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JOSEPH CORNELIUS MARCONI: GOANNA OIL MAN
WHO WE ARE

The Friends of Balmoral Cemetery Inc is a growing band of committed volunteers who are working to protect and preserve Balmoral Cemetery, an important part of Brisbane’s history and which opened around 1874. The Friends’ motto of “Restoration, Respect, Responsibility” serves as a reminder that we can all play a part in protecting our heritage in our own small way.

On 28 July 2001, an interim committee of the Friends of Balmoral Cemetery was endorsed at a community meeting chaired by Councillor for Morningside, Sharon Humphreys. This public meeting was well attended by the local community, many of whom became FOBC’s first members.

We are an independent, not-for-profit incorporated association and we work closely with the Brisbane City Council on matters relating to Balmoral Cemetery.
WHAT WE DO

The Balmoral Cemetery is an important community resource as well as a place of respect. In a way, it’s a bit like an open-air museum! Some of our area’s earliest written history and monumental artwork can be found there.

FOBC works to improve the overall appearance of the site through clean ups, tree pruning, rubbish removal and some restoration work. We are also working hard to document the history of the cemetery and prepare heritage trails, school activities and genealogical services. Our Website will soon be up and running at www.balmoralcemetery.com

GET INVOLVED!

The Friends of Balmoral Cemetery Inc is a voluntary organisation and we invite local community members to become involved. For more information about the Friends, or to join, please:

Write to: PO Box 330, Morningside Q 4170
Telephone: 07 3395 7916
Email: indocc-balmoralcemetery@powerup.com.au

Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month from 7:30pm, at the Morningside Services Club, Wynnum Rd Morningside. Members and observers are welcome to attend.

Acknowledgements

We extend our thanks to FOBC photographer Neville Bulley & Treasurer Sue Speed who provided us with the photographs for this issue of the FOBC Newsletter.

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JOSEPH CORNELIUS MARCONI
Goanna oil man
(1876-1922), goanna oil manufacturer, was born probably on 21 April 1876 in London, son of Cornelius Joseph Mahoney, Cooper, and his wife Eunice Clara, nee Proud. The family arrived in Australia about 1886 and Joseph worked with his father in Sydney as a dealer in building materials; from about 1900 they spelled their surname Marney. He became a member of a marionette show in a travelling vaudeville troupe, then traded briefly as a dealer in Newcastle, and later joined the side-show circuit, adopting the name Marconi and using Brisbane as his home base. As manager of Lyn Vane’s snakebite act, and through association with ‘Professor’ James Morrissey, he learned of plants to which goannas were thought to resort when bitten, and of the Aborigines’ belief in the healing properties of goanna fat.

From about 1910 Marconi manufactured and sold liniments and salves, the ingredients including oils distilled from herbs and goanna fat; sufferers from ills ranging from arthritis to varicose veins attested to his products’ efficacy. Entrepreneur as well as showman, he skilfully used comic advertising and especially testimonials: in his delightfully illustrated Modern Nursery Rhymes (Brisbane, 1921) the rhymes were interspersed with testimonials, and his ubiquitous goanna trade marks were seen along every bush road and railway line. The Queensland government proclaimed the goanna a protected species in certain areas in 1918 and he was refused a patent application, but Marconi’s sales throughout Australia and New Zealand continued to increase. He opened a shop in inner Brisbane in 1920 and in May 1922 the Marconi Curative Institute, offering massage, hydropathic and herbal treatment. He was particularly interested in the treatment of children suffering from poliomyelitis.

With his carefully cultivated Italianate appearance, Marconi was one of the most picturesque and best known figures in Brisbane. His hospitality was a byword: the small factory under his home, Astra, at Bulimba was a Mecca to local children. He topped the poll in the erstwhile strongly Labor Ward of Bulimba in the Balmoral Shire Council’s 1921 election as a Nationalist candidate, and proved an energetic and effective councillor.

Marconi’s skull was fractured when he intervened in a fracas in Elizabeth Street on 21 October 1922, and he died a few hours later in Brisbane General Hospital. After a largely attended funeral service he was buried in the Roman Catholic section of Balmoral Cemetery. He had married Mary Teresa O’Neill in Newtown Registry Office, Sydney, on 27 September 1904. She pre-deceased him but he was survived by three of their four daughters and three sons, of whom Norman Charles (1905-1959) was a pioneer of aviation.
in Queensland. His father was remembered by Bulimba schoolchildren in their chant: ‘Old Marconi’s dead, knocked on the head/Goannas are glad, children are sad/Old Marconi’s dead’.

Marconi’s ‘Australian bush remedy’ became part of folklore. The business remained in family hands until 1982 when the rights of manufacture were sold to Herron Pharmaceuticals (Euan and Kaye Murdoch). Astra was demolished and a large collection of goanna memorabilia was destroyed.

Australian Dictionary of Biography Volume 10.407
Balmoral Cemetery was opened in 1874, and there are more than 15,000 people buried there. Sections 1-4 (primarily Bennetts Road side) is classed as Victorian in style; this is depicted by the symbolism on the headstones and in the ornate iron lace work on some graves.

Queen Victoria (1819-1910) married Prince Albert in 1840. After he died in 1861, Queen Victoria never recovered from her grief and dressed in black, the colour of mourning, for many years. Queen Victoria is responsible for many of the traditions and symbols, that you see at Balmoral Cemetery.

At present a Symbolism trail is near completion.

Examples of Victorian Symbolism to look out for at Balmoral Cemetery:
Friends of Balmoral Cemetery Inc

Membership application

Personal details:

Title: ____________________ First names: ____________________ Last name: ____________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________

Suburb: ____________________ State: ____________________ Postcode: ____________________

Home telephone: ____________________ Mobile telephone: ____________________

Facsimile: ____________________ Email: ____________________

Do you have any skills that you can offer FOBC?: ____________________

Do you have relatives/ancestors resting at Balmoral Cemetery?: ____________________

Signature: ____________________ Date: ____________________

Membership type and annual fee: Please tick ☑

☐ Individual $20.00  ☐ Concession/pensioner $10.00  ☐ Family $30.00

(entitles 2 family members to voting rights)

For family membership, please list other family members’ names here:

1. ____________________  2. ____________________

3. ____________________  4. ____________________

5. ____________________  6. ____________________

Membership fees are charged on a sliding scale so that renewals fall due once per year. The membership fee schedule is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership fees are classed as donations and are GST-free</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Concession</th>
<th>Family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Join Jul – Sep</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Join Oct – Dec</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>$7.50</td>
<td>$22.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join Jan – Mar</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join Apr – June</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>$7.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Payment may be made by cheque or money order only, made payable to “Friends of Balmoral Cemetery Inc”. Please do not send cash in the mail. Receipts issued for all fees. Please send completed form and membership fees to:

The Secretary, Friends of Balmoral Cemetery Inc, PO Box 330, MORNINGSIDE 4170
Tel (07) 3395 7016 – balmoral@bigpond.com.au
How Cemeteries Developed

Until the nineteenth century most people were buried in the parish churchyard, but with the great increase in population which took place during the industrial revolution people moved into cities to search for work. There was no longer room for the disposal of the dead and considerable sanitary problems arose as churchyards became overfull.

From the 1820s onwards joint stock companies were formed to provide cemeteries (from the Greek word meaning *sleeping places*) independent of the parish churches. The shareholders drew dividends from the profits made out of burial fees. Many impressive cemeteries were established at this time.

However, there was a feeling that adequate burial facilities should be among the great public health improvements being made by local government, so during the 1840s several cities applied for Acts of Parliament to enable them to set up cemeteries with rate payers' money. From the 1850s a series of Acts made the process cheaper and easier, and the great age of the municipal cemetery began.

The typical Victorian cemetery demonstrates the attitudes of the time. Religion was all important, and many of these places were divided into Anglican and dissenters' sections.

The social status of those buried is reflected in the grandeur of their memorials and in the proud boasts of their epitaphs.

Victorian monuments are a great resource for information. Epitaphs 100 years ago were prolific and the highest standards of letter carving were reached. Victorians were keen to take their status into the next life through the grandeur of their monuments, and the words inscribed on them. But the epitaphs of women remind us of the harsh realities of Victorian life.

With thanks to UK National Federation of Cemetery Friends
Symbols and shapes: What do they mean?

The design and decoration of a monument reverberates with symbolic meaning. Victorian monuments were often selected for their imposing size. Table monuments, chest monuments, towering pillars, temples and mausolea demonstrated the power and domination their owners had in life. Angels and cherubs drew attention to the deceased's piety, broken columns to the tragedy of life cut short, particularly if the person died young.

Greek, Roman, and Egyptian influences dominated the first half of the nineteenth century, and Gothic design in the second.

A Victorian cemetery is an uninhibited mix of Greek temples, Egyptian obelisks and urns, Gothic arches and pillars.

Engraving of Sheffield's General Cemetery which opened in 1836

The carvings on monuments had symbolic value: lilies for piety, ivy for everlasting life, roses for sinlessness. Clasped hands (often with one cuff frilly and one plain) demonstrated the familial bonds that would endure even after death. Anchors are for hope. An inverted torch for life snuffed out.

With thanks to UK National Federation of Cemetery Friends
ELISABETH (ELISABETHA MÖLLER) GOEBEL was born May 18, 1843 in House No. 5 Untersimtshausen Hessen, Prussia, Germany, and died November 3, 1917 in Holland Park, Brisbane QLD. She married (1) JOHANN GEORG JACOB WELLER son of HENRY WELLER on September 11, 1864 in North Brisbane, Queensland. He was born in 1833 at Westphalia, Germany, and died May 2, 1890 in Brisbane, QLD.

Elisabeth was 19 years of age when she arrived in Queensland aboard the La Rochelle in 1863. She was the eldest and adopted daughter of Johann Michael GOEBEL. The circumstances around the adoption are unclear.

Jacob WELLER’s legacy to the city of Brisbane is that the suburb of Wellers Hill bears his name. There are no records of Jacob WELLER arriving in Queensland by sea and he probably landed in Sydney and travelled overland, coming to Queensland in 1862.

His marriage certificate states he was a carpenter but whether he worked in this roll is unclear. In 1874 he purchased approximately 83 acres in what is now the triangle of land between Tooheys Road, Marshall Road and Weller Road.

On this land he grew grapes, fruit trees and kept cows and a dairy.

The family had four daughters and built a large two-storey home complete with a cellar and adjacent stables on the top of the hill where the water reservoir now stands. The house apparently commanded good views of the surrounding area.

The Water Supply and Sewerage Board purchased Wellers Hill in June 1912. They installed a caretaker in the house that was burnt down a couple of years later. Son of and Sophie

Elisabeth married (2) CARL CHRISTIAN WEISS, son of CHRISTOPH and Sophie WEISS on April 30, 1896 at Ekiben, Brisbane. Queensland. He was born About 1845 at Neunstadh, Wurttemberg, Germany, and died March 17, 1911.
The Inscriptions from the tombstones of Jacob Weller and Elisabeth Weiss nee Goebel are transcribed as follows:

**JACOB**

CH HABE NUN DEN GRUND GEFUNDEN
DER MEINEN ANKER EWIG HAEHLT
WO ANDERS ALS IN JESU WIJNDEN

DA LAG ER VOR DER ZEIT DER WELT
DER GRUND DER UNBEWEGLIGN STEHT
WENN ERD UN) HIMMEL TJINTERGEHT

I have found the foundation
That eternally holds my anchor
Where else but in the wounds of Jesus

It (this foundation) lay there before the world was created
This foundation stands immovable
When heaven and earth decline.

**ELISABETH**

SELG SIND DIE TODTEN. DIE IN DEM HERRN STERBEN,
VONNTJNONJA,
DER GEIST SPRIGHT,
DAZ SIET RUHEN VON IHRER LIRBEIT.
DENNIHRE WERKE FOLGEN IHNEH NACH

Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord,
From now on forever,
The spirit speaks (promises)
That they shall rest from their labours
For their works shall follow them.

The first (Jacob) is the first verse of a hymn, and translation of which may be found in *The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941*, or in the Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal, which gives a brief history of the hymn.

The second (Elisabeth) could be either part of a hymn or scripture.

Information provided by Peter Morrison
FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

Many people are taking up the challenge of family history research, and as most of us who have started down this track have found it is a very steep learning curve. Hopefully the members of our group, through this magazine, will try to make your learning curve not quite as steep as ours.

The question could reasonably be asked what is the link between our group, Friends of Balmoral Cemetery and family history research?

The link is names and dates of which the average cemetery has many! Cemeteries are a wealth of historic information, but the real problem is tracking this information and this is how our group has a link with family history. We are compiling details of historic graves at Balmoral Cemetery. You may have relatives buried at this cemetery or there may be people of the same name that at first pass are not connected with your family but after a few years of research there is a link from the distant past.

So, back to family history research, where do you start?

The first place to commence your quest is with family members, particularly older members of the family. These people will prove a good starting position. This then leads you to cemetery records to check information that the relatives have provided. Once you have few names you can start requesting information from Births, Deaths and Marriages registrars. A lot of churches have Parish Registers that contain information relating to Births, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials. Another source of information is telephone directories, where you have lists of people with the same name. You can write to these people, and whilst they won’t all reply you will be able to piece together some parts of the jigsaw puzzle that is your ancestry. The National War Memorial, National Archives and state archives are all valuable resources for family research.

There are many resources out there that can all help you fit the pieces of the jigsaw together and I am going to endeavour to provide a few hints and resources that just may help you with your quest to discover your ancestors.

Robert Hanley
Letters to the Editor

Nundah and Districts Historical Society Inc
PO Box 451
NUNDAH  4012

Dear Kylie

Those members of the Nundah and Districts Historical Society Inc. who had the good fortune to hear your presentation on the Balmoral Cemetery last Sunday afternoon, 6 July, join me in thanking you for your splendid effort.

Your enthusiasm for the subject was infectious, and it was obvious that the Friends of Balmoral Cemetery face similar challenges to those being experienced by our Society and experienced by our predecessor, the Nundah Historic Cemetery Preservation Association. No doubt other similar organisations face the same problems and opportunities.

Our members were especially impressed to learn of the achievements already to the credit of the “Friends” in the short time since its formation.

Thank you again for “coming across the water” on a Sunday afternoon to address our members. Please also thank your organisation’s President Kelvin Johnston and Vice President Betty Sinden for their attendance.

Yours sincerely

Denis Cleary

President
Editorial Note

Are you undertaking family research? Are you looking for information about a long lost relative? Maybe one of our readers has that elusive clue.

Do you have some local pioneers in your family that you would like to share with our readers or some interesting local history you would like to tell us about? Why not write an article for our newsletter?

We are always looking for interesting pieces of local history to broaden our knowledge of the past. We are not concerned if they are short snippets or long feature articles.

When preparing articles please type the article with double space lines using Arial 10—12, Courier 10—12 or Times New Roman 10-12. Please quote all references sighted and include contact details so that we can contact you if we have any questions.

We are happy for you to include photographs with your article.

Please forward all articles, letters to the editor or any other correspondence to:

The Secretary,
Friends of Balmoral Cemetery Inc
PO Box 330, Morningside Q 4170
Telephone: 07 3395 7916
Email: indocc-balmoralcemetery@powerup.com.au

Robert Hanley
Editor