



AROUND THE GRAVES

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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CHELTENHAM AND REGIONAL CEMETERIES INC.

The Benevolent Asylum...

Many an interesting picture is emerging during work on our next book titled *"The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum: Haven of Rest"* in the *Remembering Them* series. The book is due for release in the coming months. Here are some facts:

- Seven female prisoners of the Coburg (Fairlea) Prison spent their final years at the Asylum
- On 8 and 9 May 1911, 43 males and 137 females were transferred from the Victorian Homes for the Aged (Immigrants' Aid Society) when it was closed down
- The earliest date of arrival recorded for an inmate is 1824 while two others arrived in the 1820s
- A breakdown of the birthplace of the inmates so far recorded is England (35.3%), Ireland (26%), Australia (18.2%), Scotland (12.1%), Europe (3.4%) and Other (5%)
- A number of family members who were residents at the Asylum were buried in separate graves
- Eighty inmates spent more than ten years in the institution, the longest so far recorded being 24 years. The average period was 3.23 years. Before the passing of *The Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act* in 1908, the Asylum was a haven of rest for many a needy and neglected person and after 1908, as a respite and nursing home



above:

The former Melbourne Benevolent Asylum being demolished in 1911.

(Latrobe Picture Collection, H35792, State Library of Victoria)

- As many as 230 of the 1,705 patients buried in the Pioneer Cemetery were residents at the institution when it was located at North Melbourne (pictured left)

- Only 123 former inmates lie buried in a grave with a headstone monument. (Source: *The Argus* 9 May 1908 p17, 28 Mar 1911 p6)

Monkhouse v Hall...

In 1897, two court cases at the Brighton Court were heard on the same day involving Joseph Monkhouse (Brighton General Cemetery) one of which related to the burial of **Frances Morgan** in Aug 1896 (CofE "D" 60) at the Pioneer Cemetery:

"Jos. Monkhouse sued Thos. Hall for the sum of £5 9s for the burial of Frances Morgan, his mother. Mr T W Wilson appeared for the plaintiff, and defendant conducted his own case. Evidence was given that when Mrs Morgan died her granddaughter, Miss Gemmell called upon Monkhouse and arranged for the burial. Subsequently the defendant saw him and had the place of interment altered from the Brighton to the Cheltenham cemetery. Miss Gemmell paid £1 on account and said that Hall would pay the balance. The certificate for the grave at Cheltenham was made out in the name of Elizabeth Hall, the defendant's wife. Hall in defence urged that Miss Gemmell ought to have been sued, and produced a receipt from her exonerating him from the liability, but the bench considered case proved and made an order for the amount together with £1 6s costs."

Though Joseph Monkhouse won both cases, it can be surmised that on Elizabeth Hall's death in March 1919 aged 58, Monkhouse's services were not engaged by the family. The Monkhouse name is represented at Cheltenham by **Rosa Monkhouse née Smith** (1887-1939, Meth "E" 175) who married Joseph's son Walter (1880-1961, Brighton General Cemetery). (Source: *Oakleigh Leader* 13 Mar 1897 p3, *Brighton Southern Cross* 5 Oct 1918 p1)



above:

Inscription of Rosa Monkhouse – Pioneer Cemetery, Meth "E" 175

below:

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Botanical Excursion...

Back in September 1901, a group of students from the Melbourne College of Pharmacy visited the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery. We hope you enjoy this delightful account, courtesy of Dr Janette Bomford when the back portion of the Cemetery had not yet been developed:

“Arriving at our destination, we made our way through the local cemetery—a very pretty little spot. Here a broken column thrust its mournful significance upon our sight, and there a time-worn monument hinted the uncertainty of life; but these suggestions were soon dispelled by the sunshine, and the fading relics merely induced a momentary calculation as to whether their age might possibly be arrived at by the amount of oxidation observable. Winding our way between the varied tombstones we arrived at the summit of a little hill at the back of the cemetery, and here we paused for a moment to take in the view. It was a lovely scene! Right at our feet, in a natural basin surrounded by scrub-covered hills, lay a reedy little swamp, reflecting in its depths, or rather shallows, the skies above, while from its sheltering nooks the bull-frogs made merrie chorus. At our back lay the township nestling among the undulating scrubby hills. To our left was an arm of the sea sweeping a considerable distance inland, while away beyond, the blue hills raised their heads to the upper skies. Truly, God made the

country! When we had penetrated the thicker scrub we found many specimens, but only collected the new ones; orchids were fairly plentiful, but no spiders were to be seen. In vain did we make use of stray horse-shoes and other Australian devices; no spider orchid rewarded our diligent search. Owing to the fact that the joker of the pack was missing, the behaviour of the day was marked by a staidness and sobriety which was at least, unusual. Possibly the cemetery exercised a somewhat constraining influence: but at any rate we had proof that mirth is not essential to happiness. One interesting flower we obtained was the Australian sensitive plant, in which the stamen and style are united into a column, which springs forward at the slightest touch. The great feature of this outing was the number of orchids obtained, and only a few other plants are here recorded not mentioned in the account of previous excursions, viz.: Droseraceae—*Drosera glanduligera*, with crimson petals. Polygalaceae—*Comesperna volubile*. Leguminosa—*Kennedya monophylla* Victorian sarsaparilla). *Platylobium obtusangulmo*, *Pultenaea paleacea*. Candolleacea—*Candollea serrulata* [*Stylidium graminifolium*], with its grass-like leaves and red flowers, which are sensitive. Gentianeae—*Limnanthemum exaltatum*, semi-aquatic. Orchidece—*Glossodia major*, *diuris maculate*. *D. longifolia*, *Prasophyllum elatum*, *Cryptostylis longifolia*, *Thelymitra antennifera* and *T. ixioides*.”
(Source: The Australian College of Pharmacy, 20 Nov 1901 p331-332)



Prasophyllum elatum



Platylobium obtusangulmo



Drosera glanduligera



Stylidium graminifolium



Comesperna volubile

Photos courtesy, Wikipedia.