



reflections

NEWS FROM YOUR CEMETERIES

SUMMER 2013



Australian Heritage Week (13 April - 21 April) is an annual national celebration of Australia's unique heritage. It is an opportunity for all Australians to join together to celebrate our shared heritage.



In celebration of Australian Heritage Week 2013, the GMCT is proud to announce the inaugural annual "Visit a Cemetery Weekend" on Saturday 20 April and Sunday 21 April – a weekend to commemorate the history and traditions of our local community cemeteries.

Australian Heritage Week is also a time when the beautiful autumn scenery presents a final burst of colour throughout our cemeteries before winter descends.

The GMCT is the custodians of 18 of Melbourne's historic cemeteries. Each cemetery is unique and each is filled with thousands of stories of the lives once lived that now lie beneath the headstones and monuments.

Cemeteries have been recognised for the artistry of headstones, serene park-like setting and atmosphere of tranquillity, and now with the inaugural annual "Visit a Cemetery Weekend", we encourage everyone to come together and show their support for the historical and social importance cemeteries have in their community.

Not only are cemeteries an important place to learn about the history of one's community, they are also a place where people can trace their ancestry, embrace

the celebration of life and learn about the people who have shaped their communities.

On Saturday 20 April and Sunday 21 April 2013, be sure to visit your local cemetery, whether to bring flowers, wreaths or other tributes to the final resting places of family members and friends; take a quiet walk along the paths, read a book, photograph tombstones and mausoleums, or study the engravings of tombstones – "Visit a Cemetery Weekend" isn't just a day to commemorate those who came before us, but a weekend to carry on the ritual of remembrance and recognise our community heritage.

Invite friends or family members and bring your camera so you can share pictures of the most interesting headstones you find. We will post them on our Facebook Page.

We have also created a Cemetery Search activity for children that will help them discover the interesting history that can be found in a cemetery. You can visit our website to download and print our activity brochure.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Brown
Trust Chair



BUILDING ON SOLID LILYDALE FOUNDATIONS

The vision for a new administration building at Lilydale Memorial Park has become a reality, after four years of planning.

This project was first sparked by the Lilydale Cemeteries Trust in 2008, after the Trust identified the need to improve customer service facilities at the site.

Following on from discussions with the Department of Health, who supported the idea, it was agreed that GHD Architects would develop concept plans for the building.

With the merger of the Lilydale Cemeteries Trust into the newly formed Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust in 2010, responsibility for this project was handed over and embraced by the GMCT.

Initial concepts were further developed by McCabe Architects and plans became

a reality with the completion of the facility in September this year.

The GMCT has been able to combine the old and the new - embracing continuity and change in both the use of architecture and parkland. The new building, which is based on openness and accessibility, will provide visitors and staff alike with a warm and welcoming facility.

To celebrate the opening of the new administration building, an official ceremony was held on Wednesday 24 October, 2012. This event was attended by past and current Trust Members, site staff and members of the local community.

The new building stands as a symbol of new growth at the GMCT, which is built on the foundations created by the former Lilydale Cemeteries Trust.

KEILOR CROSS CONSULTATION

The GMCT has commenced a community consultation on placing a Cross or Crucifix within the Mausoleum at Keilor Cemetery. The community consultation follows initial discussions with visitors, families and friends of those interred within Mausoleum on the need for a three dimensional crucifix

within the Mausoleum. The GMCT is now undertaking broader community consultation to provide the Trust with an informed view regarding community attitudes towards the devotional requirements of visitors to the Mausoleum and where a crucifix might be located within the Mausoleum.

Community consultation will conclude on 30 April, 2013. Feedback forms are available from Keilor Cemetery reception.





CELEBRATING ALL SOULS

The GMCT and the eight preceding cemetery trusts have shown strong support for the many and varied cultural and denominational sectors of our community wishing to celebrate All Souls' Day. As part of this tradition, each year, the Trust has extended an invitation to the family and friends of those who rest in peace in our care, within our cemeteries and mausoleums, to join us during November in remembering those who have gone before us in a number of All Souls' Day services. In 2012 the GMCT held six All Souls' services at five of our cemetery locations: two were held at Altona (for the Maltese and Polish communities) and one each at Williamstown, Keilor, Preston and Fawkner. 2012's All Souls' masses were considered a great success by all who attended.



RESPECT FOR A FALLEN HERO

A police officer killed in the line of duty almost 100 years ago has had his unmarked grave at Coburg Cemetery restored, following an intensive campaign by one modern-day detective and the Coburg Historical Society. The call to preserve the grave of Constable David McGrath - shot dead trying to arrest a gang of safebreakers in 1915 - prompted the State Government to commit \$50,000 to a Police Graves Memorial Fund.

The fund will be used to restore and conserve the graves of 157 police who have died in the line of duty.

Detective Sgt David Reilly was researching his family history when he decided to search for the grave of Constable McGrath.

He found it in Coburg Cemetery, with the help of the Coburg Historical Society and the GMCT's Community Engagement Manager, Wendy Todd. Sgt Reilly was able to attract the enthusiasm

of Police Historical Society president Ralph Stavely, a retired chief inspector, and catch the attention of Police Minister, Peter Ryan, through a story of the grave that ran in The Herald Sun.

A rededication service was held at the site, in the presence of Victoria Police Chief Commissioner, Ken Lay, Minister for Veterans Affairs, Hugh Delahunty and Victoria Police Association Secretary, Greg Davies (pictured above), together with Constable McGrath's granddaughter, Jean Sharpe, and grandson, Peter Tracey, and current servicing members of Victoria Police.

Constable McGrath's grave now features a headstone engraved with the Victoria Police badge, his rank and date of birth. The site also includes a story board which forms part of the Coburg Cemetery Heritage Walk.



PHOTO AWARD

Congratulations to Williamstown High School student Courtney Elliott who took this photo while on a school photography class excursion to Williamstown Cemetery. Courtney's photo was submitted in a local photography competition, Pixel/8 – a joint project between Victoria Police from Hobsons Bay, the Police Community Consultative Committee (PCCC), Hobsons Bay City Council, Altona Lions Club, Newport Islamic Society, Star Newspaper Group and Blue Square Design, who have joined in together to support and encourage the talents of our young people. Courtney's photo was judged the winner of the Creative Expression Award.

OUR WEATHER IN REVIEW

2012 was a year of contrasting weather across the GMCT's 18 cemetery sites. The year began with warmer than normal days and nights. The hottest day for the year was 2 January, when Werribee Cemetery recorded 41.1 °C. Rainfall was below average in January, but February soon made up for it. The warmest night for the year was 26 February, when Coburg Cemetery recorded 24.7 °C.

Rainfall around metropolitan Melbourne was above average during autumn. The wettest day of the year was 25 April, when Burwood Cemetery recorded 63.4 mm. Average daytime temperatures were mostly close to normal, but minimum temperatures were warmer than usual thanks to some very much warmer than normal minimum temperatures in May.

Winter rainfall totals were very much below average at some stations. Daytime temperatures were mostly close to normal. Night-time temperatures ranged from average to very much above average. The coldest day of the year was 1 July, when Yarra Glen Cemetery recorded 9.0 °C and the coldest night of the year was 8 July, when Yarra Glen Cemetery recorded -3.8 °C.

Our cemeteries were much drier than usual in spring 2012, with many of our cemeteries recording half their normal rainfall in September and less than half their normal rainfall in October. Daytime temperatures were warmer than usual but night-time temperatures were typical for the season.

December rainfall totals were average to below average. Daytime temperatures were warmer than usual but night-time temperatures were mixed (some cemeteries recorded warmer than normal temperatures whilst others recorded cooler than normal temperatures). December brought with it the warmest night of the year with Truganina Cemetery recording 26.0 °C on the 24th.



Visit a Cemetery Weekend

20-21 April

- Visit Our 18 Cemeteries:**
- Altona Memorial Park
 - Anderson's Creek Cemetery
 - Burwood Cemetery
 - Coburg Pine Ridge Cemetery
 - Emerald Cemetery
 - Fawcner Memorial Park
 - Healesville Cemetery
 - Keilor Cemetery
 - Lilydale Lawn Cemetery
 - Lilydale Memorial Park
 - Northcote Cemetery
 - Northern Memorial Park
 - Preston Cemetery
 - Templestowe Cemetery
 - Truganina Cemetery
 - Werribee Cemetery
 - Williamstown Cemetery
 - Yarra Glen Cemetery

THE GREATER METROPOLITAN CEMETERIES TRUST

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