



# Newsletter of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery Inc.

## Issue 6: March 2021

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## President's Word

Dear faithful member

From all indications we hope this year promises to be a normal one with help of COVID injections and keeping personal safety. In this way, we can enjoy our cemetery tours again without interruptions. Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy our newsletters.

*Gabriel Hermes*  
President

## St Kilda Cemetery Survey

Samuel Holleran is a University of Melbourne PhD student, who is examining public participation in the reimagination of urban cemeteries. Growing cities, changing traditions, and an evolving ecological consciousness have shifted the way we view urban cemeteries.

Samuel is undertaking a project which examines community participation in the reimagining of cemeteries in densifying neighbourhoods in order to understand how they function as non-traditional civic spaces. A particular focus is on how these spaces take on some of the qualities of parkland and are used for meditative walks and low-impact exercise.

### The survey

Part of the project is a very short five-minute questionnaire to gauge how people use St Kilda cemetery as an everyday walking space – something that became increasingly important during the stage four local lockdowns.

The survey is available at

<https://forms.gle/PyEemPvqbQXSsyPg9>

or use your smartphone's camera to scan this QR code.

Sam's email is [s.holleran@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:s.holleran@unimelb.edu.au)



## Brighton Cemetery Event

**Saturday 8 May 2021 at 10.00am**

A brass plaque will be unveiled for William Brahe, last surviving member of the Burke and Wills party. If attending please contact Lois at Brighton Cemeterians on 0428 772 338.

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

# Norman Brookes: *The Wizard*

by Robert Heath

As I write this article, the 2021 Australian men's tennis final has concluded, with the winner receiving the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup.

Who was Sir Norman Brookes, and why was this trophy named in his honour?

By way of introduction, it is worth noting four things concerning Sir Norman Brookes (1877–1968):

- First, he won the Australian Nationals Singles Championship in 1911. This championship was the forerunner of today's Australian Open. It is fitting to remember Sir Norman Brookes one hundred years after he himself was crowned as the Australian tennis champion.
- Second, due to his skills with racquet and ball, he was known in tennis circles as *The Wizard*.
- Third, he enjoyed success both as a singles and doubles player. He won innumerable championships in Australia, Europe and the United States and helped Australasia win five Davis Cup titles in 1907, 1908, 1909, 1914 and 1920.
- Finally, Sir Norman is buried in the St Kilda Cemetery.

This article looks at four aspects of the life of Brookes: 1. his early sporting life and the style of his tennis game; 2. his 1911 Australian Open victory; 3. his success at Wimbledon; and 4. his career as a tennis administrator. The article also contains a brief conclusion.

## 1. Early sporting life and the style of his tennis game

At the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, Brookes excelled at cricket, football and lawn tennis. He later took up golf and won the Victorian foursomes championship once and the Australian twice.

But tennis was his greatest enthusiasm. He started as a baseline player with powerful shots. By the time of his 1905 trip to Wimbledon, however, he had adjusted his style of play. In relation to his groundstrokes, he combined power with increased accuracy. But the major change was the introduction of an aggressive serve and volley game. He used a serve that twisted, spun and skidded away from his opponent. It was not easy to return these serves, and the return shot was often weak. Having delivered his serve, Brookes rushed to the net to put away such a return. In addition to this new power game, Brookes maintained the hallmarks of his old game – powerful groundstrokes, delicacy of touch and control of angled shots.

Norman Brookes was stylish and dapper on court, with a tweed cap placed firmly on his head. He wore a button-down sweater, pressed white pants, and pristine white shoes. It was a debonair look.



The caption reads:

No more appropriate opening of the new tennis courts and stand at Kooyong could have been devised than that in which Norman Brookes made a brief speech and served the first ball on Saturday. His uncanny skill and courtcraft, the familiar cap and square headed racquet awakened memories of other days when the veteran player, who is now President of the Victorian and Australian Tennis Associations, was regarded as the world's leading player for a period of nearly twenty years. *Table Talk*, 27 January 1927, page 5.

## 2. Sir Norman Brookes and the Australian Championship

Brookes played for the Australian Nationals Singles Championship only once in 1911 when he defeated Horace Rice in the final (6–3, 7–5, 6–2).

## 3. Sir Norman Brookes and Wimbledon

From 1878 to 1921, and in subsequent periods, the Wimbledon Championships took place on the outdoor grass courts at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, London.

In the same period, the holder of the Gentlemen's Singles title did not compete until the Challenge Round, when he met the winner of the All Comers' Singles game to decide The Championship. To secure a place in the All Comers' Singles, a player had to advance through the draw, playing and beating each opponent. When the reigning champion did not defend

his title, the winner of the All Comers' Singles game automatically became champion. In that situation, the All Comers' Singles was the final.

In 1905, for the first time, Norman Brookes travelled to the United Kingdom to play in the Wimbledon Championships. At this point, he was a director of the Australian Paper Mills Company Limited, the successful company of which his father had been managing director for many years.

In the singles, he advanced through four rounds, the Quarter Final, and the Semi-Final to secure a spot in the All Comers' Final. He defeated S. H. Smith in a five-set thriller. Brookes managed to break his opponent's serve late in the fifth set, earning the right to play the reigning champion in The Championship. H. L. Doherty was playing for his fifth straight title. Laurie Doherty prevailed over Brookes in a tight encounter. It would be some 70 years before the Swedish champion – Bjorn Borg – won a fifth title.

In 1907, H. L. Doherty did not defend his title. Norman Brookes advanced through the draw to meet A. W. Gore in the All Comer's Final. At that stage, Arthur Gore had won The Championship in 1901; and he went on to win The Championship in 1908 and 1909. But 1907 was not his year. Brookes won in straight sets (6–4, 6–2, 6–2). According to press accounts, this victory was founded upon the Australian's aggressive net attack. Brookes was the first foreigner and first left-hander to win The Championship. He also won the doubles title, pairing successfully with Anthony Wilding, the New Zealand champion.

In 1908, Brookes did not defend his singles title at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club and did not return to Wimbledon until 1914. In that year, Brookes again won the Singles Championship and, with Wilding, the doubles championship.

Brookes played Otto Froitzheim in the All Comers' Final. Brookes comfortably won the first two sets of this game (6–2, 6–1), before losing the next two sets in a tightly fought contest (5–7, 4–6). The last set was another close affair, but the Australian eventually managed to break his opponent's service game (8–6).

In 1914, Wilding was the reigning Singles champion, so Brookes faced Wilding (also his doubles partner) in the Challenge Match.

Brookes won in three sets (6–4, 6–4, 7–5), ending Wilding's four-year reign as the Gentlemen's Singles champion. Wilding and Brookes won the doubles title.

In World War I, in 1915 and 1916, Brookes served as commissioner of the Australian branch of the British Red Cross in Egypt. He resigned in January 1917 and in May became commissioner for the British Red Cross in Mesopotamia. Soon after, he was appointed assistant director of local resources for the British Expeditionary Force there. Stomach ulcers had prevented active service.

As a result of World War I, the Wimbledon Championship was suspended until 1919. As Brookes was the reigning champion in 1919, having won the title in 1914, he did not compete until the Challenge Round, when he met the winner of the All Comers' Singles game to decide The Championship. Brookes lost in straight sets to his compatriot, G. L. Patterson (6–3, 7–5, 6–2).

#### **4. Tennis Administrator**

I cannot improve on the summary of Brookes' career provided by W. H. Frederick in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*:

Brookes was president of the Lawn Tennis Association of Victoria from 1925 until 1937; it was largely due to his enterprise that Kooyong, purchased in 1919, was developed as a tennis centre. In 1926 he became president of the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia, holding the office for twenty-eight years. Though naturally taciturn and reserved he could at times be outspokenly blunt, stubborn and uncompromising. Despite his great prestige he did not escape the charge of being autocratic and he came under criticism as a selector of Davis Cup teams, but Brookes' name and fame were legendary. In recognition of his distinguished services to tennis he was knighted in 1939.

#### **5. Conclusion**

In light of the matters set out above, it is fitting that the Australian Open trophy is named after Sir Norman Brookes. If Brookes were alive today, it is likely that he would have told quarantined players to "get on with it". It is also likely that, putting the on-court antics and Twitter rants of Nick Kyrgios to one side, Sir Norman would have enjoyed the young man's powerful serve and volley game. It is *Wizard*-like.

# The Baines Family

by Gabriel Hermes



Have you in your cemetery wanderings come across an eye-catching memorial? The beautifully-made marble stone in this photograph recently caught my eye. It memorialises both father John Baines, who died in 1884, and his son Charles who was killed in World War 1 France 32 years later. I felt the story behind this stone was worth researching.

## Charles Baines

Charles Vincent Baines' enlistment papers provide some personal details.<sup>1</sup> Charles was born in 1882 to father John (featured on the headstone) and mother Mary. He was single, Roman Catholic, stood at height 5' 8" and weighed 145 pounds. He lived at 88 Hope Street, South Yarra.

Before joining the 1st AIF, Charles was a tram conductor at the cable tram depot located on the corner of Chapel Street and Toorak Road. The engine house and the tram barn were on this site which was opened on 26 October 1888. It was sold in 1929 and later became the Capitol Bakery, before being demolished.

The tram route at the time was Swanston Street, St Kilda Road, Domain Road, Park Street, Toorak Road and Chapel Street.

The cable tram was an ingenious system with the central power house providing traction for the wire rope under the roadway. The trams comprised two vehicles. The *dummy* or *grip* car was roofed and open and had the gripping apparatus in the centre with seats all round. The second vehicle was the enclosed *saloon* towed by the dummy. It had doors and windows and was ideal for old people, non-smokers, ladies and children, especially in winter.

The trams were painted different colours to denote a particular tram route.

The following description provides an idea of this form of transport:

The swaying, bucking progress – rather like riding a low slung racing camel – always had something of the funfair. Despite the traditional warning cry – Mind the curve!! – little old ladies and frail or befuddled gentlemen were apt to fly off as it lurched around. If the driver (bandit king of the road) missed his grip on the ever-moving cable, or misjudged his speed, the tram baulked and customers piled off to push it round the corner to clamp on the cable again. It was in the dark year of 1940 that I saw the last living cable tram lollop up Bourke Street. I knew with certainty that the world would never be the same again. Melbourne blew it when it stupidly and wantonly did away with its cable trams.<sup>5</sup>

Charles Baines as conductor would have warned passengers about approaching curves. He also collected fares using an unusual system where the conductor punched a hole in a long cardboard trip slip pinned to his uniform. At shift's end, the *confetti* collected in the punch was counted and matched with the money taken. This ticketing system was replaced by 1922 when tickets were issued to passengers.

Charles (Number 2560) enlisted on 5 August 1915 and embarked with the 23 Battalion 6th Reinforcements on A38 *Ulysses* on 27 October, arriving in Cairo one month later.



58th Battalion

Nine months later on 17 June he embarked at Alexandria with the 58th Battallion joining the British Expeditionary Force at Marseilles on 23 June. The 58th comprised former Gallipoli troops and newcomers, like Charles, mostly from Victoria.

First action was the Battle of Fromelles which aimed to draw German troops from the Somme. The battle started at 6.00pm on 19 July and ended 14 hours later. The Allies sustained 5533 casualties.<sup>2</sup> Charles was declared missing and was deemed killed in action in February 1917. The following notices were published in *The Argus* in March and July 1917.

**DIED ON SERVICE**

**BAINES – Killed in action, July 19, 1916, previously reported missing, Charles Vincent, dearly loved youngest son of Mary and the late John Baines, 79 Green street, Richmond, late of Toorak.; also dearly loved brother of Edward (N.S.W.), Mrs. P. Baker (Richmond), Mrs Crellin (N.S.W.), Walter (Sale). aged 33 years. R.I.P.**

*The Argus, 17 March 1917, p. 13.*

**IN MEMORIAM**

**BAINES – A loving tribute to the memory of my dear friend, Charles Vincent Baines, killed France, July 19, 1916, Fond memories ever cling. – (Lucy Thornell)**

**BAINES – In sad and loving memory of my dear son and brother, Charlie, killed in France, July 19 1916. R.I.P. Loved by all.**

**BAINES – A tribute to the memory of our comrade, Private C. V. Baines, who was killed in action in France, July 19 1916. R.I.P.**

Sweet is the memory, left behind  
Of one so noble, true, and kind  
His fight is fought, he stood the test,  
We'll always remember him as one of the best.

– (Inserted by his comrades of the Toorak Depot, Melbourne Tramway Board.)

*The Argus, 21 July 1917, p. 11.*

**The Baines Family**

John and Mary, parents of Charles, were born in 1841 and 1839 respectively in the neighbouring Irish counties of Mayo and Sligo. The English 1871 Census records John as head of family and dockworker, May (Mary) and Mary Ellen aged 5, living at 29 Upper Birkett Street Liverpool. The family subsequently moved to Durham before migrating to Australia in 1881 when John is listed at the Caledonian Hotel, 14 Coventry Street, Emerald Hill.<sup>3</sup> He was also Vice President and President of the Hibernian-Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, a church-based support network for Irish-born and Irish descendants.

**The headstone**

John Baines purchased a double plot in the Roman Catholic section in 1881. This was the year in which son Thomas, aged 12, died of typhoid fever and was buried in Grave 652, which did not have a headstone.<sup>4</sup> John was buried in the same grave three years later. It was not until after Charles died in 1916 that the Hibernian-Australasian Catholic Benefit Society paid for the attractive headstone.

**Notes**

- 1 NAA: B2455, Baines, Charles Vincent. [naa.gov.au](http://naa.gov.au)
- 2 Battle of Fromelles. [www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84321](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84321)
- 3 *Sands and McDougall's Melbourne and Suburban Directory*, 1880, page 262.
- 4 St Kilda Burial Order, Book 61 # 10129.
- 5 J. Hepworth, Our lost cities, *The Sydney Morning Herald's Good Weekend*, 19 March 1988, p.32. Quoted in M. Simpson, *On the move: a history of transport in Australia*, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney, 2004, pp. 53–54.

The author acknowledges the assistance of Jillian Hisock, Kelly Hoskin, Claire Barton, Warren Doubleday and Geoffrey Paterson .

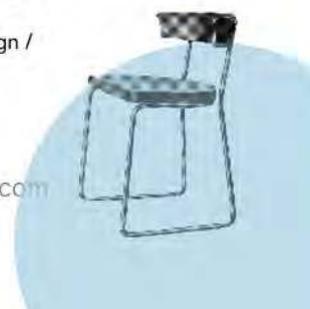
July Newsletter deadline is 20 June 2021. Your contribution is welcome. Please send to [gkp@netspace.net.au](mailto:gkp@netspace.net.au)



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# Constantia Smyth

by Meg Lee



Constantia Mathews Smyth (née Alexander)  
Photograph: E. M. Robb,  
*Early Toorak and district*,  
Robertson & Mullens,  
Melbourne, 1934.

St Kilda Cemetery shelters the body of the wife of Captain George Brunswick Smyth, a founding father of Melbourne. Constantia Alexander is buried with nephew Alexander William Mitchell Chalmers. Constantia was the daughter of Mr Thomas Alexander, Governor of the Arsenal at Mauritius. She was born on 1 May 1816 in Ramsgate, England and arrived with

her family in the earliest days of Melbourne. They made their home at *Llanmiloe*, situated in Williams Road, (approximately No. 222)<sup>1</sup>. Her mother was Mrs Grace Alexander married to Thomas Alexander. Captain George Brunswick Smyth married Constantia Mathews Alexander at St James' Church, Melbourne, on 23 November 1839 in the presence of three witnesses, H. N. Carrington, J. B. Were and F. A. Powlett, each a notable pioneer of Melbourne.<sup>2</sup> The Rev. J.C. Grylls officiated.<sup>3</sup>

Captain Smyth's friend Robert Russell, was also married at St James' Church the following month, occurring one week after his election to the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution's first committee, and the month after his speedy trading of land in Brunswick Street.

There is an unsourced note in the Royal Historical Society of Victoria files showing the Alexander family's direct line of descent, via their Friend forebears, from William the Conqueror and Catherine Parr in another family branch.

Constantia's sister, Augusta was married in Mauritius to Lieutenant Charles Forrest (b. 1809, Cawnpore, India). Charles Forrest built one of the first homes in South Yarra, *Waterloo*, and another *Hermitage* at corner of Toorak Road and Church Street.

Eliza, a stepsister of Constantia, married Captain Browne, another Melbourne notable. Lady Stawell describes her as a great beauty. They met on the ship which transported the

Alexanders to Mauritius from England. Eliza was brought up in Kent, married in Mauritius, lived in London, travelled to India; and settling first in Sydney, then in Melbourne later returned to England, then back to Melbourne and finally to Sydney.

Captain Browne is the father of author, Thomas Alexander (Rolf Boldrewood) and therefore nephew to Constantia. Rolf Boldrewood loved his mother dearly and attributes his artistic gifts to her side of the family.

Thomas Alexander, another brother, went bust during the depression.

Eliza had an unhappy marriage and bore her husband nine children. Browne, the author, described her as very feeble yet at 85, 10 years prior to her death, her mind, eyesight and hearing were nearly perfect. She died, reportedly of old age, on 8 November 1899. This is the same year that Constantia died in Melbourne. In Rolf Boldrewood's diaries he states that he paid Constantia a visit in 1889. She would have also been an aging woman.

Captain George Brunswick Smyth had extensive landholdings, including *Chelsworth*, and *Bois Cheri* in Ivanhoe, and was almost bankrupted during the 1840s recession. They returned to England where he died prematurely. Constantia was widowed in 1845 after four years of marriage.

In addition, Constantia owned 300 acres of land at Jika Jika. She also owned land at Allotment 2 Section 2 in the City of Melbourne prior to her marriage, in her own name Constantia Mathews Alexander.

Constantia and George were childless: she was 29 years of age when he died.<sup>4</sup> Constantia remained in the United Kingdom as per the Census of 1851, living in Blackheath Hill, Greenwich, Kent. She was cohabiting with four Polkington children: Ellen K, 20 years, Rose Emma 20, Alice 18 and Frederick 15, a scholar. These were her nephews and nieces by marriage. All named women in the house, including Constantia were annuitants. They lived with two servants.

Constantia eventually returned to Australia where she died. Melbourne Directories show Mrs Brunswick Smyth recorded as a resident

of Marlton Avenue St Kilda in 1892, a year prior to her arrival at Sorrett Avenue where she died.

She is buried with her nephew, Alexander William Mitchell Chalmers, company manager and company auditor, practising accountant out of Lombard Buildings, Melbourne. He died on 24 August 1947 in Melbourne.

He was her dutiful executor when she died, returning two portraits of Captain George Brunswick Smyth to England in 1899. Melbourne or indeed Australia does not own a photograph or portrait of Captain George Brunswick Smyth. If anyone can advance this search for the portraits, I would like to hear from you.

Meg Lee's email is Leemeg65@gmail.com

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> E. M. Robb, *Early Toorak and district*, Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 1934, page 119.
- <sup>2</sup> *The Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston), 18 December 18, 1839.
- <sup>3</sup> M. Cannon & I. MacFarlane (Eds), *Historical records of Victoria*, Volume 3, *The early development of Melbourne*, Melbourne, 1984, p. 596.
- <sup>4</sup> Constantia's Death Certificate, Births Deaths and Marriages, Victoria.



Constantia Smyth's grave at Other Denominations, Compartment C, Grave 227. Also buried in the grave are Margaret Chalmers, 1935, and Alexander Chalmers, 1947.

# Book review

by Genevieve Pound

*Oh Happy Day: Those Times And These Times.* By Carmen Callil

Penguin Random House, 2020. \$32.99

A gypsy woman once stopped me in a crowd and quietly told me I had lucky eyes and that I would travel. We were two outsiders, one a traveller and the other a visitor, in London's Camden Market. The reassurance of this stranger reverberated like the words of a guardian angel. It was about 1990, I was 24 and I had been allowed a two-year working holiday visa. London looked and sounded familiar, like a vast version of Melbourne. To those who were interested, I could explain the origins of my grandfather's English surname; and I politely endured chortled remarks about convicts, or my accent.

However, about my grandfather's mother, Ellen Conquest, whose father was English, I knew nothing but the name. Only in recent times have I learnt that her father, George Conquest, a brickmaker, came from Leicestershire with his parents and siblings when he was 16. Several of the Conquest family rest in St Kilda Cemetery, including his parents Joseph and Mary, and two of his infant daughters Margaret and Elizabeth, who died two years apart. George was laid to rest in Cranbourne Cemetery in 1900, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord for they rest from their labors". George and his family were *assisted* migrants who made the transition from subject to citizen in 1852, due to the influence and financial support of his uncle, Joseph's brother, also named George Conquest.

Carmen Callil's book focuses particularly on this man, one of the very early European settlers of Prahran. George was an everyman of the lowest rung of English society, and Callil has built a magnificent jigsaw of the written records concerning him. He could read, having been baptised in the Independent Chapel of his Leicester birthplace, but has left no writing; instead it is his actions which speak for him. By way of context, this George Conquest was almost the same age, and lived a similar lifespan, as Caroline Chisholm. In 1830, she married at the age of 22, however, for George aged 24, it was the peak year of transporting convict labour and he was one of 5000 men to enter New South

Wales. His trial was conducted suspiciously and as Callil often refers to Charles Dickens' work, I was reminded of *Little Dorrit* which was set in a debtors' prison and illustrated the hopelessness of the legal system and the crushing impact on prisoners' families. It also pained me to read accounts of the awful segregation of Joseph and Mary and their children in the crowded workhouse. From his sentencing at the Chester Easter Quarter Sessions in May 1829, George was marched in chains from Chester jail and taken to the prison hulk *Ganymede* at the Royal Arsenal Docks at Woolwich, about 20 kilometres along the Thames River from Camden Lock. It is a miracle that he survived those seven months and then the journey to Australia, in one of these ships run as corrupt and self-serving enterprises by people who had previously worked in the slave trade. It must have been his lucky eyes: his sentencing record states the 24-year-old had hazel eyes, freckles, and was about 5' 8". His brothers named their first-born sons in his memory, as transportation was a form of death and for all they knew George was lost to them; and to his love Sary and their unborn daughter, who would later die in infancy. Sary is Callil's ancestor.

Callil's book explains how convicts were not just London pickpockets but were people shut down and removed by the ruling classes, all over England and its dominions. Englishman Joseph Mason, convicted and transported for gathering to agitate with other underemployed rural workers, was assigned to a landowner in Parramatta around the time George was sent to Bathurst. Mason, having served his sentence, was able to return to his wife and children in England, where he wrote an eloquent memoir as grateful payment to the man who had provided his fare home. George Conquest was granted his ticket of leave, around the time his master received John Gardiner as a guest, fresh from travelling north from Port Phillip, with reports of the wonderful fertile land there. A year later, the master's son was sent south with two years' worth of provisions and a team of workers, which included George Conquest, the canal worker from Leicester. My family lived for 25 years near Gardiners Creek and we knew nothing of George Conquest and his family, who settled in nearby Prahran. Our house was built between the two world wars on old orchards.

Callil maps out the quick deconstruction of the land and Aboriginal communities eighty years before that. George became a carter at the time of gold being discovered, and amassed savings in a bank account. Then he slowly started to send for his family, many of whom, being brickmakers, settled in Prahran and worked on the clay banks of the Yarra River, making thousands of the bricks that made Melbourne. In 1854, George sailed as a paying passenger to England and spent half a year in Leicester; returning to Melbourne he masterminded a way through the elaborate emigration process to bring textile worker Sary to Melbourne in 1858. On paper at least, Sary was transformed into a housekeeper – a more sought-after migrant. Reunited in their fifties, Sary and George found peace in a tiny cottage in Robinson Street, Prahran. Their happy day had arrived.

Callil is a Melburnian who has lived in London since 1960, working in publishing and heading up Virago Press. My literature studies were inspired by the works Virago published, which gave voice to women, and others underrepresented. Like Callil, I learnt nothing about Australia's earliest years when I was at school. Since leaving school I've searched for my family's story, all the while uneducated about emigration, workhouses, transportation, and what clearing land can really mean; and I now see that a veil was drawn over these aspects of our past. Ballarat's showpiece, Sovereign Hill, doesn't prepare us for the reality of those who didn't find treasure and ended their days in the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum (refuge and hospice), or the Yarra Bend Asylum (for broken souls and minds). I was reading Callil's book this year around Australia Day. Many would agree that our earliest European days must be trawled over, however painful; the English certainly kept meticulous records. Callil alludes to the penal system's unfathomable inhumanity, and how delving into its records affected her in the same way as first learning about the Holocaust. The acquisition of Australia needs to be discussed in English as well as Australian schools.

My uncle was not impressed that he was given the second name *Conquest*. Born in the 1930s, he later dropped the name. His father, my grandfather Francis George, told countless stories about his time in Ypres during World War 1. An Australian soldier was not required to salute an English officer,

which drove the latter wild. A century earlier, a convict could be made an example of, and receive lashes for, a smirk at authority.

Callil's book spells out the legislation, the religion, the class system, the health and disease, the colour and drudgery, the industry and the unemployment, the oppression and the opportunity of George Conquest's time, and the personal bravery of the man and his people buried at St Kilda Cemetery.

Aptly, my cousins are meeting up on the Labour Day weekend, and I will commend to them Callil's book about the man who overcame such adversity and has brought us to this wonderful land of long weekends. I am so happy and proud that George Conquest's memory is rekindled. We are now allowed to be proud of our family who came from the land of the Luddites. Thanks to Carmen.

## Burial rites

by Gabriel Hermes

### Part 2

**Islamic burial** is quite different as the deceased must be buried as soon as possible, after the body is bathed and shrouded in white or linen cloth, and followed by a prayer in the mosque courtyard. No casket is used and there is no viewing.

After the funeral service mourners will walk in silence to the burial plot; no women and children are permitted at the burial of the deceased. The deceased's head must point towards Mecca. Giving flowers and gifts to the mourning family is not appropriate. Burials must be in a Muslim cemetery and cremation is prohibited.

A simple stone will mark the grave and large decorated monuments are prohibited by Islamic law. After the funeral the family of the deceased will gather and receive guests, while the souls of the deceased are judged either to follow the path of hell or enter Paradise.

**Jewish burial** is flexible for the different sects of Judaism, each having its own traditions and beliefs. A Rabbi is called when a person dies at home. The family can have a service in a chapel, in a synagogue, or directly in the cemetery.

Meantime a Shomer (watchman) stays with the dead from time of death until the funeral or burial. Preparation of the deceased includes washing and dressing

by a licensed staff member or the Chevra Kadisha to perform the Tahara and Shmira. Putting a small stone on a grave is to remember in a permanent way the memories of the deceased. Cremation is not recommended because they believe you should not damage the body because it belongs to God, but some do want to be cremated and follow the burial protocol.

**Hindu faith** is the third largest in the world with one billion followers. Funeral service rituals vary between sects. The Hindu prefers to die at home surrounded by family who will keep a vigil until cremation, usually within 24 hours. His body is in a casket for the mourners to see the deceased. The ashes are scattered in the sacred Ganges river or at some place of importance to the deceased. The male or female mourners wear white; black is considered inappropriate. The mourning period lasts from 10 to 30 days and a ceremony is held at home. Visitors are expected to bring fruits in order to liberate the soul for the journey to heaven.

**Traditional African rituals** The main belief is that life and death are continuous and death is another state of being. Soon after the individual dies, they inhabit the spirit world and can be reincarnated into several people. On the other hand if the individual is not buried properly or has lived in a dishonest way, the deceased's ghost will wander around among the living and could harm living individuals.

The deceased is covered with his or her own clothes and with the skin of a slaughtered animal. The house is then prepared to receive the whole community to pay their respects and hold a vigil. They first turn all the pictures to face the wall, cover all mirrors, and windows are smeared with ashes so the dead cannot see themselves.

Secondly, they must make a hole in the house wall to remove the dead person feet first through the hole thus facing away from the house. They must not use the front door symbolising that the deceased is now part of the ancestral community. At the burial site the family remains silent. Once in the grave, the deceased is supplied with afterlife food, pots, pans, shield and spear. There is sometimes a ritual killing of a cow for the deceased to take to the land of his ancestors and at the same time to protect the living. Source: Wikipedia.

# The Cemetery 100 years ago

This article considers the life, works and funeral of William Mark Forster, founder of the Try Boys Society.



William Forster was born in Rothbury England on 7 October 1846, eldest child of Luke Forster and Anne, née Blackett. The family arrived in Melbourne in 1852 when Luke opened a saddlery business. After leaving school, William became a general merchant. William married Mary Jane McLean on 1 September 1869. They had five sons and eight daughters and bought a house at 21 Canterbury Road, Toorak. Mary Jane died in 1908 and two years later William married widow Mary Alice Gowdie.<sup>1</sup>

## The Try Society

The Society started in 1883 when William met three boys whom he invited home to play games with his children. The numbers attending the Forster home soon grew.

Key events in Try history include establishing a girls' Try Society in 1884, founding the Herald Boys Try-Excelsior Class for newsboys (1886), and opening a new building in South Yarra (1887).<sup>2</sup> Try Australia's vision continues to this day being to create a meaningful difference to the lives of those facing disadvantage.<sup>3</sup>

## The Funeral: 8 June 1921

"The funeral left the deceased gentleman's late residence at 2 p.m. on Wednesday. Halting at the Try Society, a short and impressive ceremony was conducted by the Rev. A. Jones and the Rev. Clifden H Eager. Those present included Mr. Slater, M.L.A., the Mayor of Prahran (Cr. J. W. Flintoff), councillors, members of the Board of Management, and a large number of friends, members, and old boys. Mr. W. H. Edgar, M.L.C, who gave a brief address, said he regarded it as a great privilege that he should have any part in such a sacred service. He could not express what was in his heart for that great man . . . Mr. Forster's life was characterised by love, expressed in the boy and girl life of our State. The value of that work had not yet dawned upon the people. It could not be estimated or tabulated. Since he first gathered a few lads together it is estimated that no fewer than ten thousand had passed through the door of opportunity which he had held open for them.

That fact was sufficient to cause all present to pause and thank God for what Mr. Forster had done for boy and girl life, in the interests of manhood, and for the Commonwealth. He was a man of great spiritual force of character. He had a glorious hope beyond, and that hope led him to instil into the young minds the value of citizenship . . . Every boy who went in or out of the Try Society will remain as a monument to the magnificent work done by Mr. Forster. He was not paid, nor did he receive any assistance from the Government, but his ideals, his spirit, and his force of character impressed people, and they gave . . . The Rev. A. Jones and the Rev. Clifden Eager also paid testimony to the fine ideals of the deceased.

As the body was removed from the hall for the cemetery, Try Boys, young and old, lined up, and with bowed heads, paid their last tribute to the friend who had done so much for them. The chief mourners were the three sons of the deceased gentleman, Messrs. W. C. D., G. E., and S. W. Forster. The pallbearers were Messrs. W. Groom, J. Bartlett, J. I. Griffin, R. McIntosh, P. Holloway. A. T. Wiseman, and L. Hillard. The floral tributes included one forming the word "Try" from the boys of the Society."<sup>4</sup>

Mr Forster was buried at St Kilda in Presbyterian Compartment B Grave 0246.



The cortege in Surrey Road

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> W. Landells, *Try, pioneer of youth welfare 1883–1983*, Try Youth and Community Services, 1984.
- <sup>2</sup> *A short history of WM Forster's TRY Society*. [try.org.au/since-1883](http://try.org.au/since-1883)
- <sup>3</sup> *Try Australia Annual Report 2018–2019*.
- <sup>4</sup> *Prahran Telegraph*, 11 June 1921, p. 5.

Photographs

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