



Newsletter of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery Inc.

Issue 3: September 2020

President's Word 1

Rhoda Le Griffon 1851–1949 2

Frederick Klaerr 1856–1934 3

The Cemetery 100 years ago 4

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President's Word

Dear Members

Due to this terrible insidious virus that has badly hit Victoria, we have had to cancel this year's in-person Annual General Meeting with our guest speaker.

We don't know at this stage when we can have our AGM. However, we are planning to conduct elections for positions, if an election is required.

If you wish to stand for election to the Committee, and if you wish to vote in the proposed election, you must be financial for the year 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. Please pay your dues and submit completed nomination forms by Saturday 29 August 2020.

If an election is needed, we will send out ballot papers by email, and post for those who are not online. Completed ballots are to be returned by Wednesday 30 September 2020. We will correspond with financial members about the election, if one is required after 29 August 2020.

On behalf of the Committee we thank you for your understanding and your patience and please keep safe during this period.

Gabriel Hermes
Acting President

Recent Arrivals

The Friends have received these publications:

Brighton Cemeterians *The Cemeterian* 61; Brighton Historical Society *Journal* 192, Winter 2020; Carlton Community History Group *Newsletter* 18; Malvern Historical Society *Local History News* July 2020; Port Phillip Historical and Preservation Society *eBulletin*, 5 June, 19 June, 3 July, 10 July, 31 July, 7 August; Port Phillip Historical and Preservation Society *Newsletter*, June and August; Prahran Mechanics Institute *Recent additions and August 2020 Newsletter*; Royal Historical Society *Update* 1 July, *History News* 349 August, and *Victorian Historical Journal* 91:1, June 2020. *St Kilda Historical Society Newsletter* 232, August 2020.

Rhoda le Griffon 1851–1949

When re-researching Rhoda (Hobbs), more details were now available via *Trove*.

Born on the Isle of Wight on 29 July 1851, Rhoda, brother Frederick and parents, Henry and Ellen Hobbs (1828–1896), arrived in Melbourne on 18 September, 1852. Because of fever on board, the SS *Persian* was quarantined on arrival. The Hobbs family initially moved to Warrnambool, but by April 1860 the family was living in Geelong.

Henry seemed to have integrated quickly into the community and opened his own foundry. In September 1877, he was mentioned in the *Geelong Advertiser* as being at a Geelong West Borough Council meeting, where he was now on the council¹. The discussion that night centred on the Council assisting with a collection of exhibits for transmission to the Paris Exhibition. Councillor Hobbs thought that the Council could not afford any funds for the purpose.

In October 1879, the Geelong Agricultural Show was opened, and was fairly successful. Local firms that made a creditable display in the implement and machinery department, included H.Hobbs, of the Barwon Foundry². In 1880, in the Geelong Juvenile and Industrial Exhibition Adult section, Henry Hobbs of Barwon Foundry South Geelong received a Certificate of Merit in the Chilled Cast Iron Plough Shares section³.

Daughter Rhoda was married in Carlton in 1888 to Edward Baron Nicholls (1841–1893). He was a St Kilda storekeeper with the couple living in Bowen Street, St Kilda. It was a short marriage, as Edward died after five years. The probate documents show that, as soon as possible, all the business relating to Edward was transferred to father Henry Hobbs, and he bequeathed £200 to his wife, including everything he possessed.

Rhoda seems to have moved back home with her parents in widowhood. Her mother Ellen passed away in 1896, aged 68, and Ellen probably took over the mothering role. Her parents had another seven children, among them twin daughters, Henrietta who died aged three, and sister Jemima who lived to 86. All her siblings married, so it seems feasible that Rhoda probably

looked after her father.

In 1913, Henry was given an order for the Country Fire Brigade Board for 100 steel sets of hose couplings, to be distributed amongst the brigades for demonstration practice. They were of the three-thread standard, were lighter and more durable than brass, and would prove cheaper in the long run.

When a fire broke out in the Hobbs home in Fyans Street in 1915, it was lucky that father and daughter were not in residence in the six-roomed weatherboard villa which adjoined the Hobbs' foundry. Twenty firemen attended, and the only damage was to the washhouse and bathroom.

By 1901, Rhoda, now 50, remarried to Joseph Emile le Griffon (1858–1912) a 43 year old bachelor.

Emile was the son of Joseph Pierre le Griffon and wife Anna Lansdell. Joseph's family were all from St Helier, Jersey. Anna married Joseph Pierre in Clapham, London in 1857 aged 27, and soon Emile was born in Lambeth. Unfortunately husband Joseph died at an early age of 37. Mother and sons emigrated, whether together, we don't know.

The 1890 New Zealand Census shows that brother Harry and Joseph Emile, were working and living in Wellesley in Auckland, Harry as a machinist and Joseph Emile as a joiner. Mother Anna died in 1901, at 42 Brunning Street, St Kilda. Joseph Emile passed away at Royal Park Hospital in 1932 and was buried at St Kilda Cemetery on 11 October at Wesleyan C, Grave 750A with Rhoda, who died in 1949 in Kew.

Brother Harry and wife Sarah had three sons, Ernest Emile, Bert and Horace. Ernest served in the 1st AIF. and died at Hughesdale after returning aged 43.

References

¹ *Geelong Advertiser*, 8 September 1877, p. 3.

² *The Age*, 17 October 1879, p.3.

³ *Geelong Advertiser*, 20 February 1880, p. 3.

Research by Claire Barton

Become a member of Friends

Membership costs \$15 and includes free tours throughout the year and Newsletters. Email info@foskc.org for a membership form.

Frederick Klaerr 1856–1934 of Galliers and Klaerr



Frederick Klaerr, pictured, was born in 1856 in the Ovens region in northeast Victoria.

Although his brother was born in Sydney in 1858, the family returned to Melbourne, where the rest of Frederick's siblings were born. Only sister, Rosalie, lived past infancy, marrying at 16 and going on to have seven children. Father Jean (John) travelled to Callao, Peru, and died in July 1863, leaving wife Mathilda, who was just on two months pregnant with Rosalie. How the family managed is unknown, but by 1870, when Frederick was about 27, he joined the foundry of H. Galliers, in Inkerman Street, St. Kilda.

In 1870, Mr H. Galliers started his business in Inkerman street, St. Kilda, as a plumber and gasfitter, and carried on until 1883.¹ After twelve years, he took Frederick Klaerr into partnership. The decision the two men made was to start producing gas stoves, cooking and heating, as every home needed one. After a short time, Mr Galliers retired, and the business steadily increased, and the works expanded from time to time, until they covered several acres. With Mr Gallier's retirement, this opened the way for Mr Alexander Law to join the firm, and this enterprising, capable *son of Auld Scotin* was a tower of strength to the business.

The firm now made iron and brass founding, manufactured bedsteads, ranges, one-fire stoves, grills, grates, interiors, fenders, electrical and mechanical appliances, plumbers work, brassware, and specialised in silver and nickel plating. This business was probably unequalled in the Commonwealth, and at this address, 135–157 Inkerman Street, St. Kilda, anything could be made from the finest steeple-chimney clicks, to the most delicate milling and turning of mathematically correct cog wheels.

Bedsteads made here were celebrated throughout Australia and beyond. The firm was the sole maker of the Stevenson patent corner joint iron bedstead. They were also the only firm in Melbourne, who

FOSKC Newsletter 3/2020, page 3

made bioscopes. The firm was so versatile that Frederick's son, Jack Klaerrs, stated: "We will undertake anything, and do it properly".²

Galliers and Klaerr was a social firm employing over one hundred and fifty skilled workmen, who had to be constantly employed. The firm held family picnics in the Frankston area, and all the family were invited to attend.³

In 1915, the firm held a World War 1 recruiting drive with another firm with some employees enlisting and joining about 29 employees who had already enlisted.⁴

In 1921, at the ripe old age of 65, Frederick climbed to the top of a new chimney stack, 80 feet in height, and laid the last brick to it.⁵ The iron foundry had grown steadily, but was now over forty years old so, in the expectation of continuing growth, plans were made to install new engines and boiler, together with the construction of a new chimney. .

In 1937, at the age of 81, being a widower for 15 years, Frederick passed away to join wife Mary in St. Kilda Cemetery. They are buried at Roman Catholic Compartment B Grave 402.

References

- ¹ *The Prahran Telegraph*, 21 July 1906, p. 3.
- ² *The Prahran Telegraph*, 21 July 1906, p. 3.
- ³ *The Prahran Chronicle*, 7 March 1903, p. 3.
- ⁴ *Malvern Standard*, 17 July 1915, p. 5.
- ⁵ *Table Talk*, 13 January 1921, p.6.

Research by Claire Barton



Photographs Upper: Frederick Klaers c1888. State Library Victoria Accession No H28190/341. Above: Interior view of the factory. State Library Victoria Accession Number H2016.144/1.

The Cemetery 100 years ago

James Burston, soldier, businessman and Lord Mayor, died on 4 March 1920. This account from the Herald follows his funeral from Hawthorn to the graveside at St Kilda Cemetery.

FUNERAL OF GEN BURSTON MILITARY HONORS GIVEN

Impressive ceremony marked the funeral of the late Major-General James Burston which took place this afternoon.

The cortege left Christ Church, Hawthorn, at 3 o'clock, and proceeded along Chapel street to Dandenong road, where it was joined by the firing party from the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery.

The pall-bearers at the St Kilda Cemetery were Majors-General E Tivey and F. G. Hughes, Surgeon-General Sir Charles Ryan, Brigadier-General T. J. Courtney, Colonel Sir Harry Maudsley, and Colonel G. B. Appleton. Brigadier-General V. C. M. Sellheim represented Senator Pearce, Minister for Defence, and the other members of the Military Board present were Lieut.-General Sir Harry Chauvel and Major-General J. G. Legge. Colonel A. C. Luscombe represented Brigadier-General C. H. Brand, Commandant and Major O. V. Hoad carried out the military arrangements.

At Christ Church an address was delivered by Archbishop Clarke and the services at the graveside were conducted by Rev. H. E. Taylor, assisted by the Rev. H. S. Hollow.

Among the mourners were members of the City Council and representatives of many social and business interests in the city.

A salute was fired at the graveside and the ceremony ended with the Last Post, sounded by buglers supplied by the Defence Department.

The funeral arrangements were in the hands of A. A. Sleight.

On behalf of the State Government, Mr Lawson, the Premier, forwarded a letter of condolence on the death of Major-General Burston to Mrs Burston. Mr W. M. McPherson, the Treasurer, represented the Ministry at the funeral.

The Herald, 5 March 1920, p. 7.



Portrait of James Burston (Lord Mayor Lieutenant 1908-10) by James Clarke Waite. City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection.



General Thomas Blamey chats with Brigadier Burston (left) at Gaza. Photo Frank Hurley Australian War Memorial Accession Number 004087.



Grave of James and Marianne Burston. Wesleyan B Grave 0497. *Not slothful in business – fervent in spirit – serving the Lord.*

Further reading

Australian Dictionary of Biography.
<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/burston-james-5436>

Cemetery conversations,
November 2009, page 2.
foskc.org

The Age, 6 March 1920, p. 13.
The Argus, 6 March 1920, p.20.

Research by Geoffrey Paterson

The deadline for the November 2020 Newsletter is 11 October.
Please send **your** contribution to gkp@netspace.net.au