



# Raves from the Graves

## President's Report

Welcome to the winter 2016 edition of our Newsletter, *Raves from the Graves*, and greetings to all our new members. The Committee of The Friends hopes you are all managing to stay warm, especially if you live in the southern parts of Australia.

After our tumultuous year in 2015 with the 150<sup>th</sup> The Friends of Cheltenham have re-introduced tours back into our yearly program, and I am pleased to report that our first two tours for 2016 have been a great success. Both were fully booked, and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. There are two more planned for the second half of the year, with the next in October for Children's Week and then November, our acknowledgement of Remembrance Day. A tribute to pay our respects to all men and women who served in wars. Dates for these tours are included within this edition.

This edition also includes two stories taken from the recent tours at Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery. Sue Beazley, one of our valued Committee members, and a committed, professional and passionate researcher, has spent many hours researching for the tours, so we hope you enjoy reading the life stories of the two individuals chosen for this edition.

My work with the War Graves Working Group (WGWG), a subcommittee of the Vic RSL Heritage Committee, is progressing well. Steven Johnson, a Committee member, has devoted hundreds of hours to walking around the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery, reading every headstone and inscription in an effort to determine if any individual interred within, may have served in WW1, as many family graves did not record details of service for their country.

### Index:

President's Report	1
AGM	2
Tour Reports	3
Tour Details	4
Research Articles	
Mme A Greenwood	5
Thomas Gomm	7
Headstone Repair	10
Affiliates	12

### Current Committee :

President:	Rosemary Reddick
Vice President:	Margaret Osborne
Secretary:	Frank Ruse
Treasurer:	Julie Johnston
Ordinary Committee Members:	Ric Norman Sue Beazley Steven Johnson

### Contact details:

Friends of Cheltenham  
Regional Cemeteries  
[www.focrc.org](http://www.focrc.org)  
[info@focrc.org](mailto:info@focrc.org)

PO Box 2958,  
Cheltenham 3192

Ph: 03 9497 1318 (Rosemary)

# FoCRC



Steven then investigated our database for information on all possibilities with supporting evidence from National Archives and the Australian War Memorial. The result is a list of over 280 service men & women. This list now forms part of a master database. This master database includes WW1 service personnel who are buried at Cheltenham cemeteries, Brighton, Preston, Yan Yean, Warringal (Heidelberg), Fawkner, Coburg, Springvale, Warrnambool, Melbourne General, Kerang, Healesville and other rural cemeteries. The group hopes to start researching the burial records for St. Kilda cemetery soon. As the WGWG is only a small group of willing volunteers there are limited resources to investigate all cemeteries, so we do rely on family notifying us of any ancestors who have served. Please contact me through the FoCRC email address: [info@focrc.org](mailto:info@focrc.org) if anyone in your family served in WW1 – regardless of where they are buried. We hope you enjoy the articles and other details in this edition of The Friends Newsletter. The Committee wishes to thank Sue Beazley for the very high quality tours she presents and the hours spent researching on behalf of us all.

We look forward to hearing from you, if you have feedback, concerns or stories you would like to share.

*Rosemary Reddick*

## Annual General Meeting

The next AGM for Friends of Cheltenham Regional Cemeteries Inc, will be

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August at 10am,**

followed by an Ordinary Committee meeting.

If you would like to attend the meeting please RSVP by 19<sup>th</sup> August.

Refreshments will be provided.

Venue will be advised when numbers attending are known. Generally we meet in the Summer House at the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery, so please wear warm clothing.

Rosemary Reddick

## Membership Subscription

Membership is open to anyone from around the world with an interest in the Cheltenham Cemeteries, Melbourne Australia. For just \$A15.00 per annum\*, members receive a range of benefits. We also welcome organisations. Please download a membership application form, complete & return to PO Box 2958, Cheltenham Vic 3192 or email to [info@focrc.org](mailto:info@focrc.org). Payment details are available from the website [www.focrc.org](http://www.focrc.org).

\* Plus \$A10.00 joining fee for new members.

*FoCRC*

# WALKS AROUND

## Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery 2016

*The Friends of Cheltenham Regional Cemeteries has reintroduced guided tours/walks. There have been two successful walks this year. Conducted by Sue Beazley & Marg Osborne, with assistance from Ric Norman & Frank Ruse.*

### **Ladies of the Cemetery – March 2016**

This was a very successful tour, brilliantly presented by Sue Beazley, and included some intriguing women. The weather was in our favour, as it was a sunny pleasant day for strolling around the cemetery. We even had visitors who wandered in and joined the tour, though they had set out from home to go shopping!

The walk concentrated on the lives of some strong, courageous, capable and clever women, such as Catherine Childerhouse who, at 105, is one of the oldest persons buried at the cemetery. Sue highlighted the hardships faced by women, especially in childbirth, as well as their tenacity, fortitude and adventuring spirit, which is evident in Madame Agnes Greenwood, whose story is included in this edition.



### **Convicts & Felons Tour – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June**

The Convicts & Felons tour was another successful walk around the oldest part of the Pioneer cemetery. The tour was guided by our amazing researcher and presenter, Sue Beazley and capably assisted by Marg Osborne – our Vice President. Sue has managed to ‘uncover’ 10 convicts buried at Cheltenham Pioneer, all with fascinating stories, and all confirmed guests of the harsh and unbending English penal system. You can read about one of these interesting and intriguing people, Thomas Gomm, in this newsletter.



# ***Future tours at Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery 2016.***

## **Children of the Cemetery**

**2:00 pm Sunday, 23<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

Join Sue Beazley when she presents a tour focusing on the life, illnesses and dangers local children faced, and who are buried at Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery. The tour will be heartfelt and engaging as Sue is a sympathetic story teller.

## **Military Tour: Remembrance**

**2:00 pm Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

Join Frank Ruse on this poignant and moving tour. Hear about the war services of normal, ordinary, but gallant and courageous men, who sacrificed years of their lives to protect the freedom we all enjoy today.

**For both tours meet inside the gate of Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery,**

**Charman Road, Cheltenham.**

**Cost: \$10 Members  
\$12 Non-members**

**Refreshments Provided**

Bookings Required: [info@focrc.org](mailto:info@focrc.org) or call 9497 1318

**We tour come rain, hail or shine; so come prepared with suitable clothing and footwear. Bring a brolly if you are concerned about the sun or rain.**

**Have you received your copy of our Newsletter?**

If you have not received any previous Newsletters and you are a financial member, please notify Rosemary Reddick.

[info@focrc.org](mailto:info@focrc.org)

# RESEARCH ARTICLES

## The story of Madame Agnes Greenwood

Researched and written by Sue Beazley.

**Agnes Cecilia Greenwood** (68B\*EM\*O) was born in 1885 in Braidwood New South Wales to the circus family of **William James Mackie** and his wife **Mary Ann Rolfe**. Her parents operated Mackie's Circus, an all-female travelling circus operating mainly around Canberra and surrounds at a time when the circus was at the peak of its popularity in Australia. Country towns waited in eager anticipation when it was announced that one of the circuses was coming to town. At the age of 3 Aggie Mackie, as she

was popularly known, made her professional debut as a tumbler in the family circus. As she became more proficient she progressed to contortionist and acrobat before adding trapeze, horse riding, tight rope and chair balancing to her repertoire. Aggie was only 11 years old when her mother Mary Ann died, leaving William with 5 young girls and a son to care for. After the death, William lost interest and eventually the circus folded.

Agnes and three of her sisters were then apprenticed to Eroni's Circus, one of the top New South Wales circuses. The Mackie sisters were quick to make their name and were amongst the stars of the circus world, working for all the well-known circuses. Agnes was to spend her younger life on the road, often performing with her sisters, **Lottie, Minnie and Lizzie** as they travelled to nearly every State. At varying times she performed with Perry's Circus, the very large Fitzgerald's Circus, Worth's and Sole's Circuses and the Tivoli in addition to Eroni's.

In 1908 Agnes met and married **William Arthur Greenwood** (68B\*EM\*O) and they settled in Melbourne, with son **Arthur** born 1911 in Carlton. Perhaps understanding that the circus would always be part of her, William agreed to Agnes opening a circus school. By the early

**MACKIE'S  
WORLD CIRCUS,**  
HEADED BY A FEMALE BAND,  
Will perform in  
**GUNDAGAI**  
**On Friday & Saturday Nights**  
If you wish to see horsemanship come and  
see Mackie's Circus.  
**ALL LADY PERFORMERS.**  
The Five Mackie Sisters in their Bending,  
Tumbling, Carrying, Hoop and Glass Act.  
**MISS MINNIE MACKIE,**  
The Queen of Equestrianism, in the Slack  
Wire, Trapeze and Hurricane Hurdle Act.  
**JUGGLING ACTS BY PERCY LEE.**  
**Rego To-Night (Tuesday).**  
**POPULAR PRIORS.**

**Gundagai Times**  
**14 November 1899 Advertisement**

1920s Agnes had opened **Greenwood's Acrobatic Academy** in Little Collins Street, where she taught acrobatics, trapeze, contortion and wire walking, often showcasing her students in performances at various venues. Sister Lottie followed her lead, joining the staff of the famed **May Downs Dancing Academy** around 1925. Advertisements for Greenwood's Academy appeared regularly in the Amusements page of the Age and Argus from 1924 to 1951.



s  
ne  
sert  
it but  
eir life's  
agrance of  
; but also  
and fears.

d  
ap  
sho  
Eroni  
Aggie  
known,  
life when  
Greenwood

tragically fell to her death during a rope performance in Cardiff Wales in 1958.

The Greenwoods left their inner city living in Carlton and Brunswick and moved to Seaford sometime in the 1940s, before finally settling at 98 Latrobe Street, Mentone not long before William's death in 1968. The Mentone house became a shrine to Aggie's circus life and she would regale visitors for hours regarding the circus days. Agnes was 92 years of age when she passed away at her home in Latrobe Street in 1977. Agnes' extensive collection of photos, circus handbills and memorabilia was donated to the National Library of Australia in Canberra where they can be viewed in the reading room. Unfortunately, none of the collection remained in Victoria and is not available online, seeing it lost to Victorian researchers. In many ways Greenwood's Acrobatic Academy was the fore-runner to the teaching methods of the now popular Fruit Fly Circus. Aggie's obituary at the death of her sister Lizzie in 1945 sums up her life,

*'The memories of those happy circus days when we were all together'*

National Library;  
Photos of Madame Agnes Greenwood

Agnes adopted the name **Madame Greenwood** and amongst her students was **Patti McGrath**, later to marry Bert Newton. Her star student however was **Frances Duncan** who performed as '**La Frankie**', gaining national and international fame. Frankie



# The story of Thomas Gomm

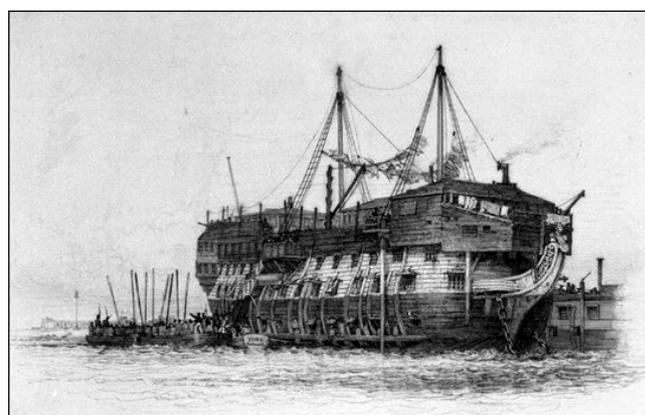
Researched and written by Sue Beazley

**Thomas Gomm** (142\*ECE\*O) was probably the most difficult of our convicts to follow with little mention of him in Tasmania or Victoria. It had generally been accepted that **Henry Gomm** (49\*BB\*O) who is buried elsewhere in this cemetery, was the convict, but further research proved that **Thomas Gomm Junior** was our convict. Thomas was the brother of **George Gomm** (101\*ECE\*O) who had arrived in the local area in the early 1850s with his family and was well regarded in the community. It was probably this relationship which gave Thomas an air of respectability that allowed his convict past to be concealed.

**Thomas Gomm the Younger** as he was known in his home town was born in Wheatley Oxfordshire in 1805 to **Thomas Gomm** and **Sarah Elmes (Ellams)**. Thomas earned his passage to Van Diemen's Land when he was charged with breaking into the Wheatley house of **Elizabeth Miller** in July 1839 whilst she was away from her home; items taken included a blanket, pair of sheets, feather bed, 6 table cloths and a tea caddy. Thomas evaded the police until finally he faced the Oxford Lent Assizes on 27 February 1840. He was found guilty and the sentence handed down was **life**, never to be allowed

to return to England. This was not the first time Thomas had faced the Oxfordshire court, his first appearance was in April 1837 when he received 3 weeks for larceny of wood; his second charge was for larceny of fowls. He again got off lightly, receiving only 1 week.

Following his trial, Thomas was moved to the '**York**' Prison Hulk at **Gosport Plymouth** on 16 March, where he remained until boarding the '**Lord Lyndoch**' on 25 August 1840 to be transported to Tasmania. The ship finally departed on 7 September arriving Hobart 5 February 1841. The 'Lord Lyndoch' was the same ship that carried another of our convicts **John Blencowe** (71\*EM\*O). It is difficult to



The York Prison Hulk'

believe that Thomas and John would not have known each other, as not only had they been held

on the 'York' and transported on the same ship, both served part of their sentence in the **New Norfolk** region of Tasmania. It suited both to keep their past secret.

Thomas's convict record shows his wife as **Sarah**, although the only marriage found for Thomas was to **Ann Ring** on 19 October 1829 in the nearby town of Cuddesdon. It is likely that Ann and Sarah are one and the same, either a deliberate or name recording error. Certainly Thomas' death certificate records his wife as **Sarah Ring**. Sarah was herself brought before the court for larceny on 10 July 1839 for trying to sell a pair of boots that were identified as the property of Elizabeth Miller. When the constables visited the Gomm's house they found the stolen goods, but Thomas had absconded. Sarah faced the court, but was acquitted of the charge due to insufficient evidence. Sadly the 1841 census records Sarah and their three children **Henry** 10, **Thomas** 6 and **William** 4 living at the **Union Workhouse in Headington**, which was the main town located around 5 kms from Wheatley. By the 1851 census only William remains at the workhouse, aged 13 years. Hopefully the other two boys had entered into service somewhere. There was a Sarah Gomm who passed away in 1853 or it is possible that Sarah remarried leaving William behind. William did actually survive the Workhouse, but never married.

This was not a prosperous family, with Thomas and George's father **Thomas Snr.** (188\*ECE\*O) shown as a pauper living in Wheatley on the same

census. He finally joined his sons when he arrived on the '**Copenhagen**' in October 1859 aged 81 years. It is likely that George paid his fare as he was too old to qualify for an assisted passage.

Thomas had no incidents recorded on his prison record and in 1849 he received his Ticket of Leave allowing him freedom of movement. He was granted a Conditional Pardon in July 1852. Unlike our other convicts he was not awarded a Certificate of Freedom as he was banned from returning to England. A trip across to Melbourne to join his brother was the safest way of removing those branding words '**Thomas Gomm Lord Lyndoch**' as he would ever be known if he stayed in Hobart. By 1856 he was a carrier renting in Church Street Richmond.

In March 1859 Thomas married **Sarah Coleman née Wood** at St Andrew's Church in Brighton. Sarah was the widow of **John Coleman** who had died in 1857. Thomas and Sarah settled in Collingwood where Thomas is shown as owning land and working as a labourer. Sarah and Thomas do not appear to have had any children before Sarah's death in 1874. She was buried at Melbourne Cemetery with her first husband, John Coleman. Thomas continued to own property in Collingwood until his death, but the last few years he owned vacant land. He probably lived with his brother George or one of Sarah's sons then, as all were living in Collingwood at the time. Thomas passed away 27 August 1883 aged 78 years and is buried on his own. His father Thomas Snr is



142\*ECE\*O Thomas Gomm Jr



188\*ECE\*O Thomas Gomm Snr,  
(Sawyer, Beaumaris) - earliest year of  
birth at Old Cheltenham (1774/1775)



101\*ECE\*O George Gomm

buried with one of his grandchildren in a nearby unmarked dirt grave and brother George and family in a far more expensive grave directly opposite Thomas Junior.

*Sources:*

*Thomas – baptism certificate 1805*

*Thomas and Ann Ring marriage certificate*

*Tasmanian Convict Records*

*York Prison Hulk Records*

*Oxford Chronicle & Reading Gazette 6 July 1839 –  
housebreaking report*

*Tasmanian papers accessed via National Library of  
Australia Trove*

*1856 Melbourne Census*

*PROV; Victorian rate records for Collingwood*

**Directory**

**Current Sponsors:**

- Astral Monuments,  
ph: 1300 729 432
- Janet Tacken – Civil Celebrant.  
[www.jennyfuneralcelebrant.com.au](http://www.jennyfuneralcelebrant.com.au)  
ph: 0430 181 820
- Peaberry's Café,  
Charman Rd, Cheltenham.

**Affiliated Associations:**

- Brighton Cemeterians
- St. Kilda Friends Group
- Sandringham & District Historical Society
- Dingley Village Historical Society
- Moorabbin Historical Society
- Bayside Historical Group
- South Eastern Historical Group
- War Graves Working Group
- Southern Metropolitan Cemetery Trust (SMCT)



# HEADSTONE RESTORATION

## Fund Raising for Oldest Headstone at Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery

Recently the oldest headstone has succumbed to the ravages of time and weather. The Friends of Cheltenham Regional Cemeteries are currently trying to raise funds to have this headstone repaired.

Hopefully it can be saved for a few more years to come?

The headstone was erected sometime after 1865 and represents 8 individuals buried in 3 graves, with 4 being babies. Richard Tilley d 1865, George Tilley d 1927, Mary Ann d 1908, Thomas Tilley d 1876, Alice d 1882, Emily d 1886, Reginald d 1887 & George E 1889.

If you would like to contribute to the costs of repairing this historic monument please contact us at

[info@focrc.org](mailto:info@focrc.org)

or make a payment via the details below:

Bank: Bendigo Bank Limited

Account name: Friends of Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Inc.

BSB: 633-000

Account: 130896830

Or take advantage of paying by PayPal. It's free and secure. Just visit our website

<http://www.focrc.org/joining> and click on the "Donate" button. Payment can be made by credit card.



Alternatively, our postal address is:

PO Box 2958

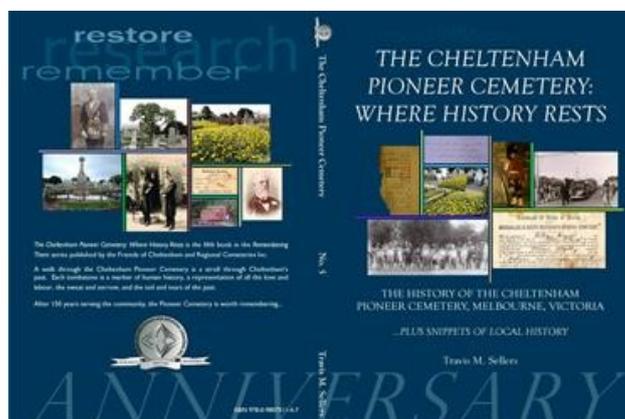
CHELTEMHAM VIC 3192

# Our latest book

## *The Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery: Where History Rests*

After 150 years serving the community, the Pioneer Cemetery is worth remembering...

Written by Travis M. Sellers, *The Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery: Where History Rests* is the fifth book in the *Remembering Them* series published by the Friends of Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Inc. With an index of over 800 names. It is a rich source covering not only the history of the Pioneer Cemetery, but snippets of local history featuring persons buried at the cemetery. The publication contains a number of appendices including a summary of the trustee minutes (1863-1932).



**[Download the index and see if your ancestor is included!](#) [PDF-177KB]**

**Limited print run of just 105 copies, each book is individually numbered and signed by the author. Paperback.**

\$40.00 incl. postage and handling (\$36.00 for financial members)

Purchase your copy using PayPal or download an **[Order Form](#)** [PDF-426KB] and return with your cheque or money order. <http://www.focrc.org/forms/>

### **South Eastern Historical Association (SEHA) meeting – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Nov 2016.**

The Friends of Cheltenham will be hosting the last SEHA meeting for 2016. This group consists of historical societies and other affiliated organisations like The Friends of Cheltenham, and we meet 4 times a year. The group itself covers all of the South Eastern part of Melbourne and beyond, from Cheltenham across to Pakenham, Mornington Peninsula, down to Koo Wee Rup, Lang Lang and all places in between. The day includes a Committee meeting, lunchbreak for all attendees who wish to join us at that point, then a general meeting afterwards. The general meeting is a way for all the groups present to report on the activities of their organisation, which could include any up and coming events that may be of interest to all. All financial members of The Friends of Cheltenham are welcome to attend the day. Lunch is at your cost. Venue and times will be published on our next newsletter, or you can contact Rosemary Reddick at [info@focrc.org](mailto:info@focrc.org).

## **Tours & Other Interests at Affiliated Cemeteries**

### **St.Kilda Cemetery**

#### **Monumental St.Kilda—A Visit to some Grander Memorials**

Sunday 28 August 2:00pm

#### **Lawyers and Judges**

Sunday 25 September 2:00pm

For further details please contact [www.foskc.org](http://www.foskc.org)

### **Brighton General Cemetery**

#### **Talk: Dr Rosalie Triolo—'Sunshine & Shadows' (Inc in AGM)**

Victoria's State Schools & No.11 Australian General Hospital—Caulfield 1914-1919

Sunday 7th August

#### **Artists of the Brighton Cemetery.**

Will include a talk by a Boyd family member who will discuss the amazing Boyd dynasty.

Sunday 10th October 1:00pm

For further details please contact [www.brightoncemetorians.org](http://www.brightoncemetorians.org)

### **Coburg Cemetery**

#### **Monuments & Headstones**

Sunday 21st August at 2pm,

#### **Lawyers, Guns and Money**

Sunday 16th October at 2pm

For further details please contact [focc.group@gmail.com](mailto:focc.group@gmail.com)

### **Malvern Historical Society**

#### **Wednesday 17 August History Matters: Managing your digital collection 10am - 11am Stonnington History Centre**

Historian Simone Sharpe provides handy tips on how to store, protect and manage your collection of digital photographs and documents.

Stonnington History Centre, Northbrook (behind Malvern Library) **RSVP: 82901360**

*FoCRC*