



AROUND THE GRAVES

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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CHELTENHAM AND REGIONAL CEMETERIES INC.

Forthcoming Tour

"The Tragic '20s" is our newest tour of the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery and has involved many hours of research by the Friends. It is doubtful a tour of this kind has been undertaken in Australia before—local persons who all died in tragic circumstances during the 1920s. Our feature article for this month covers in more depth the decade that went through enormous social and technological change. The unfortunate deaths of over 35 persons are covered, including abortion, drowning, electrocution, poisoning, level crossing fatalities, manslaughter, murder, suicide, as well as accidents involving guns, trains, trams, cars, trucks, bicycles, motorcycles, horses and even an empty beer bottle!

One of the persons featured in the tour is this young lad from Bently-Moorabbin (pictured left) who shot dead his younger brother Jack over a game of hiding. He was later arrested at Cockatoo after coming third in a foot race. It was one of the most tragic and distressing events of the Moorabbin district made even more tragic that he died at Tally Ho Boys' Home before his 15th birthday.

Come along and hear the full riveting story on our tour of the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery (Charman Road, opp Cheltenham

Railway Station). **Sunday 1 March 2009 at 2:00pm** and **Sunday 17 May 2009 at 11:00am**. Cost is \$10.00 (\$5.00 members) and includes a tour pamphlet and refreshments. **Bookings are essential** and can be made on-line at www.focrc.org/tours.htm or by ringing Vivienne on (03) 5420 7671.

above:

Shot dead his own brother
on Christmas Eve

(Courtesy Newspaper
Collection,
State Library of Victoria)



John Prince: Mentone Identity

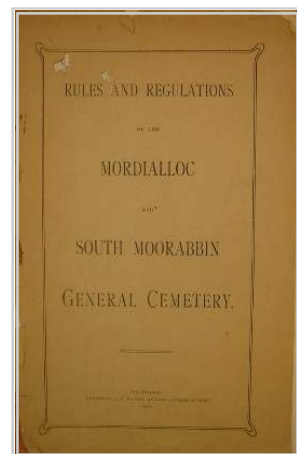
This year marks the 75th anniversary of the death of John Prince. Prince is one of 80 persons whom the Friends have located at the Pioneer Cemetery mentioned in Leo Gamble's excellent book "Mentone Through The Years" (2003). The ubiquitous trucks on the roads today bearing the name of Prince's Laundry Service Pty Ltd was founded by Prince on a very small scale at his Como Parade East home in 1905. Though Prince retired due to bad health in the early '20s, the firm continued to be run by his son Harry and descendants. Today the firm is a major national company providing commercial linen to the hospitality and healthcare industries. John Prince is not exactly a household name, but in Mentone, his legacy will be remembered for his philanthropic generosity and for providing employment to many during the Depression of the 1930s. He died on 3 June 1934 aged 73 and is buried with his wife Jane Ann (d 1928) and daughter Eileen (d 1915).

(Source: Gamble, L., "Mentone Through The Years" (2003) p81, 109, 150 & 178).

Did you know?

It is not commonly known that the Trustees of the original "Mordialloc and South Moorabbin General Cemetery" received £12-11-6 in donations from the local community in aid of the establishment of what is now known as the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery over 145 years ago.

(Victoria Government Gazette 11 Aug 1865 p1793 and 11 Oct 1864 p2275-76)



above:

Original rules and
Regulations from 1911

(Image courtesy
Department of Human
Services)

The Friends are proud to be inaugural members of the Australian Federation of Cemetery Friends Inc. www.afocf.org

The Tragic '20s

The 1920s was a decade of enormous change that saw a dramatic transition from 19th to 20th century technologies. Electricity from Yallourn was first connected to the city and powered the new electric trains and trams, while the horse made way for a new and dangerous force of urban life – the motor vehicle. Society changed too. More and more of its citizens died as crime, suicides and accidents increased while the feared underworld became increasingly public in its nefarious activities. It was the decade when Melbourne was no longer marvellous.

In the 1920s, Cheltenham was a quaint, semi-rural town rather than the suburb of Melbourne it is today. The distinction is important for the separation acted like a protective barrier sparing its residents from the worst of the tragic '20s that was to befall the metropolis. But far from being a staid area, from Bentleigh to Bonbeach, tragedy was everywhere. And they occurred with such regularity that it was almost an accepted part of life.

For the market gardeners of the Moorabbin-Cheltenham district, death on the land was surprisingly uncommon in the '20s. Instead it was the tyranny of distance from the Melbourne markets that saw many lose their lives. William Baker and his son Henry, of Keys Road in Moorabbin were returning from Melbourne on the afternoon of 30 June 1922 with two carts loaded with manure. The 68-year-old was riding along Wickham Road when, as was his custom, he jumped from his lorry whilst it was in motion. His foot caught the top part of the wagon. Henry witnessed the event unfold while walking alongside his lorry nearly 20 metres in front. Before he could reach his father, William fell on the road and the wheel passed over his head. Death was instantaneous.

For man accustomed to conquering his natural environment, the sea has so far proved unconquerable. Many have gone to a watery grave taken by the sea's ever-changing moods for the unforgiving sea is at its destructive best when it lacks our respect. Francis (Frank) George Luttgens and Charles James, a retired grocer spent the day fishing for whiting off Werribee. On the trip back to Mordialloc, the sea unleashed one of its unforgiving moods – heavy waves with strong, southerly gusts. Both men realised any attempt to anchor at the

pier would be hazardous. But Luttgens banked on his 22 years' experience and decided it was a gamble worth taking. The gamble failed. As the boat approached the pier, Luttgens took position at the front near the anchor leaving James in control of the vessel. The heavy seas washed the boat under the pier and it bumped onto one of the piles causing Luttgens to fall overboard. His last words were "Help!" as James wrangled with the lifebuoy unable to unravel the rope. A treacherous wave was believed to have struck Luttgens against the pier rendering him unconscious. His body was located two hours later on rocks about a mile away. Luttgens' untimely death was a timely reminder that experience is no match for the unconquerable, unforgivable sea.

How ironic that a market gardener on his way to the Queen Victoria market laden with vegetables would be killed by a green grocer. That was exactly what happened on the night of 16 March 1927 when Hector Thomas Royal Walsh's well-lit cart was struck from behind by Daniel McMichael, a greengrocer of Hislop Road, Parkdale. McMichael was driving north along Pt Nepean Road with Charles Wiseman after they had attended a party at Parkdale. Both were under the influence of alcohol and it was a very bright moonlit night. Witnesses saw McMichael's truck travelling at approximately 50 kilometres an hour closely following a motor-car before he struck the Bentleigh market gardener near Dendy Street. A jury found McMichael not guilty, but justice came to the Walsh family in November 1928 when Royal's wife Annie sued McMichael for £1,000 in damages for negligent driving on behalf of herself and children Edna and Alan. She was awarded £850.

Hell and all its fury made the '20s a truly tragic decade.

Download the entire 6,100 word article from the Members' area of our website:

www.focrc.org/members.htm



above:
Headstone inscription of
Frank Luttgens—
"Accidentally drowned at
Mordialloc"