St Kilda Cemetery.

Cruise ships are quarantined because of the Corona virus. One hundred and eighty years ago, fever affected the barque *Glen Huntly* and led to the establishment of Australia's first quarantine station.

The latter is commemorated by the Glen Huntly Pioneers Memorial in St Kilda Cemetery, shown below. The Memorial's plaque (below right) outlines events and the three people involved.

This article backgrounds the ship and the people involved.

The Ship

The 504-ton *Glen Huntly*, which sailed

from Greenock Scotland on 14 December 1839, was built at Wick, Caithness in the same year. The quality of provisions, cramped conditions and stormy weather, made for eventful sailing.

The People

The ship sailed with a crew of 18 and passenger number estimates range from 170 to 190. The passengers were assisted migrants and their families. Two- and single-parent families, couples, and lone sailors made up the crew with ages ranging from one to 63 years. Of the three buried at Point Ormond, John Craig was a weaver (aged 40) with a wife and eight children, while James Mathers (38) and George Armstrong (48) travelled alone.

Geoffrey Paterson



ON DECEMBER 13TH 1839
THE EMIGRANT SHIP "GLEN HUNTLY"
LEFT GREENOCK, SCOTLAND
AND ARRIVED AT HOBSON'S BAY
ON 17TH APRIL 1840.
MANY OF THE PASSENGERS SUFFERING
FROM FEVER WERE LANDED AT THE
RED BLUFF, ST KILDA.
ON 24 APRIL, 1840.
THAT BEING THE FIRST QUARANTINE
STATION IN VICTORIA.
A FEW DAYS LATER
JOHN CRAIG
JAMES MATHERS
GEORGE ARMSTRONG
SUCCUMBED TO THE DISEASE AND
WERE INTERRED AT THE BLUFF.
OWING TO THE ENCROACHMENT OF THE
SEA THEIR REMAINS WERE EXHUMED AND
REMOVED TO THE ST KILDA CEMETERY
ON 27TH AUGUST 1898.
BY THE BOARD OF PUBLIC HEALTH.
THIS MEMORIAL WAS ERECTED
BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION.
TO MARK A NOTABLE EVENT IN THE EARLY
HISTORY OF THE COLONY.

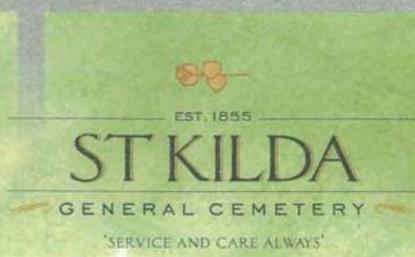
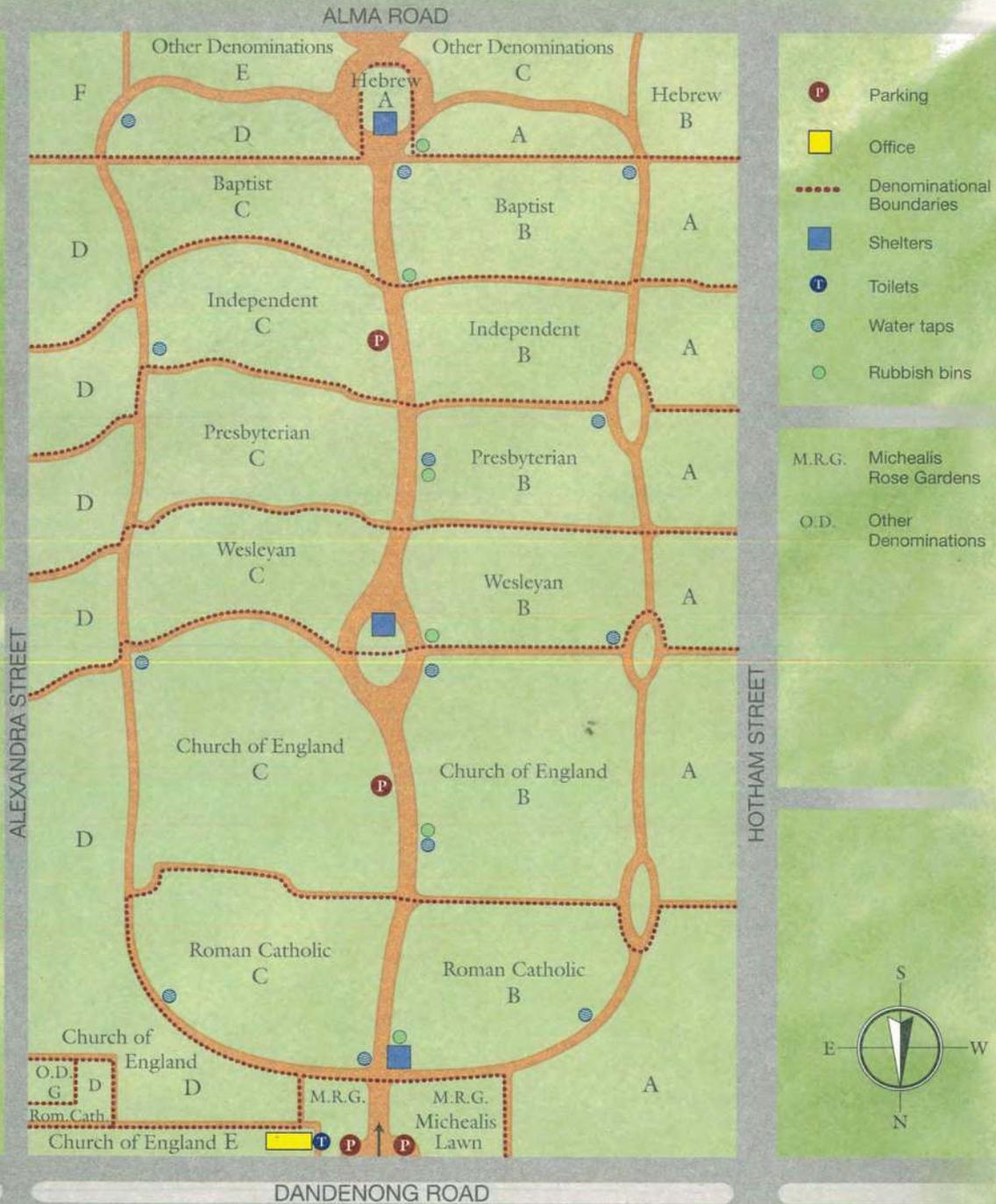
Top left: Charles S. Bennett. The Nameless Graves Point Ormond. P. Phillip, A relic of ship Glen Huntly. State Library Victoria. Accession Number H2348.

Bottom left: Glen Huntly Pioneers Memorial in St Kilda Cemetery. Other Denominations A.

Right: Inscription on the Glen Huntly Pioneers Memorial.

St. Kilda General Cemetery

THE TRUSTEES OF THE NECROPOLIS SPRINGVALE ADMINISTER MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY (CARLTON), THE NECROPOLIS SPRINGVALE AND ST KILDA GENERAL CEMETERY.



St Kilda General Cemetery (Melway Map 58 Ref. G-9)
 Opening hours — 9.00am to 4.30pm, 7 Days a week.
 The main entrance is from Dandenong Road, St Kilda East.

There are a limited number of memorial wall niches and rose garden positions available. For further information about these memorials or any other queries, please contact us by **TELEPHONE (03) 9349 3014 FACSIMILE (03) 9349 2340** or write to St Kilda General Cemetery, c/o Melbourne General Cemetery, PO Box 7, Parkville Victoria 3052

The deadline for the July Newsletter is 9 June.
 Please send **your** contribution to gkp@netspace.net.au