Newsletter Friends of St Kilda Cemetery Inc

July 2019

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Winter has arrived – keep warm and enjoy this newsletter and some tours and walks through St Kilda Cemetery

Volunteers needed…

COME AND HELP THE FRIENDS BE A WONDERFUL HISTORICAL GROUP.

Printing of newsletter

Printed copies of our newsletters are provided courtesy of SCOTSBURN NURSERIES

www.scotsburn.biz
The Friends thank Scotsburn. Their kind assistance is most appreciated.

Contributions to our newsletter are welcomed. Email for further information to info@foskc.org

Grave photo: Mollison family grave, St Kilda Cemetery Bap B 594 and 595, together with his wives Emily Beatrice Mollison buried 9 April 1891, Corientia Elizabeth Mollison buried 17 April 1920 and Grace Elizabeth Mollison cremated 25 February 1958 and other members of the Mollison family.

Featured Article

CRAWFORD HENRY ("MOLLIE") MOLLISON

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST

"The doctor who solves murders"

Born 1 August 1863; died 6 April 1949; cremated 29 April 1949

Baptist B 594

Article by Elizabeth Hore

Crawford Henry Mollison was born on 1 August 1863 at Bendigo, Victoria, where his father Crawford Mollison (an Englishman from Hastings, Kent, who had come to Australia in 1838 and who is also buried at St Kilda Cemetery) was Assistant Commissioner to the Goldfields.

At the age of eight, young Crawford was sent on a windjammer to relatives in England, and there attended a school in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. On returning to Victoria he entered Kew High School, which stood on the site of the present Trinity Grammar School in Charles Street, Kew. Later Mollison went to the Geelong Grammar School, at that time a small academy of fewer than 100 boys overlooking the Barwin River on the Barrabool Street Hill; but it was at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School he finally matriculated, to graduate MB (Melb) in 1884. After two years as a resident medical officer at the Melbourne Hospital, he was in England taking the MRCS. He then spent some months in Vienna studying dermatology at the Polyclinic. On returning to Melbourne he joined, for a year or two, Dr Campbell White of Balaclava, in general practice.

Mollison married Emily Beatrice Smith at Hawthorn on 23 October 1889. After her death in childbirth in April 1891 Mollison, feeling that he could no

Frederick Deeming

Linda Agostini

Linda Agostini, dental records, Sydney Living Museum

longer practise medicine, turned to pathology and became honorary pathologist at the Children's Hospital (1891-1904). He was appointed assistant pathologist at the Melbourne Hospital in 1892 and senior assistant pathologist in 1911, holding that post until 1938 when he was appointed consulting pathologist. In 1893 he became coroner's surgeon, and pathologist to the Women's Hospital, a position he occupied until the appointment of a full-time pathologist in 1939. He was lecturer in forensic medicine at the University of Melbourne in 1904-43.
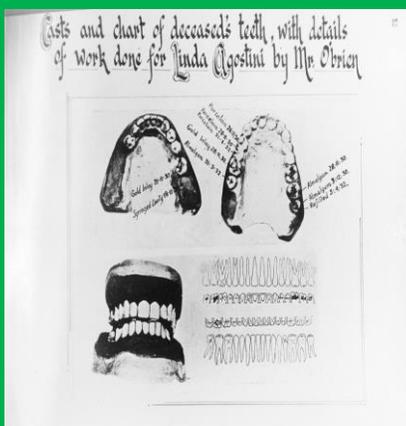
But from 1891 he devoted himself to the fields of pathology and forensic medicine in which he was to hold a supreme position as coroner's surgeon in Victoria for fifty-five years. During that time he carried out an average of 500 autopsies a year and became known for many years as "the doctor who solves murders" due to his association with police investigations into most of Victoria's famous murders at the time, notably the Deeming murder (1892), the Gun Alley murder (1922), the Leonski murders (1942) and the Linda Agostini, "Pyjama Girl", (1934-1944) cases.

With his quiet and unassuming nature, cherubic countenance, pleasant smile and soft voice, Mollison was regarded as a model witness who gave evidence clearly and concisely to the extent that counsel found it difficult to sway him as he refused to be hurried into giving an answer. All facts as he knew them, whether favourable or otherwise were placed before the court. He saw his position to be one of finding and presenting all relevant facts, to set them out fully and as an expert to give opinions when asked. The first and only time on record of Mollison losing his temper was during the "Pyjama Girl" inquest when he was bombarded with questions. This was remarked upon jokingly by magistrates, police, doctors, and solicitors when he retired as Government pathologist in June, 1947.

The "Pyjama Girl" case was significant as the earliest example in Australia of the use of dentistry to identify the victim of a homicide. The body of Linda Agostini was preserved in formalin and placed on public display at the University of Sydney. It was not identified for ten years. The first dental examination was found to be flawed and another dentist was called to examine the body and it was identified as Agostini.

Mollison's other work included his appointment as assistant pathologist to the Melbourne Hospital and to the Women's Hospital. He did an immense amount of work in private practice and for many years was the final Court of Appeal in macroscopic and microscopic problems. His reports were always to be relied upon and were known throughout Australia.

He was the successor to Mr Justice Stewart McArthur as president of the Medico Legal Society of Victoria, treasurer of the Medical Society of Victoria in 1891 and continued in that office when that society amalgamated with the Victorian Branch of the British Medical Association in 1908; on his retirement in 1947 he had held that office for fifty-five years. The Federal Council awarded him the rare distinction of its gold medal.

For the first twenty-one years of the British Medical Insurance Company of Victoria he served as Chairman of Directors and acted as President of the Medical Board of Victoria for six years.

Mollison had a dry wit, a quiet, retiring nature and enjoyed many friendships. He enjoyed bridge, never missed a Melbourne Cup, was surgeon to the Victorian Racing Club, and loved cricket and royal tennis.

He married three times: Emily Beatrice Smith at Hawthorn on 23 October 1889 who died in childbirth in April 1891; Corientia Elizabeth (d 1920) daughter of Thomas Browne ("Rolf Boldrewood") on 18 December 1900; and Grace Elizabeth Thomas on 16 October 1929.

He had only one pupil, Dr Redford Wright-Smith, who died three years after succeeding Mollison at the morgue. In 1946, aged 83, Mollison returned to work until a replacement could be found. He died on 6 April 1949 and was cremated. His third wife and a daughter from each of his first and third marriages and two sons from his second survived him. His eldest son was lost on service in World War II. Mollison's portrait by W B McInnes is in the council-room of the Australian Medical Association (Victorian branch
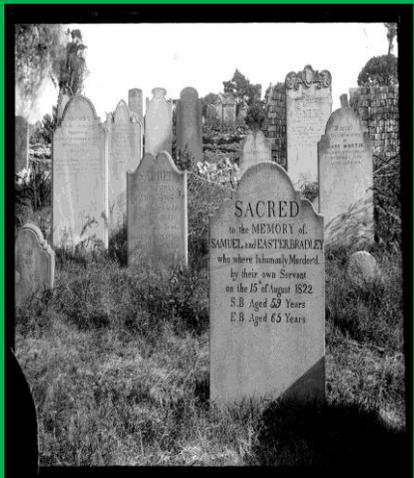
Dead Centre Exhibition, State Library NSW

If you are visiting Sydney, don't forget to see this terrific exhibition at State Library NSW, ends Sunday 17 November 2019.

DEAD CENTRE EXHIBITION,

STATE LIBRARY, NEW SOUTH WALES

DEVONSHIRE STREET CEMETERY

A VANISHED SYDNEY CEMETERY

Devonshire Street cemetery once sprawled across sandy, uneven ground bounded by the city's Elizabeth, Pitt and Devonshire streets — where Central Station now stands.

The major cemetery for nineteenth century Sydney, the Devonshire Street Cemetery was divided by walls into seven sections denoting religious denominations. The oldest was the Church of England section, then Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Wesleyan, Quaker and Jewish sections.

Consecrated in 1820, the cemetery filled quickly over the following decades. It was officially closed in 1867, but family vaults continued to accept new burials. By the end of the nineteenth century, the entire ground was overgrown and uncared for; burials had been made within every square inch, even under paths. Rubbish was often dumped from neighbouring terraces, and at night it was a dangerous, insalubrious place.

In January 1901 the State government announced its intention to clear the cemetery to make way for Central Station. It is estimated that over 30,000 bodies had to be removed. Descendants were given two months' notice to decide where their forebears' remains would be reinterred. Those not claimed would be transferred to Bunnerong cemetery, an extension of Botany cemetery.

Before the graves were exhumed, two dedicated locals from nearby Albion Street, Surry Hills, set about documenting the cemetery. Married couple Arthur and Josephine Ethel Foster were standing next to the headstone of ex-convict and successful businesswoman Mary Reibey when they decided to photograph and copy the inscriptions. Their record is extraordinary — and include about half of the 1220 Church of England transcriptions and hundreds of tragic accounts of short lives and misfortunate deaths.

It wasn't just the cemetery that was cleared in 1901. The entire block where Central Station now stands, some 11 acres (4.5 hectares), included some of Sydney's early colonial buildings; the Benevolent Asylum (built in 1820), Christ Church parsonage (built 1852), the Police Barracks and Inspector General of Police, the morgue, the Sydney Female Factory, the Convent of the Good Samaritan and the Tram Depot.

Almost 120 years after the Devonshire Street cemetery was cleared, the headstones that remain standing at Botany cemetery are still beautiful — though altered. The old stones are covered in lichen, and the predominant colour of the scene is rust-red. The many examples of Victorian-era stonemasonry — angels, seraphs, sacred hearts and crosses, draped urns and broken columns — contrast with the modern cemetery. And some of the inscriptions can no longer be deciphered.

This is an edited down version of an article written by Elise Edmonds, Senior Curator, Research & Discovery, first published in SL magazine, Winter 2019. State Library New South Wales.

If you are visiting Sydney, don't forget to see this terrific free exhibition at State Library NSW, ends Sunday 17 November 2019.

St Kilda Cemetery is located on the corner of Dandenong Road and Hotham Street, ST KILDA EAST

Recent /news/tour/events highlights

PAST COPIES OF FRIENDS OF ST KILDA CEMETERY NEWSLETTER "CEMETERY CONVERSATIONS"

We have noticed that not all our newsletters appear on our website and have spent some time hunting down the missing ones. The very early copies could not be found. If anyone has a copy of them, we would be grateful if you could let us know. Due to the size of some Cemetery Conversations we are unable to upload them however if you wish to see a copy that is not showing on our website, please check the catalogue on the Prahran Mechanics Institute Library website and then contact us.

https://www.pmi.net.au/

Email us at info@foskc.org and we will try and assist.

MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2019-2020 ARE NOW DUE
Cost remains at $15, please email for further details: info@foskc.org

Future Tours and events
PLEASE NOTE: The new toilets in cemetery are near front gate and now operational for future tours. Please ask tour leader for the code to open door.

FUTURE TOURS AND EVENTS FOR 2019:

Coroners, Constabulary and Crime, 2.00pm Sunday 28 July 2019 – THIS IS NOT A TOUR FOR THE SQUEAMISH!

Colonial Merchants of Melbourne, 2.00pm Sunday 25 August 2019 – a wonderful tour with lots of interest, led by Claire

AGM – 10-12 noon Saturday 31 August 2019, Emerald Hill Library, Bank Street, South Melbourne, Guest speaker: Susan Grant who will speak on Joseph Panton. More news soon.

PLEASE FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK OR LOOK AT OUR WEBSITE FOR NEWS OF ALL FUTURE TOURS AND EVENTS

Tour Cost $15; members free. Afternoon tea included. Bookings: email preferred info@foskc.org; or tel: Sheila 9531 3648 or Liz 0422379053

All our tours leave from the main entrance to the cemetery in Dandenong Road. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear as we go all weathers, rain, hail or shine.