



AROUND THE GRAVES

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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CHELTENHAM AND REGIONAL CEMETERIES INC.

Caulfield Railway Disaster...

The third book in our *Remembering Them* series will be launched with a commemorative event at the Caulfield railway station on Sunday 4 December.

Titled *"The Caulfield Railway Disaster: Carnage & Courage"*, the book is a biographical register of those associated with the Caulfield railway disaster that occurred on 26 May 1926 at 6.20 pm when two suburban trains collided claiming three lives and injuring over 170 others – all three victims are buried at the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery. Also included in the book is the story on what remains the single most devastating event to affect so many from the south-east.

One of the many young Chelsea residents injured was (Bertha) Lillian Anderson *née* Halfpenny (1907-82). Lillian is the aunt of the well-known trade unionist John Halfpenny (1935-2003) and great-aunt of current MLA for Thomastown, Bronwyn Halfpenny who will be attending the commemorative event.

Halfpenny's fortitude was evident when she was interviewed by *The Herald* newspaper;

"A feature of the smash according to her companions was the efforts of Miss Ethel Williams, 15, to keep up the courage of the occupants of her carriage between the time of the crash and of the release of the injured. One companion, Miss Lillian Halfpenny told the story today from her bed at St Leonard's Hospital, Turner street, East Malvern. 'Jove,' she said. 'Miss Williams is the biggest trick I've ever met. When the lights went out and we were all there with the collapsed seats imprisoning our legs, and most of us injured, she called out a joke about compensation. It made us



above:
Lillian Halfpenny on her marriage
to Noel Anderson in 1928.

(Photo courtesy of Michelle &
Pam McKitterick)

all laugh despite ourselves. Just before the smash she had been telling us how many steps of the Charleston [dance] she

could do. When the lights went out and all the girls began screaming she made us laugh by telling us that our injuries would put jazz on the coat for the future.' Dealing with her own experiences, Miss Halfpenny said she had been sitting next to the boy George Beames who was killed. Just before the smash he had said to her, 'It looks as if we are going to be stuck here all night!' 'It was terrible,' said Miss Halfpenny. 'I was trapped between the seats, and until released, I thought both my feet had been cut off. The shock took off both my shoes and the feel of them in the dark made me think they were my feet'."

For more information on the disaster, visit our website www.focrc.org/caulfield1926

Pre-release copies of *The Caulfield Railway Disaster: Carnage & Courage* can be purchased until 4 December for \$25 (paperback) or \$15 (CD). Visit www.focrc.org/shop where you can also download the index of the 1,040 names featured.

Saints on the field and above...

The Cheltenham district was St. Kilda Football Club's recruiting zone for many decades and not surprisingly many Sainters lie buried at the Memorial Park, including:

Trevor Graeme BARKER* (1975-89), captain 1983-86, Club Champion 1976 & 1981, 230 games, 134 goals.
Gordon James BRUNNAN [Brunnen] (1946-48), 26 games.
Colin DEANE (1933), captain and coach 1933, three games. Played in Melbourne's 1926 premiership side.
Cyril GAMBETTA* (1922-31), Club Champion 1925, 129 games, 75 goals.
Horace (Harrie) HATAM (1910-15), 84 games, two goals.
Edward SANNEMAN* (1922, 1925-31), 72 games, 25 goals.
Clarence (Clarrie) Herbert VONTOM* (1939-45), captain 1944-45, 86 games, 78 goals.

Cr. **Leslie Robert COATES** (Lawn "G" Row A Grave 64) is worth a mention. As a Moorabbin City councillor (1947-74), Coates helped initiate the Club's move from Junction Oval to Moorabbin in 1964.

[* - denotes Life Member]

Obituary...

"The death of Mrs Charlotte Keys, of Chesterville road, Cheltenham, relict of the late Mr Robert Keys, took place last week. Deceased, who was 94 years of age at the time of her death, was probably the oldest resident of the Brighton electorate. She was born in Dublin, Ireland, and arrived in Melbourne 72 years ago [in 1842 on the 'Martin Luther']. She was married in St. James Church, Melbourne, in 1847, to Mr Robert Keys, a resident of Brighton from 1845. Mr and Mrs Keys built and lived at the Brighton Club Hotel, Nepean road, then a well-known coaching house, and subsequently the Elsternwick Hotel, which they afterwards sold to Mr Young (of Young and Jackson). Mr Keys was one of the first councillors at the inception of local government at Brighton in 1859, and was subsequently mayor of the borough. They removed to Keys road, Moorabbin, in 1870,



above:
Gravesite of the Keys family – CofE "D" 6-8 at the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery

and subsequently to Cheltenham, where Mrs Keys resided continuously up to her demise, Mr Keys being a councillor and ex-president of the Moorabbin shire. Deceased's family consisted of nine sons and one daughter, of whom three sons survive. The funeral took place at the Cheltenham

cemetery, the Revs. A. Caffin and Crotty officiating at the graveside." – South Bourke and Mornington Journal 23 Apr 1914 p3.

Charlotte Keys and her husband Robert (d 1887) are buried at the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery (CofE "D" 6-8) with other family members: Robert (d 1898), Samuel (d 1904), William (d 1909), Arthur (d 1912), Charles (d 1913), George (d 1940) and Helena (d 1949).

Police Graves Memorial Fund

News of the Police Graves Memorial Fund announced on 29 September aimed at ensuring the graves of all 31 murdered policemen are maintained brings to mind the two policemen buried in the Cheltenham cemeteries who were killed in the line of duty. The lesser known of the two was Constable **Leonard Cardell Rymer** (No. 8650), the father of two from Oakleigh. On 1 February 1937, Rymer was a sidecar passenger on a police motorcycle being driven by Constable

Eric Wilmot when it broke down on Nepean Highway. The cycle was hitched to the rear of a tow truck but at the St. Kilda Junction on the journey back to the Russell Street headquarters, the motorcycle overturned resulting in injuries to both Rymer and Wilmot. They were admitted to the Police Hospital where Rymer died that night as a result of complications. (Source: *The Argus* 3 Feb 1937 p9)



above:
Grave of Len Rymer – Meth "57" 15 at the Cheltenham Memorial Park

St. Matthew's Church of England

Since 1867, three of the 20 ministers from St. Matthew's Church of England, Cheltenham were laid to rest in the Cheltenham cemeteries:

Rev. Alfred **CAFFIN** (pictured) (1887-1902) – CofE "D" 102, Pioneer Cemetery.

Rev. Thomas **MOORHOUSE** (1902-12) – CofE "D" 133, Pioneer Cemetery.

Rev. Charles Balmain **COTES** (1937-42) – CofE "116" 39, Memorial Park.



Who Am I?

I was born Gunter Morawski in 1913 at Leipzig, Germany to a Jewish family. At the age of 17, I fled Nazi Germany to Paris and took an active role in the Resistance. In 1949, with my wife and son, I moved to New York before migrating to Melbourne and we opened the city's first Parisian style outdoor café in 1954, successfully combining the dual entrepreneurial activities of restaurateur and art dealer. I died in 1992 and was buried at the Cheltenham Memorial Park. In 2006, a not-for-profit cultural foundation was established in my honour.

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