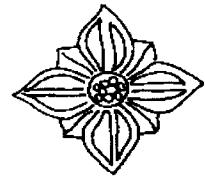

CEMETERY CONVERSATIONS

The Newsletter of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery



Issue 1

October 1998

Who are the Friends?

Early in 1998, a small group of people with an interest in St Kilda Cemetery met to discuss the formation of a Friends group. There are already a number of Friends of cemetery groups in existence both overseas and in Australia. In Victoria, there is a Friends of the Bendigo Cemeteries and a Friends of Footscray Cemetery.

The "Friends of St Kilda Cemetery" has been established with the objective to:

Promote the conservation and appreciation of the St Kilda Cemetery as a place of remembrance, of historic importance and of natural beauty.

At present, the Friends operates as a non-profit unincorporated group. Our long term aim is to hold regular tours; talks and other activities that promote the heritage values of the cemetery. We want to share our passion and knowledge of the Cemetery with as many people as possible.

At present, the Friends is in its formative stages. No fees or subscriptions are payable to be kept informed. We have decided that if there is enough interest in our aims and if the regular tours become a success, then we may explore the matter of Incorporation of the group.

Become a Friend

If you would like to become a Friend of St Kilda Cemetery and receive further details of tours and activities please drop a note to Pearl Donald, 66 Southey Street, Elwood Victoria 3184 or telephone Pearl on 9531 6832. ■

St Kilda Cemetery on National Register

Did you know that the St Kilda Cemetery is included on the Commonwealth Australian Heritage Commission's Register of the National Estate?

The Australian Heritage Commission is a Commonwealth Statutory Authority. The Register of the National Estate consists of "those places, being components of the natural environment ... or cultural environment of Australia that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations as well as for the present community".

The inclusion of the cemetery on the Register does not impose any constraints on the land managers, but it is recognition of the special heritage values that the cemetery possesses. The Australian Heritage Commission's Statement of Significance for the Cemetery states:

St Kilda Cemetery is one of Melbourne's oldest cemeteries and was the principal burial place south of the Yarra River during the nineteenth century. It is closely associated with the settlement of greater Melbourne and, particularly, the settlement and development of St Kilda.

The Cemetery is a local landmark because of its large size featuring many undisturbed headstones and memorials, surrounding iron, stone and brick fences. Its townscape value is further heightened by the fact that it is adjacent to one of the city's great boulevards. ■

Our emblem

The emblem at the top of page one has been drawn from a detailing which is to be found in the cemetery. Do you know from where it has been derived?

If not, perhaps it is time for you to take a closer look at the cemetery. Details of forthcoming tours are to be found on page four of this newsletter.

In our next issue, we will reveal the source of our emblem. ■

Cemetery Tours prove popular

The first guided tours of the Cemetery conducted by the Friends were led by Pearl Donald and Geoff Austin on Sunday 7 June. In cold, overcast weather around 30 people attended the tours which visited the memorials of individuals such as Captain James Bennett; Albert Jacka; Frederick Sargood and Baron von Mueller.

The second tours were held on Sunday 16 August. On this particular day the weather was delightful and perfect for a walk around the cemetery. We were pleased that about 30 people also attended this tour.

It is hoped to conduct tours on a regular basis, perhaps once a month. The Friends also hope to run other tours based upon particular themes, so you may wish to revisit the cemetery in future to learn about a particular aspect or topic (such as the plants and trees of the cemetery; the symbolism in memorials etc).

Stay tuned for further information. ■

Meeting with the Necropolis

Since 1968, the management of St Kilda Cemetery has been performed by the Trustees of the Necropolis at Springvale. The Necropolis has the responsibility for managing not just Springvale Cemetery and Crematorium, but also Melbourne General and St Kilda cemeteries.

The Friends felt that it was important that its aims and objectives should be brought to the attention of The Necropolis at an early stage.

In late June this year, Friends Pearl Donald, Freda Erlich and Geoff Austin met with representatives of the management and Trustees of the Necropolis at Springvale. A positive discussion took place and the Friends looks forward to working cooperatively with the Necropolis in the future.

Meeting with the Friends of Footscray Cemetery

On 28 July, we attended a meeting at the Footscray Town Hall of the Friends of Footscray Cemetery.

The Maribyrnong City Council is also the trustee of the Footscray Cemetery. The Council is keenly interested in the management of the cemetery including its heritage values and is supporting the establishment of a Friends group.

If you have a particular interest in the Footscray Cemetery or would like information about the Friends, contact Dwayne Singleton at the Maribyrnong City Council on 9688 0380. ■

Spotlight on St Kilda - Alfred Deakin

One notable occupant of St Kilda Cemetery is former Prime Minister Alfred Deakin. Our general tour of the cemetery, includes Alfred Deakin's grave.

Alfred Deakin was born in Collingwood in 1856 to immigrants William Deakin and his wife Sarah. Both of Deakin's parents are buried alongside his grave.

Deakin studied law at the University of Melbourne. In 1878 he was introduced to David Syme from the Melbourne *Age* newspaper and began contributing articles for publication. David Syme also spent time cultivating Deakin's political aspirations.

In 1879, Deakin stood as the Liberal candidate for the seat of West Bourke. Although he narrowly won the election, Deakin stunned the Parliament by announcing in his maiden speech that he would be resigning due to allegations over the fairness of the poll. Finally, in 1880 he was elected to the Victorian State parliament. During his years in Parliament, Deakin was particularly interested and involved in issues of irrigation and water supply.

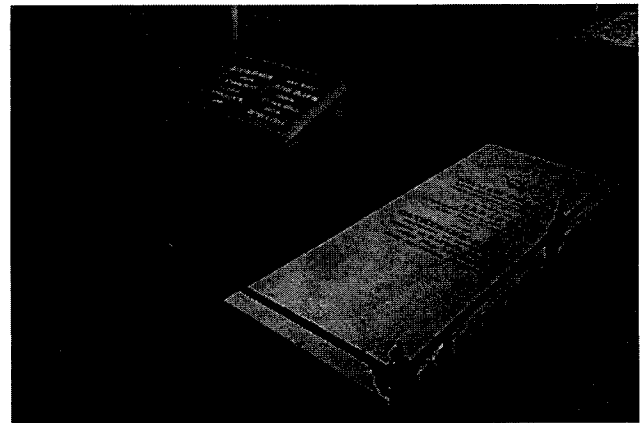
Deakin had invested heavily in land speculation during the 1880s and was badly affected by the burst of the land boom in the 1890s. Unlike many, he repaid his debts.

During the 1890s, Deakin's main preoccupation was the Federation movement. Deakin attended many of the intercolonial conferences and Federal conventions and was involved in the development of the Constitution.

Deakin was elected to the first Federal parliament in 1901. He became Attorney-General in Edmond Barton's first Cabinet. Deakin was later to become

Prime Minister in 1903 and again in 1905-08 and 1909-10. He retired from Parliament in 1913.

Alfred Deakin died in 1919 and is buried in St Kilda Cemetery with his wife Pattie who was well known for her work in children's welfare and especially the kindergarten, creche and playground movements.



Alfred Deakin's grave at St Kilda Cemetery (left). Deakin is buried with his wife Pattie. His parent's grave is the marble slab on the right.

The Nineteenth Century Cemetery

In May this year, Geoff Austin gave a talk to the Friends on the evolution of the modern cemetery.

The illustrated talk visited some of the more celebrated 19th century cemeteries in England and the United States. Presented below is an extract from Geoff's talk.

The Evolution of the Modern Cemetery

Up until the second half of the nineteenth century, most of the population of Britain, the United States and even the Australian colonies were buried in churchyards or burial grounds attached to churches. The cemetery, as we know it, is essentially a nineteenth century phenomenon.

There were a number of things that led to the development of the modern landscape cemetery

divorced from the influence of the Church. These factors included:

- In England, increasing dissent towards the established church (the Church of England) and the rise of other religious denominations. Those who were not Anglicans resented the requirement to be buried on Church of England property or church consecrated lands.
- Industrialisation following the industrial revolution and urbanisation and the movement from the country to the cities. The sudden population explosions in cities in the late 18th and early 19th centuries meant that the small parish churchyard could not cope with the increasing number of burials.
- An increasing concern about the public health implications of burying the dead in overcrowded conditions in the midst of towns and cities. It was feared that there were sanitary issues raised by overcrowded burial grounds that posed a threat to the health of the general population.
- Because of overcrowding in parish church yards, Church authorities began to establish new burial grounds at a distance from the actual Church building itself. Thus the direct links between the church and the care of the dead were being cut in the minds of society.
- Society increasingly formed the view that the dead should be treated with respect, that one's resting place should be for perpetuity.

A future issue of this newsletter will look at celebrated 19th century cemeteries in England and North America.

The first great landscaped cemetery in modern Europe was the Parisian cemetery of Pere Lachaise. This cemetery with its serpentine paths was set out on a hill to the east of the city in 1804.

In our next issue, we will look at Pere Lachaise and the influence it had on the development of the modern cemetery in Britain. ■

Forthcoming Events

Friday 16 October - 2.00 PM

Vardy Plaque unveiling

On Friday 16 October 1998 at 2.00 PM, a plaque will be unveiled by the Mayor of the City of Port Phillip, Cr Dick Gross at the grave of John Edward Smallpiece Vardy. Vardy was born in England in 1841 and migrated to Australia in 1869. He was at times a surveyor, architect and estate agent. As a surveyor, his legacy is the "Vardy Maps" which are a valuable historical reference of St Kilda and district to this day. Vardy died in 1882.

This function has been organised by the St Kilda Historical Society. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

Sunday 18 October 1998 - St Kilda Cemetery's Horticultural Heritage

**** Please note change of date ****

Keep Sunday 18 October 1998 free for a horticultural tour of the St Kilda Cemetery. These tours will be led by horticulturist and cemetery expert, John Hawker, and other Friends. The tour begins at 2.00 PM and will leave from the main gates on Dandenong Road.

The tour will look at the trees and vegetation of the cemetery; the symbolic use of plants on monuments and within cemeteries; and the graves of people associated with botany, horticulture and the nursery trade.

Sunday 17 January 1999 - Graveside service for Albert Jacka VC

The annual graveside service to commemorate the life of distinguished First World War soldier Albert Jacka VC, is planned for Sunday 17 January 1999. ■