

Cemetery Conversations



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF ST. KILDA CEMETERY INC.

EUPHEMIA ETHEL ELIZABETH SPENCER HENDERSON

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As a talented watercolourist of botanical subjects, and a jilted lover of a romantic and famous man, Euphemia Henderson's life should be well recorded as a Victorian romantic tragedy, but her talents and subsequent sorrow for her situation are probably now well-forgotten.

Born on the island of Guernsey, a daughter of James Henderson and Catherine *née* Black, Euphemia, with her brother John Black Henderson and her sister Georgiana, arrived in Victoria in 1838, thus being one of the earliest arrivals in the colony. They settled on Phillip Island and subsequently moved to Yanakie, South Gippsland.

Euphemia came from a gifted and artistic family. Her brother James was a noted artist.

Euphemia's hobby was an engagement in painting flowers. The extent of her interest in garnishing subjects for her paintings led her to the Melbourne Botanical Gardens where she met Ferdinand von Mueller, the director.

Mueller was interested in art for its botanical depictions and had a great number of women botanical painters and collectors send

drawings to him. These included Louisa Atkinson, Fanny Charsley, Helena Scott, Annie Walker, as well as Euphemia.

On meeting, Euphemia and Mueller were attracted to each other and engaged in walks and interludes in the grounds of the Gardens where their romantic relationship developed. Mueller referred in his writing to her as "My Beloved Euphemia" and in 1863 they became engaged, but this was a short-lived romance, as the following year Mueller broke off their relationship on the dubious grounds of his ill-health and pressure of work, but it is also said that he thought she was past child-bearing age. He subsequently became engaged to Rebecca Nordt in 1865 but that relationship failed and he never married.

Euphemia died, unmarried, at Kew, Victoria, in November 1907 and is buried at St. Kilda General Cemetery (CofE "D" 480) in an unadorned grave.

(Source: Morris, D., "Mueller, Sir Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich von [Baron von Mueller] (1825 - 1896)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 5, Melbourne University Press, 1974, pp 306-308; Dictionary of Australian Artists Online— www.daa.org.au/main/read/3186*)

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SYBIL CRAIG (1901-89)

The reportage of war would be incomplete without the contributions of war artists, who have predominately been men, placed in the front line to paint what they saw. Few women were commissioned to this role in Australia during WW1, however the works of Stella Bowen, Nora Heysen and Sybil Craig stand out for the quality of their work and their depiction of another side of warfare. Whilst their appointment was an overdue recognition of their abilities, they faced many more restrictions than male artists and their role was mainly to document the work of women in the services.

Craig was born in Enfield, England on 18 November 1901 and arrived with her parents in Victoria the following year. She commenced drawing classes in 1920 and enrolled at the Melbourne National Gallery School in 1924-31. Encouraged by her friend and fellow artist Jessie Mackintosh, Craig held her first solo show at the Athenaeum Gallery in 1932 and exhibited with the Women Painters and Sculptors from 1933. Craig's further studies developed her interest in colour, pattern and simplicity and she found influence in the work of Matisse, and that of the English artist Matthew Smith. Craig drew

on all these aspects for her portrayals of women in her 1940s war paintings.

On 1 March 1945, Craig became the third female official war artist appointed by the Australian War Memorial. She was recommended by members of the Memorial's art advisory panel who had been urged to include more modernist artists. Craig's parents urged her to accept.

As a shy and self-conscious person, Craig felt inadequate for her post, ill-equipped to adequately portray her subjects in an industrial setting and found it a "tremendous responsibility". She felt obligated to remain in Melbourne to look after her parents, where she would be able to travel on public transport to select destinations as part of her appointment.

Craig's war paintings are notable for their contrasting settings. She worked for four months at the Commonwealth Explosives Factory at Maribyrnong, recording the activities of the female munitions workers. Craig grew to love this aspect of her assignment, saying: "My work is at present wonderfully interesting to me, and I feel as though I have crowded a lifetime of experience into a few months...". In stark contrast to the factory floor, early in her appointment

Craig painted members of the Comforts Fund sewing group in a number of works.

The 176 works that Craig completed as an official war artist are mostly small in size but make use of vivid colour and pattern. She captures the variety of tasks women performed in Melbourne in the war years, demonstrating the importance of women's contributions to the war effort. She found the factory noisy, but enjoyed the companionship of the other workers. There is no trace of propaganda in her work, but rather visions of honest depiction; Craig painted what she saw. Unfortunately her modernist war works are rarely exhibited outside the confines of the Australian War Memorial.

Craig died in a nursing home in Melbourne on 14 September 1989 and is buried in the St. Kilda Cemetery with her parents.

Come on our Artists' Tour on Sunday 22 March and hear more about Sybil Craig and many other famous painters buried in the Cemetery.

(Source: Australian War Memorial, www.awm.gov.au/aboutus/artist_profiles/craig.asp; Speck, C., "Painting Ghosts: Australian women artists in wartime" (2004); Wilkins, L., "Sybil Craig (1901-1989)" in "Artists in Action" (2003); Wilkins, L., "Sybil Mary Frances Craig", Dictionary of Australian Artists' Online, www.daaa.org.au/main/read/1970)

"Craig's works are replete with rhythm, colour, simplicity and design, and are a delight to the eye in their modernist form".



Headstone monument of the Craig family grave—Church of England "D" 220



REMEMBERING BARON SIR FERDINAND VON MUELLER



Grave of Baron Sir Ferdinand von Mueller at the St. Kilda General Cemetery



The headstone monument of von Mueller's impressive grave

Baron Sir Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich von Mueller (1825 - 1896) was a man of worldwide repute. He was the recipient of many international honours for his scientific endeavours and was largely responsible for the international recognition given to Australian scientific endeavour. This is exemplified in the following article which appeared in the American journal "The Museum: A Monthly Science Journal" (August 1898 - page 149) following his death on 10 October 1896;

"The Late Baron Sir Ferdinand Von Mueller, K.C.M., F.R.S. Etc., Government Botanist of Victoria.

Scientists throughout the

world, but more especially the deceased's numerous personal friends, will be pleased to hear that his executors (Rev. W. Potter, Dr. Alex. Buttner and H. Buttner, Esq.) are - in compliance with the Baron's dying wish - now collecting donations for the erecting upon his grave in the St. Kilda cemetery, Melbourne, of a monument worthy of the deceased savant's fame. The monument is of grey granite, 23ft. in height, all highly polished, and will stand in the centre of a grave-plot 12ft. square, planted out with choice specimens of the Australian flora, with which the Baron's name has become imperishably linked. They also will be glad to know that the illustrious phytologist's supplemental

volume of the *Flora Australiensis*, upon which he had worked for years, and was preparing for the Press at the time of his death, is to be published, together with two volumes on his administration as director of the Botanical Gardens, Melbourne, and embracing a biography and complete bibliography of his writings. The executors will feel favored by the loan of any of his letters, or the communication of incidents in the Baron's life which friends may deem worthy of notice in the biography. Donations and letters should be addressed - "Rev. W. Potter, 'Vonmueller,' Arnold street, South Yarra, Melbourne. Australia".

FREDERIC GODFREY HUGHES (1858-1944)—CITIZEN SOLDIER

Frederic Godfrey Hughes, was born on 26 January 1858 at Windsor, Melbourne. Educated at Melbourne Grammar, he began as a clerk with a prominent Melbourne land valuer before setting up on his own firm about 1884. He was a noted athlete, footballer and rower and served on St. Kilda Council for twenty-three years including two terms as Mayor.

He was best known as a citizen soldier rising through the ranks from a gunner in 1875 to become commander of the 11th Australian Light Horse Regiment in 1903. On the outbreak of World War I, Hughes commanded the 3rd Light Horse Brigade and served at Gallipoli. His men took part in the disastrous storming of the Turkish trenches at The Nek on 7 August 1915. Hughes was evacuated to Australia in

March 1916 suffering from pneumonia and typhoid fever.

After the war he concentrated on business, mining and pastoral interests and died at St. Kilda on 23 August 1944.

Hughes' grave will be visited at the forthcoming Military Tour on Sunday 19 April 2009.



FORTHCOMING TOURS

Artists' Tour

Sunday 22 March 2009 at 2.00pm

This easy circular walk visits the graves of Sybil Craig, Hugh Ramsay, Elizabeth Parsons and many other notable artists. Come and hear about their lives and artistic works.

Military Tour

Sunday 19 April 2009 at 2:00pm

St. Kilda General Cemetery is the resting place of veterans of battles from the Napoleonic wars to the Second World War. Even veterans of Australia's own civil conflict, the Eureka Stockade, lie within the Cemetery as well as Captain Albert Jacka, the first Australian recipient of the Victoria Cross in World War One.

The Trials of Ned Kelly

Sunday 17 May 2009 at 2.00pm

This tour will focus on a number of people whose lives crossed that of Ned Kelly and his gang members. Among those to feature include most of the lawyers connected with the Kelly trials; various police involved in the pursuit of the Kelly gang and Prison officials from the Old Melbourne Gaol. This tour is held in conjunction with Victorian Law Week.

Notable Women

Sunday 21 June 2009 at 2.00pm

This tour focuses on notable women buried in the Cemetery and the contributions that they have made to the community and the nation.

General tour details:

All tours of St. Kilda Cemetery leave from the main entrance gates on Dandenong Road, St. Kilda East.

Tour cost: \$10.00 for adults (except where indicated). Members of the Friends of St. Kilda Cemetery and children (under 18 years) are free.

Bookings: Reservations for all tours are essential. Numbers are limited. Book now on (03) 9531 6832 to avoid disappointment.

Tours usually run for about 90 minutes.

SOME NOTABLE ANNIVERSARIES IN 2009

200 years ago (1809)

Thomas Manifold was born in Cheshire, England on 29 March 1809, he emigrated to Hobart Town in 1827 and obtained a land grant on the Tamar River. He visited Port Phillip in February 1836 and was soon to land the first sheep at Point Henry, near Geelong. With two brothers he took up Purrumbete near Camperdown in 1839. He later lived in Melbourne dying at Caulfield on 7 November 1875 (CofE "A" 219).

175 years ago (1834)

Sir Frederick Thomas Sargood was born on 30 May 1834 at Walworth, London. A successful businessman and politician, Sargood's wealth enabled him to build the imposing *Rippon Lea* house and garden. Sargood died suddenly on 2 January 1903 (Ind "C"24A).

150 years ago (1859)

SS *Admella*, a steam ship of 209 tons ran onto Carpenter

Rocks near Millicent, South Australia on 6 August 1859. Over the next eight days, 89 people lost their lives, including the fourteen-year-old Edwin Chambers whose name is commemorated on a headstone in the St. Kilda General Cemetery.

100 years ago (1909)

Charles St. George Truelove singer, choir-master and one time secretary of St. Kilda General Cemetery died on 1 September 1909. Charlie Truelove was manager of the Cemetery for twenty years until he suddenly fled in 1905 under a cloud of suspicion. Among the allegations were that he had resold graves that had been previously used. All this by a man who in his youth sang as a boy soprano in the St. George's Chapel choir at Windsor Castle before Queen Victoria. Ironically, Truelove came to be buried in the St. Kilda General Cemetery (OD "C" 15A).

JOHN OWENS - GOLDFIELDS MEDICO AND POLITICAL LEADER

This year is also the anniversary of the birth of John Downes Owens who was born in Shropshire, England in 1809. He arrived in the colonies in 1850 as a surgeon on an immigrant ship. He went to various goldfields and was in Bendigo 1852 where he was among the first doctors. Moving around the goldfields, Owens became involved in campaigning for the miners. This was to lead to a seat in the Victorian Parliament. Owens went on to become acting assistant emigration officer at Queenscliff and acting resident surgeon at Pentridge. He died at Windsor on 26 November 1866 (CofE "C" 41).

