



Raves from the Graves

President's Report

Welcome to the 14th edition of our Newsletter, *Raves from the Graves*. The Committee of The Friends extends a warm welcome to all our new members, and many thanks to our current members for their continued support of the group and our aims.

The beginning of 2020 has been, and will continue to be, a trying time for us all. The year started with bushfires in many parts of Australia, then flooding struck those burnt out communities just as they were trying to get back on their feet. Now we are all grappling with the latest ordeal, which has affected the whole of Australia, COVID-19, and which is unfolding globally as the most serious world disease since the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic. As with the rest of the community, the current health crisis has impacted The Cheltenham Friends and we have cancelled all tours and activities until further notice. The current situation will also affect our ability to undertake regular research, and visit the cemeteries to take images of gravesites for any who may require them. Please be assured that it is still our aim to continue what we are able and permitted to do, in regards to research. However, there will be delays in our responses and we apologise for this, but we must ensure the health and safety of our volunteers which is of paramount importance. We are sure you will understand.

Other news from The Friends relates to the Commemoration Service for Pte. John (Ernest) Dunbar, which was held on Saturday, 25th January at Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery. It was a wonderful event and you can read more about it and see some photos of a very special day on page 12 of the newsletter.

Once the current health crisis passes, The Friends will follow up on our approach to the Defence Minister, Darren Chester MP, on behalf of Edward Leake, a highly decorated soldier.

It is hoped that later in 2020 The Friends can again focus on the restoration of memorials, and the placing of plaques at grave sites, and

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Current Committee

President:
Rosemary Reddick

Vice President:
Margaret Osborne

Secretary:
Sue Beazley

Treasurer:
Sue Beazley

Ordinary Committee Members:
Ric Norman
Pam Norman

Contact Details

Friends of Cheltenham Regional
Cemeteries

Website:
www.focrc.org

Email:
info@focrc.org

Postal Address:
PO Box 2958
Cheltenham VIC 3192

Phone:
(03) 9497 1318 - Rosemary

FoCRC



finally have a plaque placed on the Richard Tilley gravesite, the oldest headstone at Cheltenham Pioneer. We will also apply for approval to place historical plaques at the graves of Alexander Vause MacDonald and Dr. Richard Goldstone, both who played pivotal roles within the local community when Cheltenham was in its infancy. These two men were outstanding in their contributions to the district, but sadly they both lie in unmarked graves.

You may notice that this edition of our newsletter is larger than it usually is. With the current COVID-19 situation and the fact that we are all, for the most part, in isolation, we thought it might be a nice idea to provide you with a little bit more reading material to while away the time! We have included some diverse and interesting articles, including pieces on Cr. Roy Beardsworth and Eliza (and Jimmy Dunbar) of the Bunurong Tribe which we hope you enjoy.

Given that Anzac Day is approaching, we have also included an article on Lance Corporal William Caulfield M.M., who sadly passed away at the young age of 22 years. The Editor of our newsletter would like to take this opportunity to thank those who regularly contribute and, in particular, the wonderful pieces that were provided by Sue Beazley on this occasion.

We also have further excerpts from the delightful reminiscences of Fairlie Taylor – *Memories of Cheltenham and Beaumaris*. Fairlie wrote a wonderful journal describing people and happenings in 'her' Cheltenham, when she lived there. It is a wonderful insight into the history, values, morals and standards of the day. There is also an update on the goings on at the Cheltenham Station – which has had an impact on the cemetery, due to road closures, limiting access to the cemetery at various times. This will continue into 2020.

As always, I would like to thank The Committee of The Friends for all their hard work and tireless efforts to keep the group moving forward. Everyone has their own specialty, which makes for a very cohesive and unified group.

I thank you all for your continued support for The Friends of Cheltenham Group and I look forward to hearing from you if you have feedback, concerns or stories you would like to share.

We wish for you and your families to stay healthy in these unprecedented times. Let's continue to work together as a community. Stay connected, stay positive and care for each other.

Rosemary Reddick
President

we're all
IN THIS
together

Have you received your copy of our Newsletter?

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

info@focrc.org

Cheltenham Railway Station

If you live in Cheltenham or surrounds, you will no doubt be aware that the Frankston side station building has been dismantled and flat packed away to allow the redevelopment to start on the next phase of the project.

The dismantling was reported on the Save Cheltenham Station Facebook pages, with images being posted. It was a sad day for many. It is hoped that the old building will be placed somewhere close to the cemetery and Cheltenham Park, with many sites being put forward for discussion and consideration. To be continued ...



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Cr George Roy Acaster Beardsworth 1888 - 1939

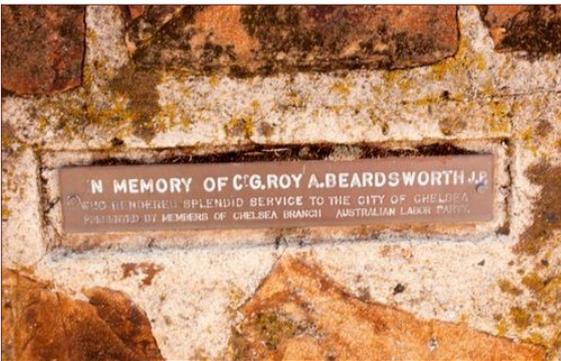
Researched and written by Sue Beazley

If you live in or visit the Chelsea area you may have come across a seat constructed of stone in Nepean Highway at the Chelsea Railway Station. A closer look will see the seat carries a memorial to Cr Roy Beardsworth.



Memorial seat at Chelsea Railway Station

The name probably means little to the many who have rested at the seat and few would know that this energetic gentleman was at the forefront of nearly every progressive movement in the early days of Chelsea.



IN MEMORY OF CR G. ROY A. BEARDSWORTH J.P.
WHO RENDERED SPLENDID SERVICE TO THE CITY OF CHELSEA
PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF THE CHELSEA BRANCH, AUSTRALIAN LABOUR PARTY

'In appreciation of his work for the citizens of Chelsea, a decorative stone seat to the memory of the late Cr. G. R. A. Beardsworth was dedicated to the public by the Mayor (Cr Charles) and his life-long colleague and former Mayor, Mr. D. Bowman. The ceremony took place in the Main Road, Chelsea, and was attended by hundreds of residents.'

~ Age (Melbourne), 25 August 1942.

He was tireless in his efforts to progress the development of his beloved city. This stone seat, a token of the esteem that Cr Beardsworth was held in by the local residents of Chelsea, is now under threat with the imminent level crossing removal scheduled for Chelsea. The seat is marked for destruction with no plan to remove it to a new position. We were recently asked by the newly formed group working to save the old Chelsea station buildings, (4 Feb 1907), for assistance with some research on Cr Beardsworth so they could gather support for the seat to be re-located in the station vicinity. We were happy to assist, progress does not have to come at the cost of the loss of local heritage; the two can co-exist, a juxtaposition of the new and the old, our history and our future.

So who was George Roy Acaster Beardsworth, known to all as Roy?



Cr George Roy Acaster Beardsworth

1888 - 1939

George Roy Acaster Beardsworth was born in Queensland 6 August 1888, the eldest surviving son of Ernest Beardsworth, a pioneer of the sugar industry, and his wife Edith Rose *née* Dean. The Beardsworth family moved to Melbourne and in 1906 Roy attended a boys' camp at Chelsea with the youth group from St Saviour's Church in Collingwood, near where the family lived in Abbotsford. Roy was captivated by the area from that first visit, soon becoming a regular weekend

before permanently settling there in 1914, the year he married Elsie Elizabeth *née* Hart at St Saviour's Church on 14 November. Roy and Elsie originally settled in Woodbine Grove, Chelsea, building the house they called 'Elsroy'.

His Achievements

Roy worked at MacRobertson's Confectionary in Fitzroy for 15 years and it was whilst there that he joined the Trade Union movement as an organiser for the Storemen and Packers' Union. In 1926, he was appointed as the Secretary of the Hospital Employees' Union and went on to serve as a delegate to the Trades Hall Council. He served as Vice President and President of the Victorian ALP Branch and contested the Federal seat of Flinders for Labor against the Prime Minister Hon. Stanley Bruce in 1925. He unsuccessfully stood for the Labor Party in the former Federal seat of Henty and the State seat of Dandenong (1921). His dedication to the City of Chelsea was matched by his commitment to the Labor Movement and the ordinary workers.

There can be no doubt that Beardsworth's greatest achievement was the establishment of the Mordialloc-Chelsea High School, which he was the first to agitate for. His campaign was realised when on 18 February 1924 the Mordialloc-Chelsea High School opened with 120 scholars.

Cr. Beardsworth was invited to officiate at the opening and he served on the first High School Council. This now thriving school is testament to Beardsworth's persistence.



Mordialloc-Chelsea High School Opening
Cr Beardsworth - middle front row

Beardsworth stood for Central Ward Chelsea Council in 1922. He was the first Labor Mayor elected for Chelsea in 1930 and served twice as Mayor of Chelsea in 1930/1931 and 1938/1939. He was still a member of the Chelsea Council at his death, 16 years of service to his city.

Cr Beardsworth involved himself in many facets of local life, joining the Chelsea Progress Association in 1916, soon after moving to the area. He served on the Association for many years, rising to President. He was a strong advocate for the electrification of the Frankston line and regularly pushed for extra railway services on the line. He regularly spoke of the need to get workers home as soon as possible.

Throughout his involvement with the Progress Association, Cr Roy Beardsworth was a relentless advocate for his local area.

Cr Beardsworth also worked tirelessly for many other local organisations:

- * 1915 Appointed to the Shire of Dandenong Repatriation Council representing Chelsea (Secretary from 1915, working with returned soldiers)
- * 1923 Appointed Magistrate for Chelsea and Justice of the Peace
- * 1932 Appointed to the Board of the Infectious Disease Hospital
- * Chelsea Fire Brigade - Chairman
- * Chelsea Football Club - President
- * Chelsea State School Committee
- * Chelsea Swimming & Life Saving Club - President, Hon Treasurer and Life Member
- * Chelsea A.L.P. Branch - President
- * Chelsea Community Hospital Appeal - Secretary
- * St Chad's Church of England - Warden
- * Foreshore Trust - member for several years
- * Severance Committee - Advocating for severance from Shire of Dandenong - Hon.
- * Secretary and Organiser - 1920 saw the Borough of Carrum established
- * President of the Salaried Officers' Association

On 15 November 1939, members of the Hospital Employees' Union were travelling to Ararat for a country meeting when tragedy struck.

Beardsworth was driving the car, when a tyre blew out just outside of Melton. He did his best to keep the vehicle straight, before it skidded onto the wrong side of the road and Roy was thrown on to the roadway suffering serious injuries. Cr Roy Beardsworth was 51 years old when he died in St Vincent's Hospital at Fitzroy eleven days later, 26 November 1939. He was buried at Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery a few days later. Sadly for his family, his tragic death was the third in just four months, following the passing of his mother Edith and younger brother Raymond all buried at Pioneer, along with father Ernest, wife Elsie and two of their children Eric and oldest son Mervyn. Elsie was left with their four children at their home, 'Elsroy', 28 Blantyre Avenue Chelsea.

Cr Roy Beardsworth was accorded the honour of a Civic Funeral, the first held by the Chelsea Council. A large number of Trades Hall and A.L.P. officials, State and Federal Parliamentarians and Councillors attended his funeral. The shops of Chelsea were closed to allow the staff to stand outside their premises as the cortege passed.

At the time of his death, a report in the City of Chelsea News said: 'Roy Beardsworth was probably the most outstanding man in the municipal history of the district.' (1.12.1939).

Surely this highly respected man who gave so much to the City of Chelsea is entitled to keep his memorial seat, it seems a minor request. If you are a resident of the City of Kingston, we hope you will give your support to the Chelsea residents who are working hard to save their heritage. We wish them well.



Beardsworth grave at Cheltenham Pioneer

Sources:

- Obituary 30 November 1939 Labor Call, page 1
- Frankston and Somerville Standard (Vic.: 1921 - 1939) Wednesday 30 August 1922 Page 2 MR. ROY BEARDSWORTH
- Various Labor Call newspapers
- FOCRC research for 150th Anniversary of Pioneer
- City of Kingston Historical website - George Roy Acaster Beardsworth: Councillor and Activist and photo of opening of Mordialloc Chelsea High School
- Photos of moment accessed from Monument Australia: <http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/government---local/display/30778-g.-roy-beardsworth>
- Beardsworth grave photo - Friends of Cheltenham burial database

Membership Renewals

A reminder that our membership year ends on 30 June every year.

If your membership was due to lapse on that date, you should have received an email from Rosemary Reddick.

If your membership has lapsed since then, we look forward to hearing from you as you continue to support your group.

We look forward to working with you all in the future growth and goals of the Friends of Cheltenham Regional Cemeteries.

Memories of Cheltenham & Beaumaris

Continuing our series of excerpts from the manuscript of memories by Fairlie (Addie) Taylor.

Source: RHSV Box 41-2 MS 023683 1958

The Sham Fights

These were held in Cheltenham from 1895 to 1897. The fights were held always on Queen's Birthday, 24th May, and were between the Militia Regiment of Melbourne and Field Artillery of Melbourne. The Field Artillery with their horse drawn guns were camped on the hill where the Victoria Golf House now stands - trenches were dug around part of their camp.

The attackers, who were to try to take the hill, started at daybreak from Ricketts Point beach - these consisted of mounted troops and infantry men. The men on foot made their way over the market gardens of the Monks, Moreys, Woffs, Bodleys and Kings, keeping close to the hedges. The gardeners' daughters brought out cups of tea for the men.

Finally the attackers reached the hill, the great cannons drawn by horses went out to meet them, and the fight began. I remember hiding behind a gum tree to watch, being discovered by an officer, soundly scolded and sent home because I was in the way of the cannons.

In 1910 the Cheltenham Rangers, under Everest Le Page, fought the Brighton Rangers. The fight lasted all night, after which the men were rested in the Orderly Room, now the Soldiers' Hall.

Funerals

I remember the days when the undertaker's hearse was drawn by horses at a snail's pace - great black plumes waved from the top of the hearse. The undertaker, son of a pioneer, wore a long band of black crepe dangling from the back of his top hat. We all donned black armbands when one of our friends died, and every shop in the street was closely shuttered as the funeral passed by.

I must tell you one lovely tale here about our undertaker - Wal. Rose - who was the hope of his side in cricket. He would be in the field in immaculate white togs when suddenly he would dash off to the dressing room and emerge a minute later in long black coat and top hat and go off to

conduct a funeral. If his side was in difficulty, watches would come out and the men would be heard to say "he must be here soon!" Then came the sound of galloping horses drawing a swaying hearse, and in a jiffy Wal would throw off his long black coat - his cricket togs were underneath - and go out to save his side.

Paul Angier

My mother at the age of 9 years, after collecting the mail from the Cobb & Co. coach, would often have to take some of this mail to a small hut near Patty Street, in which lived an exile from the Court of Servis - he was known as Paul Angier - chooks perched on his bed rails and on his table. Paul would say "Listen! Don't you hear the tapping? Listen, don't you hear the voice calling me? Are you there Paul Angier, are you there Paul Angier?" I've often wondered what poor old Paul did in Servis that the voice of conscience followed him out to Australia.

Lizzie, my mother, and her little friend - Maggie Gomm - were always given a little black pudding when they brought the mail to Paul. Maggie ate her share eagerly, but Lizzie couldn't bear the horrid stuff. When old Paul died, it was found he had left his money to Maggie.

Moral - never refuse a black pudding.

Cheltenham Gang

In the early days Cheltenham had a gang known as the "Merry Hawks", a thorn in the side of many residents. To get these lads off the street, Sir Thomas Bent and Mr Frank Le Page arranged for the building of the billiard room adjoining the Mechanics Institute.

Cheltenham Boys

Alan Jackson, England's War Economist, who is now financial adviser to Ghana, spent his boyhood in Park Road.

Forbes McKenzie of Centre Dandenong Road is now Dr. Forbes McKenzie, Health Officer of Melbourne.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Lance Corporal William Stanley Caulfield Military Medal - (M.M.)

Researched and written by Sue Beazley for the Great War Tour based on our Military Tour for the 150th Anniversary celebrations for Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery

Armistice brought an end to the Great War on 11 November 1918, the day we mark as Remembrance Day, estimated deaths 20 million. Of Australia's population at the time of 5 million, 60,000 of our young men had died. In the midst of the celebrations, the World was in the grips of a terrible pandemic, Spanish Flu, which had begun its deadly assault on the world in January of that year.

The total world-wide deaths vary, but it is estimated that 50 million of the 500 million who contracted this deadly influenza died, at a time when the world was trying to recover from World War 1. Swift quarantine measures were introduced in Australia in October 1918, but in January 1919 the first case of Spanish Flu was diagnosed. By the end of that year around 40% of the Australian population had succumbed to the virus and around 15,000 Australians had died. (*National Museum Australia Defining Moments - Influenza Pandemic*)

For the first time as we face a new pandemic there will be no local Anzac Day services, so to honour the many World War 1 veterans who rest at both Cheltenham Pioneer and Cheltenham Memorial cemeteries, we have chosen a local, William Stanley Caulfield M.M.

William Stanley Caulfield was a local boy, born at Cheltenham in 1897 to John Caulfield and his wife Esther Jones. The Caulfield family lived in Patty Street, Mentone where John operated a market garden. William attended Cheltenham School No. 84 and then found employment as an Ironmonger. He was 18 years and 3 months old when he enlisted in the A.I.F. on 14th May, 1915 and was assigned to the 14th Battalion, 7th Reinforcements. Given his age he required the written consent of his parents before he could be accepted.

William's oldest brother George (62*42ACC*O) had enlisted in the 22nd Battalion in January that year along with his brother Herbert (24*43CE*O). Herbert had his enlistment cancelled a month later when the medical check discovered that he had a diseased heart. Interestingly Herbert lived until 1961.

Private William Caulfield embarked with the 14th Battalion aboard the Royal Mail Steamer Persia departing Melbourne 10th. August 1915. He arrived at Mudros Harbour on the Greek Island of Lemnos on 23rd. October, 1915. The Gallipoli campaign was still continuing only 100km from Lemnos.

In March 1916 William was transferred to the 4th Machine Gun Company and promoted to Lance

Corporal in April 1917. He had distinguished himself as a fine soldier at the Battle of Bullecourt and was recommended for a Military Medal for devotion to duty at the Battle of Messines in June 1917. Lance Corporal Caulfield was a runner between Company headquarters and the machine guns in the front line. He also led relief parties in the darkness and over shell-stricken country.

William was severely wounded on 25 September at Ypres in Belgium. He was admitted to the Norfolk War Hospital Norwich on 8 October, where it was found he had shotgun wounds to the back, buttocks, thigh and arms, but it was the shotgun wound to the stomach that was classified as severe and had left a 7 inch scar. On 14 October 1917 his Military Medal was finally confirmed.

William was discharged from the War Hospital and transferred to Australian Auxiliary Hospital Dartford on 10 January 1918 after 94 days in hospital. The scar had healed, but debilitated and complaining of headaches, William requested to be sent home for treatment. He returned home to Melbourne on 14 June 1918 and finally declared permanently unfit for service and discharged on 27 July 1918.

In a letter to the Cheltenham Seaside News dated 22 June 1918, L. W. Pennyⁱ and Corporal J. L. McCoubrieⁱⁱ wrote:

"We are greatly surprised and disappointed that no public welcome has been accorded - Private W Caulfield. He arrived at his home, Mentone, last Friday, he is only a boy, and in addition to doing his bit has been awarded the Military Medal for, bravery on the battle-field. He held a most difficult position after his comrades were shot and while waiting for relief was wounded twice. Mentone residents apparently think nothing of this for they have not yet even said, 'Thank you'. Surely such a man is worthy of a fitting welcome and deserves to be carried shoulder high for his pluck. Up to the present he is the only native Mentone to return with such a medal, and we think the only native of Moorabbin Shire."

Lance Corporal William Stanley Caulfield was 22 years old when he died at 10 am on 24 September 1919 at the Caulfield Military Hospital as a result of the gunshot wound he had received to the abdomen. He was buried two days later and rests at the Pioneer Cemetery

with his parents. William's estate consisted of 114 pounds 4 shillings with the State Savings Bank Caulfield, no doubt mainly his service pay. William is still remembered today with his name listed on the Cheltenham School No. 84 Honour Board displayed at the school and the Moorabbin Shire Roll of Honour which is now housed at the Cheltenham RSL.

Footnotes:

ⁱ Lytton William Penny, son of Cr Edwin T Penny, who the proposed new suburb of Penny is named after.

ⁱⁱ Corporal James Loudon McCoubrie

Source:

Australian War Memorial - research was carried out for our 'The Great War: A Military Tour' and our Military Tour, which was part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations for Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery.



Group portrait of members of 2nd Section, 4th Australian Machine Gun Company, at Fruges in France

Middle row: 3702 Cpl William Edward Wright, Cambridge, TAS, killed in action 17 October 1917; 1381 Driver Leonard Henry King, Kerang, VIC; 291 Pte Horace Edward Nutley, WA; Lieutenant (Lt) Edgar Boyd Clouston, Sydney, NSW, died of wounds 26 September 1917; 557 Pte Albert Stanley McConachy, Winchelsea, VIC, killed in action 26 September 1917; 408 Pte J. Collins, Doncaster, VIC; 552 Pte (later L Cpl) Victor George Hawkins, South Yarra, VIC, died 18 August 1918; 478 Pte Walter Richardson, TAS; **2359 L Cpl William Stanley Caulfield MM, Mentone, VIC – 4th from right**; Lt Albert William Baird Fawcett, Footscray, VIC; 463 Pte Thomas Colling, Eaglehawk, VIC; 556 Pte Cleve Goulding Milne, Essendon, VIC, killed in action 17 October 1917.

Original print held in AWM Archive Store

PB/BS.

TELEPHONE:
CENTRAL 4741.

In all communications regimental number,
rank, full name and unit of Soldier referred
to to be stated.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

BASE RECORDS OFFICE,
VICTORIA BARRACKS.

Melbourne, 21st May, 1918.

Dear Sir,

I have much pleasure in forwarding hereunder copy of extract from Third Supplement No. 30431 to the *London Gazette*, dated 14th December, 1917, relating to the conspicuous services rendered by the undermentioned member of the Australian Imperial Force.

AWARDED THE MILITARY MEDAL.

"HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Military Medal for bravery in the field to the undermentioned :—

No. 2359 Lance-Corporal W. S. CAULFIELD ."

X

X

X

X

The above has been promulgated in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* No. 66, dated 2nd May, 1918.

Mr. J. Caulfield,
Petty Street,
Cheltenham,
VICTORIA.

Yours faithfully,

Major,

Officer i/c Base Records.

C.7277.

Military Medal (M.M.)

**Awarded to Lance Corporal William Stanley Caulfield
on 14 October 1917**



Cheltenham School No. 84

Honour Board



Pte. John (Ernest) Dunbar Commemoration

Saturday, 25th January 2020



Pte. John (Ernest) Dunbar
A gifted artist, whose potential was never fulfilled

In January, the Commemoration Service for Pte. John (Ernest) Dunbar took place at Cheltenham Pioneer. The service was well attended by over 40 people, including a number of members of the extended Dunbar family, all of whom travelled from New South Wales.

The Bayside Mayor, Cr. Clarke Martin, was MC for the day along with other dignitaries, such as Brad Rowsell MP, Convener of the Headstone Project Andrea Gerrard OAM, and Raden Dunbar, a great nephew of Pte. Dunbar and author of *The Secrets of the Anzacs: The Untold Story of Venereal Disease in the Australian Army, 1914 - 1919*.

In the lead up to this event and on the day itself, the Cheltenham Friends were supported by Beaumaris RSL, whose knowledge and expertise was of great value, along with the wonderful support we received from the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, in particular, Kelly Hoskins.

It was a moving and poignant service which finally afforded Pte. Dunbar the recognition he deserved over 90 years ago.



Raden Dunbar
Great nephew of Pte. John Dunbar



Cr. Clarke Martin
Mayor of Bayside

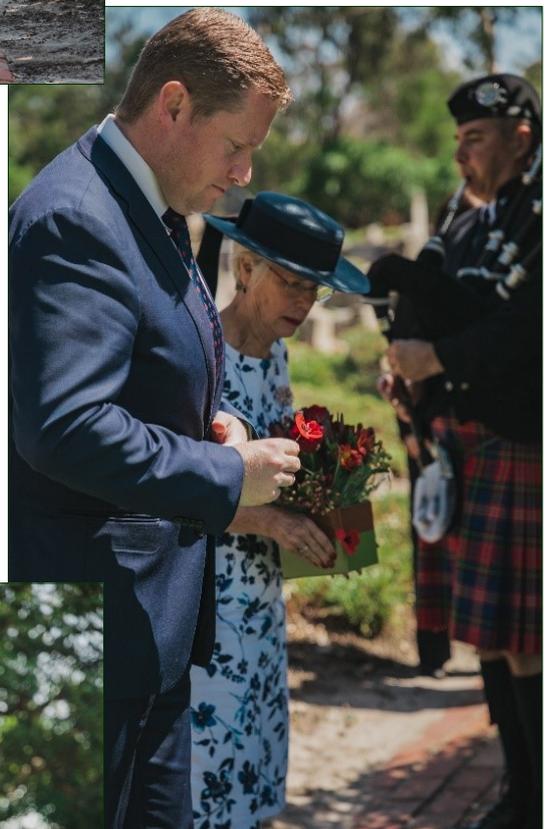
Robert Crozier
Piper



Laying poppies



Kelly Hoskins
Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries
Trust
and
Brad Roswell MP
Sandringham



Sue Beazley
Committee Member of The Friends

Andrea Gerrard OAM
Convener of Headstone Project



A piece of Pte. Dunbar's artwork

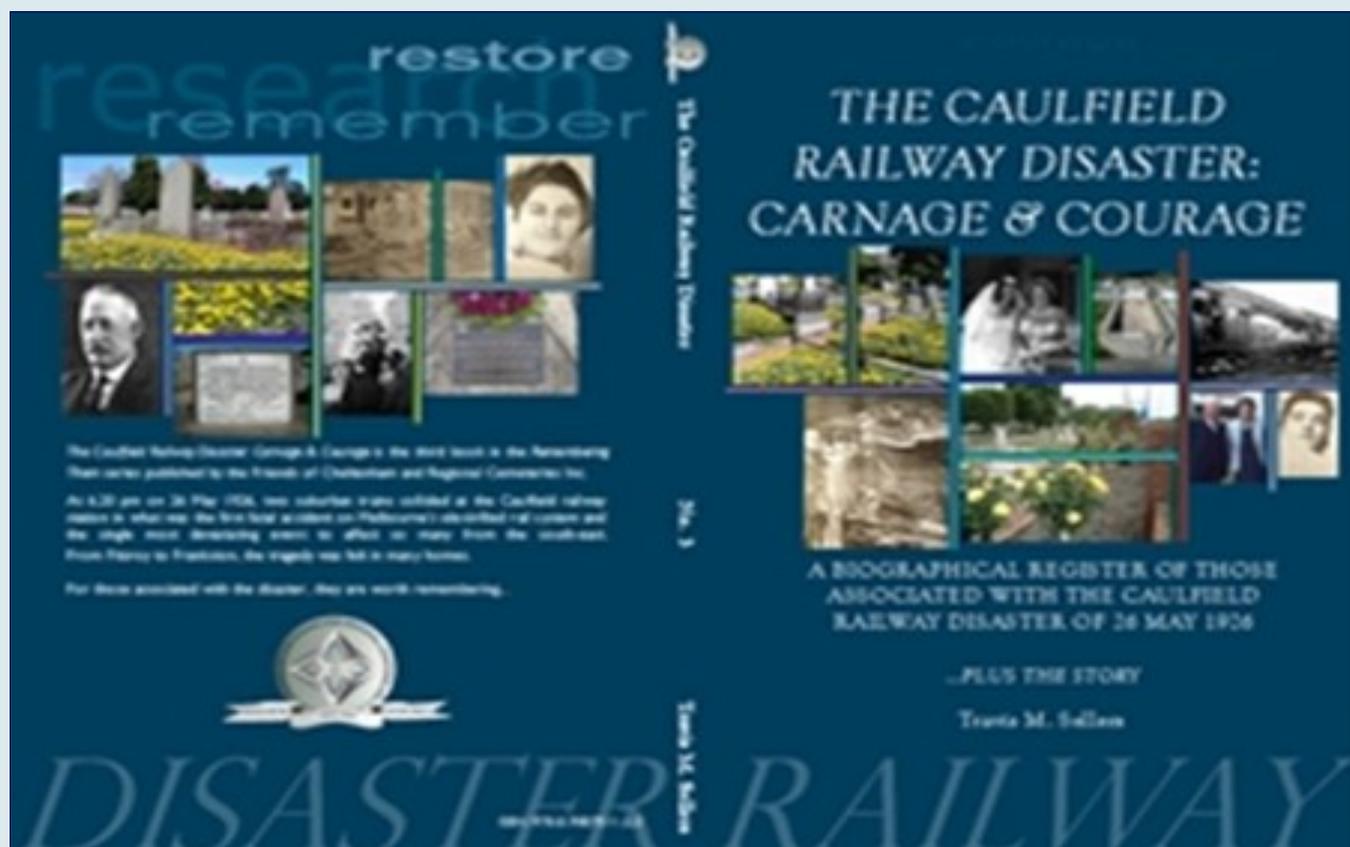


**Commemorative plaque
on the grave of
Pte. John Dunbar**



The Caulfield Railway Disaster: Carnage & Courage \$25.00

Please see Page 20 for payment details



At 6.20 pm on 26 May 1926, two suburban trains collided at the Caulfield railway station in what was the first fatal accident on Melbourne's electrified rail system and the single most devastating event to affect so many from the south-east. From Fitzroy to Frankston, the tragedy was felt in many homes. For those associated with the disaster, they are worth remembering...

Written by Travis M. Sellers, *The Caulfield Railway Disaster: Carnage & Courage* is the third book in the *Remembering Them* series published by the Friends of Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Inc. The A5-sized book comprises 172 pages and 71,600 words with colour illustrations and an index of over 1,040 names. It is a rich source of genealogical information on those associated with the disaster including birth, death and marriage details as well as newspaper articles. The publication also includes the story of the tragedy. The book foreword is written by Andrew Lezala, CEO of Metro Trains Melbourne.

[Download the index and see if your ancestor is included!](#) [PDF-251KB]

Membership Subscription

Membership is open to anyone from around the world with an interest in the Cheltenham Cemeteries, Melbourne Australia. For just \$A20.00 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. Payment details are available from the website www.focrc.org.

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

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Eliza of the Bunurong (Boon Wurrung) Tribe

Researched and written by Sue Beazley for the Ladies of the Cemetery Series

Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery is the final resting place of two aboriginals, Tiger a 15 year old servant from Queensland who resided at Mordialloc and Eliza the last female of the Bunurong Tribe, that we still acknowledge as the original owners of the land around Port Phillip and Westernport bays and one of the five tribes that made up the Kulin Nation of South-Central Victoria.

Eliza was 55 years old when she passed away on 28 February 1877 at what had previously been the aboriginal reserve on the bank of Mordialloc Creek. She was accorded a European funeral thanks to some of the Mordialloc settlers who were sympathetic to the plight of their local aborigines. On 1st March, Eliza was interred at Pioneer in a grassed area known as Stranger's Ground, an area reserved for those who could not afford to be buried, died unknown or did not follow one of the recognised religions. Reports of the time speak of Jimmy Dunbar and his pack of dogs being left to mourn her passing at his *mia-mia* (hut) at Mordialloc.

Six days later, 5 March 1977 'King' Jimmy Dunbar, the last full-blood member of the Bunurong passed away at the Alfred Hospital from liver failure, amongst other illnesses. This time his pack of dogs mourned alone, not allowing anyone to approach Jimmy's Mordialloc *mia-mia* for many daysⁱ. Jimmy was buried in an unmarked grave at Melbourne Cemetery, sadly there is no record of its location; his death certificate shows no age, but records his birth place as Mordialloc. Around 1928, with the cemetery approaching capacity, Eliza's grave was one of 12 graves exhumed from Stranger's Ground and moved to the nearby Presbyterian area to allow the cemetery Trustees to sell some new graves. The early Trustees were not always ethical in their dealings when money was involved.

For thousands of years the Bunurong had roamed freely around the Port Phillip and Westernport Bays. Mordialloc Creek, with its ready supply of fresh water and food, was one of their favoured hunting grounds.

The first permanent white settlers to arrive in the area originally known as 'Murdy Yallock' were Alexander Vause MacDonald and his wife Isabella (née Munro) in 1842. MacDonald built the primitive bark-roofed Travellers' Rest Inn at Mordialloc Creek, an early stopping place for travellers, before another small hotel was built on the site in 1853.

In 1852, the Bunurong were allocated 840 acres of land at Mordialloc Creek, with the intention of keeping the tribes away from the growing settlement of Melbourne. The Aboriginal Protection Board revoked the Mordialloc Reserve in 1862-1863, considering it now too close to Melbourne and the land was handed over to establish the Moorabbin and Mordialloc Farmer's Common, where the early settlers could apply to graze animals and grow crops.

In 1864 the Government Protector William Thomas advised that the Mordialloc aboriginal population was 11, by 1872 the number had dwindled to 4 – Jimmy, and his lubra Nancy, and Peter and his lubra Eliza. That same year Nancy, Peter and Eliza were confined at Prahran lock-up on 9 October 1872 for being drunk and disorderly. They were discharged and left for Mordialloc on their releaseⁱⁱ. The coming of white settlement had exposed the local aborigines to alcohol and the European diseases that had hastened their demise.

Eliza and Nancy were not always so cordial to each other. Mrs. Mary Brown (née McKnight) recalls when Peter left his first lubra Nancy and took Eliza as his new lubra.

"Very angry, and threatening dire vengeance, Nancy called at the McKnight home, and attempted to take a rake, declaring, "Liza steal my man, Liza steal my man. I comb her hair; I comb her hair," and probably would have, but for the influence of Mr. McKnight".ⁱⁱⁱ

In his 1872 report the Custodian for the Mordialloc aborigines, Mr. J. W. Randell, stated "As the Mordialloc Aborigines now number only four, and one of the women (Eliza) is far from strong, I do not think that the Board will be put to any great

cost before the tribe is extinct. I have carried out my instructions by supplying the rations as economically as possible, and regularly once a week^{iv}.

The Bunurong tribe were survived by the half-caste children born to the Bunurong women abducted by white sealers and taken to remote islands in Bass Strait. A few of their descendants remain and act as custodians for the First People of this area, to preserve and protect the sacred land, cultural beliefs and stories of the Bunurong Tribe, the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the Boon Wurrung Foundation. Sadly these two groups have recently been to court over who is the official representative.

In 1970 a cairn was erected in Scullin Reserve, Mordialloc. This cairn commemorates Alexander MacDonald and the Bunurong Tribe. Alexander and Isabel MacDonald, along with Eliza, lie unrecognised at Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery, with no memorial or headstone marking their graves.

Hopefully in the future, funds will be found to recognise these three who played an important part in the early history of Mordialloc.

Footnotes:

ⁱ *The Argus* 14 April 1877, page 6

ⁱⁱ Return showing the number of aboriginals confined in Her Majesty's gaols and lock-ups for year ending 31 December 1972 (National Library)

ⁱⁱⁱ *Standard* (Frankston, Vic. 1939 - 1949) 24 Jan 1941, page 8 Aboriginal Amour Recalled by Woman Who Knew Blacks

^{iv} Aboriginals under charge of local guardians 1 January 1972 (National Library)

Sources:

Death Certificate - James Dunbar 4591/1877

Holding picture of Eliza and Peter from State Library

Picture of Jimmy Dunbar from State Library

Pictures of Jimmy Dunbar and Nancy, and Jimmy and his dogs:

www.localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au/articles/499



Peter and Eliza

HELPERS WANTED

Are you interested in helping The Friends of Cheltenham Regional Cemeteries group? We would love to hear from you. Maybe you would like to help us on tour days, greeting people, or helping out with our afternoon teas?

Maybe you have administration skills that you are happy to use, perhaps even with helping with our website or social media. Or do you love the thrill of the chase, when it comes to researching many of the interesting people who are buried at both cemeteries? Are you interested in military research, as there are many service personnel buried at Cheltenham cemeteries and the committee is currently attempting to put together a catalogue of all these gallant men and women?

If you are interested in helping the group, please come along and have a chat with one of our committee members, we would be delighted to meet you. There is no pressure to become a committee member, we would just like to meet our members to encourage your involvement in your group – not to mention that we could use an extra pair of hands occasionally!

Contact: info@focrc.org



Jimmy Dunbar and his wife Nancy
Outside the Bridge Hotel, Mordialloc



“This cairn was erected by the citizens of Mordialloc to commemorate the first permanent white settler in the district MacDonald whose homestead was built near this spot in 1845 and also to commemorate the Boonurrong Aboriginal Tribe whose camping grounds were along the banks of the Mordialloc Creek”



JIMMY, the last of the Mordialloc aboriginals, is dead—dead. He was well known in and around the metropolis, as a favourable specimen of his race, and a perfect master of the boomerang. He had formerly served as a mounted trooper, and his last lubra died at Mordialloc only a week before him. He expired in the Alfred Hospital. A boomerang crowns him.



Jimmy and his dogs, outside his mia mia located on the Blind Creek, an arm of the Mordialloc Creek and adjacent to the Bridge Hotel c. 1870

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