



# AROUND THE GRAVES

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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CHELTENHAM AND REGIONAL CEMETERIES INC.

## Remembering Laurell

The *Murder Victims: Fate's Wicked Child* is our soon to be released second instalment in the *Remembering Them* series designed to remember the lives of those buried in the Cheltenham cemeteries. The A5-sized book comprises 200 pages and 91,000 words with colour illustrations and an index of over 620 names.

Whether a student, shop owner or senior citizen, policeman, prostitute or prisoner, the victims of fate's wicked child came from all walks of life. For all of the 29 murder victims featured, their deaths were unnatural leaving family and friends to mourn their loss. And while time may heal their hearts, the pain never fades.



(above)  
Headstone inscription of Laurell Moran—Cheltenham Memorial Park (Lawn "M" Row N Grave 25)

One of those featured in the book is **Laurell Ann Moran (1975-88)**. Laurell was just 12½ when she was murdered by her violent father after a high-speed police pursuit through the Bayside area that ended in tragic circumstances outside the Sandringham and District Memorial Hospital.

As Justice Fullagar said in sentencing Dennis Moran to a minimum of 11 years (later increased to 14 on appeal), *"I find it hard to imagine that any man who had full control of his reasoning power and emotions could wilfully kill a healthy young daughter whom he loved and who had all her life before her."*

Long after her death, schoolfriends from Mentone Girls' Grammar still remember sweet Laurell. Twenty-three years later, Laurell is a memory that shows no sign of fading, for in their hearts she left more than just memories, but love and affection. As her friend Rebecca recalls;

*"Not only do I remember Laurell often but also I remember her with the warmth and kindness she showed others. I will not forget Laurell or the senseless way in which she was taken. Our lives certainly go on although the perfect memory of Laurell will stand still in time."*

Other subjects featured include victims of the Hoddle and Queen Street massacres, the recent gangland murders, Australia's most infamous hostage tragedy, a victim of the Frankston serial murders, as well as the subject of Australia's most prolonged and publicised criminal cases.

***The Murder Victims: Fate's Wicked Child* is due to be available on 28 Mar 2011 as a book (paperback) or on CD (PDF file). Pre-release orders will attract a 10% discount. Visit [www.focrc.org/shop.htm](http://www.focrc.org/shop.htm) where you can order a copy on-line or download an order form.**



(above)  
"The Walking Stick Brigade" taken in 1913—some grand old men of Cheltenham who lie buried in the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery.

Standing (l-r) **William Tilley** (CofE "E" 120), **George Ridley** (CofE "A" 25), **James Tilley** (CofE "100" 3), Tom Hall, **George Tilley** (CofE "E" 222) **William Judd** (CofC "42A" 22), Bill Baker, **Charles Noll** (CofC "A" 49).

Seated (l-r) **William Shields** (Meth "E" 10), **Don McSwain** (Pres "A" 32), **George Barber** (CofE "E" 170) and **James van der veen Fisher** (CofC "A" 10).

(Courtesy Barry Tilley, reproduced with permission)



## From Floods to Fire

As the vengeful fury of Mother nature dominates the news, from floods to fire, we look back at those who lie buried in the Cheltenham cemeteries who were associated with some acts of nature that occurred in the district.

Back in December 1934 following a period of wild weather, the most disastrous floods to have affected Victoria left over 1,500 homeless in the Chelsea district alone. Police Constable **George Gilding** (CofE “333” 6—Memorial Park) was one of three policemen who between them rescued over 100 persons. While wading in water up to his armpits in a house in Embankment Grove, Chelsea, Gilding managed to dodge a snake that attempted to bite him on the face whilst he carried a woman to safety from one of the rooms. There followed a local Relief Appeal to oversee the distribution of funds. Amongst those who served on the committee were **Cr. George Beardsworth** (CofE “54” 2—Pioneer Cemetery), **Hon. Frank Groves MLA** (CofE “B” 48—Pioneer Cemetery) and orchadist **Henry Monk** (Pres “158” 17—Memorial Park). Two local Chelsea residents, **John Touzel** (1916-2004) (Lawn “E4” Row H 32—Memorial Park) and his father **George** (CofE “143” 61—Memorial Park) were presented with certificates of merit for their role in the rescue efforts.

Floods in the low-lying district were nothing new in what once was swamp land. **James Smyth** (CofE “57” 19—Pioneer Cemetery) sued the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for £1,160 damages after his Edithvale property adjoining the Carrum main drain was flooded three times in 1924.

If it wasn't flood, then fire caused havoc to the thickly tea-tree scrubs along the foreshore. Back in December 1913, over 90 homes were destroyed when an area covering 1½ miles by 200 yards left a blackened wilderness of bristling stumps. **Percie Flyger** (Meth “58” 18—Memorial Park) lost a number of properties he owned, including a six roomed cottage. While the property was insured, Flyger still lost an estimated £200. **Henry Emery** (CofE “349” 3—Memorial Park) was another to suffer when his three roomed dwelling and tent in



(above)  
The grave of Frank Groves MLA  
(Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery, CofE “B” 48)

Kelvin Grove was destroyed. It is believed **Alfred Hortle** (Meth “34” 12—Pioneer Cemetery) lost his three-roomed bungalow also.

Two cyclones caused widespread damage in the district. The most notable and often mentioned was the Brighton ‘line storm’ of February 1918. Of the six reported injured, **Francis Prescott** (CofE “87” 3—Memorial Park) of Moffat Street, Brighton suffered a broken arm. But few suffered more damage than **Henry Hatcher** (CofC “74” 16—Memorial Park). His property adjoining the Brighton Orphanage suffered extensive damage. Holes were knocked in the tile roof, a chimney came down, and tiles were stripped from a garage as well as his outhouses. One eyewitness stated that it seemed as if the “tiles were floating around in the air like pieces of paper”. Many of Hatcher’s neighbours suffered as well.

Then there was the Cheltenham cyclone of October 1936 that left a trail of ruin in Charman Road as shops were wrecked, houses unroofed, windows shattered and trees uprooted causing an estimated £2,000 damage. In three minutes of terror, **George McCoubrie** (Pres “197” 23—Memorial Park) or possibly his father **James** (Pres “A” 8A—Pioneer Cemetery) had a narrow escape as bricks flew all around his shop of McCoubrie and Young. One brick injured a boy Robert Street hitting him on the back of the head. McCoubrie was standing in the plumbing repair room when he heard a loud roar and struggled against the force of the wind whilst trying to shut the main door. A tree branch crashed within inches of him. Another eyewitness was **William Taylor** (CofE “99” 2—Pioneer Cemetery) who owned a boot repairer business. He declared that “if it happened 10 minutes earlier, when more than 40 school children were in the street, many of them would have been killed.” Taylor’s verandah was destroyed and his plate-glass window smashed. A gate on the back fence was torn from its hinges and was carried for more than 20 yards across a paddock. Next door to Taylor was the unoccupied shop owned by **Arthur Monk** (CofC “42” 13—Pioneer Cemetery). The front was torn out and the verandah which was supported by two thick posts was swept away. (Source: *The Argus* 23 Dec 1913 p7, 24 Dec 1913 p9, 4 Feb 1918 p7, 9 Dec 1924 p9, 1 Dec 1934 p23 & p25, 3 Dec 1934 p9, 5 Dec 1934 p8, 13 Dec 1934 p7, 18 Sep 1935 p7, 31 Oct 1936 p17)



(above)  
Grave of William Taylor  
(Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery, CofE “99” 2)