



**Altona Laverton
Historical Society Inc.**
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NEWSLETTER

MYSTERY SURROUNDS LANGHORNE GRAVES

WILLIAMSTOWN CEMETERY



Sarah Marianne Langhorne died in 1871 at Laverton Homestead (now Altona Homestead) from Parkinson's disease. It was only three years since Sarah had returned to Australia after 13 years in England.

Husband Alfred had returned the previous year and was most surprised by the debilitating state he found Sarah in, including being barely able to walk. He then understood why Sarah needed to be accompanied on the voyage by two young nieces who attended to her every need.

The unfortunate Sarah was interred in a grave in Williamstown Cemetery. Using a double plot, the grave was bordered with carved bluestone supporting a low iron fence on all sides, and a tall regal monument suitably inscribed placed at the head of the grave.

Therein lies one of the mysteries. On the headstone below the details for Sarah, is also an inscription detailing the life of their daughter, Alice Mary Anne Langhorne, who had died 10 years earlier in Brighton, England in 1861 aged only 13. It is clear to see that the details for both lives were engraved on the headstone at the same time, which raised the question, was Alice actually buried there, or was this simply a memorial to the young life lost?

We found the microfiche film of the burial register for Williamstown Cemetery 1858-1909 and the listing for the burial of Sarah Langhorne. Nothing unusual there. However, the second interment was much later in 1888 for a person who was actually unknown, and is the second mystery relating to this grave.



Langhorne Grave-Williamstown Cemetery

The second burial happened in July 1888 when according to a note in the burial register, bones were exhumed from an unmarked grave found on the "Laverton Plains." At that time there was a lot of activity taking place in the Altona area transforming the pastoral property into lots suitable for residential housing, in readiness for sales later that year. The railway line was extended from Williamstown Racecourse to Altona and the first pier built so that prospective buyers may arrive either by train or steamer.

It would seem the unmarked grave was found in a position not convenient for all this development that was happening and in a location that encouraged the authorities of the day to make a guess that it was a person connected to the Langhorne family. The bones were reburied with Sarah and noted only as "Langhorne" in the burial register. This was not the burial of Alice Mary Anne Langhorne, and she had no immediate family in Australia to have arranged such in 1888. Her father Alfred had died in 1874. All other relatives of Alfred and Sarah Langhorne's who had a connection with Laverton Homestead can be accounted for in traditional cemetery burials.

Research is continuing. We are trying to locate the original burial register for Williamstown Cemetery to be absolutely clear what was recorded for the unusual burial in 1888. Chris Langhorne in England is making enquiries there with family and checking archives in the quest to find where young Alice was actually buried.

Fawkner Memorial Park

Another grave issue concerns the Langhorne's in Fawkner cemetery. The inscriptions on the horizontal monument for the five people interred is very worn making it exceedingly difficult to read. Fortunately we do have a copy of the wording which the society recorded a number of years ago. ALHS would like to arrange for a metal plaque duplicating the original wording be affixed in a suitable position on the grave preserving the information for future generations.



Langhorne Grave-Fawkner Memorial Park

Before this can happen though there are a couple of obstacles to overcome first.

Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, responsible for the running of Fawkner Memorial Park, has six people listed in their online database for that grave. We suspect the sixth person is a duplication of Sarah August's burial in 1844 (Sarah Marianne Langhorne's mother) with typos and we are awaiting for GMCT to check their records.

Plus there is the problem of who has authority over the grave to permit a plaque be added. It was proving quite difficult in a recent phone conversation convincing a GMCT staff member that there would be no one still left alive with such authority, since the grave was last used in 1874 when Alfred Langhorne passed away, almost 150 years ago.

It has since been found that Joseph Garnault Vautier arranged for the addition of Alfred's name to the sandstone slab. As Alfred's one and only surviving issue, Alfred Robert Maskall Langhorne aged 28 was still on board ship travelling to Australia arriving some five weeks after Alfred's death, it is very likely that Joseph also arranged the burial.

Originally the burial took place in the Old Melbourne Cemetery, now Victoria Market, and was moved to Fawkner in 1923.

Joseph James Vautier was married to Amy Byron Cooke, the sister of Fanny Sarah Cooke whom Alfred Robert Maskall Langhorne returned to England to marry in 1875. They were first cousins. It would seem the Vautiers were living in Melbourne in 1874 and perhaps Joseph was the last person to hold authority for the Langhorne grave. He died in 1896.



Chris Langhorne

Once these obstacles have been resolved, Chris Langhorne has expressed a wish to contribute towards producing the plaque as he is keen to see the family's history preserved too. We are very grateful for his interest in the project.

Investigations continue and we will update you when more news comes to hand.

(Research by Ann Cassar)



Williamstown Cemetery

ALHS and Truganina Explosives Reserve Collaboration Project

Historical society members are lending their knowledge, experience and technology to assist in the cataloguing and digitisation of the historical records and images held at the Truganina Explosive Reserve.



Having recently purchased an overhead portable scanner the team of Ann Cassar, Jim Hevey and Graeme Reilly are spending each Tuesday sorting and digitising around 220 files that contain reports, documents, maps, articles, booklets and images. The team estimate that it will take them most of the year to complete this large task.

It is envisaged that the end result of this project is that by digitising all of this records they will be protected for future research and will ensure that the originals can be stored away to protect from being damaged or lost. The project will also ensure that a backup of all of their material will be made and stored off site.

Additionally, all these records will be stored within a new database, held at the Explosive Reserve, which will also make it easier for anyone to search and find relevant material on the history, operations and restoration of the site and its buildings.

While this is an excellent opportunity to ensure that all of the materials are properly filed and stored, it also provides a great opportunity for the team to learn more about the history of the explosive reserve and the people who worked and lived on the site including available information on the indigenous habitation of this area.

We will keep members informed of our progress and any interesting stories or artefacts that they might find.

From the Secretaries Desk

After asking how we can keep up with the amount of cataloguing, research and publishing material to our website the committee decided to place a ad for volunteers with the 'Volunteer West' organisation during the last two weeks of 2020.

We didn't need to wait very long for responses and resumes to begin rolling in for positions of editors, catalogue/archivist and research personnel. This response took us a little by surprise as it was over the Christmas period, COVID was still impacting and we didn't know how many people had the skills we were looking for.

Within a month we had two university students providing their editing skills working remotely and keeping in touch via email and zoom meetings. The work also provides our two new volunteers with practical experience the support their studies.

We were also fortunate to gain the skills and services of an Archivist graduate who also brought additional technology and research skills that complement the work we are currently undertaking. We have spoken to a young student keen to learn the skills of a historical researcher and we are in conversation with a further volunteer with a keen interest and qualifications in research and sub-editing.

The work that our great volunteers are now assisting us with is allowing our other members to expand their breadth of research and commence work on the digitisation of our own research materials and also the records held by our good neighbours at the Truganina Explosive Reserve.

If anyone knows of people interested in assisting in data entry, research, writing or editing then contact us at g.reilly@alhs.com.au

A NEW BOOK FOR 2021

Members David King and Maureen Lane have combined to produce a new book recently issued setting out David's membership and memories of the Angels Australia Motor Cycle Club formed in 1964.

Available for purchase on line at Dymocks

ANGELS

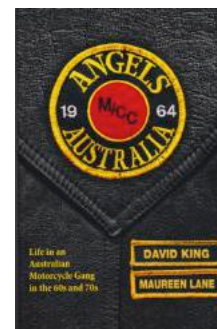
Maureen Lane, David King

PaperBack

February 2, 2021

David King was only 10 years old when he met The Angels.

David's story also provides insights into the history of Melbourne's west and the teenage boys and girls who broke free of the norms of the 1950s to rebel in the '60s. It is a snapshot of life in a motorcycle gang that had a code of conduct, common interests and specific values, in a time gone by. The Angels code of 'all for one and one for all' was inclusive of all nationalities in a time of overt racism, and ensured a tight bond grew between this band of rebels and misfits who found a place to belong. This book acknowledges the Angels who shared David's love of motorcycles and taught him skills and life lessons when home and David's story offers rare insights into life in a motorcycle gang at that time in history and of a little boy lost, who survived enormous challenges to grow into an exceptionally good man.



SHIRE OF ALTONA COUNCILLORS 1957 - 1963

Our current research project takes us back to the period when Altona seceded from the Shire of Werribee to form its own Shire in 1957.

Our initial research will cover the inaugural nine councillors that were elected in May 1957 and then the two councillors elected three months later in August that replaced A Ford and F Rush.

These councillors include:

- H C Kim
- C McIntyre
- G H Ransom
- A W Langshaw
- A H Ford
- F Rush
- R Logan
- R J Cooper
- W G Cresser
- R Frazer
- R J Watson



Each have a unique story of how they moved to Altona and then felt the strong need to stand up help progress the newly formed shire. Along with their period as councillors we are also looking at parks, reserves and streets named after each of our local government representatives.



Councillors with school children during proclamation

If anyone has any images, stories or articles covering any of these councillors and their time representing the residents of the new Shire of Altona please contact us via our website alhs.com.au

ANZAC DAY

2021



8th Light Horse on Bivouac at Altona Bay, November 1914, Shortly before they embarked for Egypt and then on to Gallipoli

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn;
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember them.**

Storing of Document Images

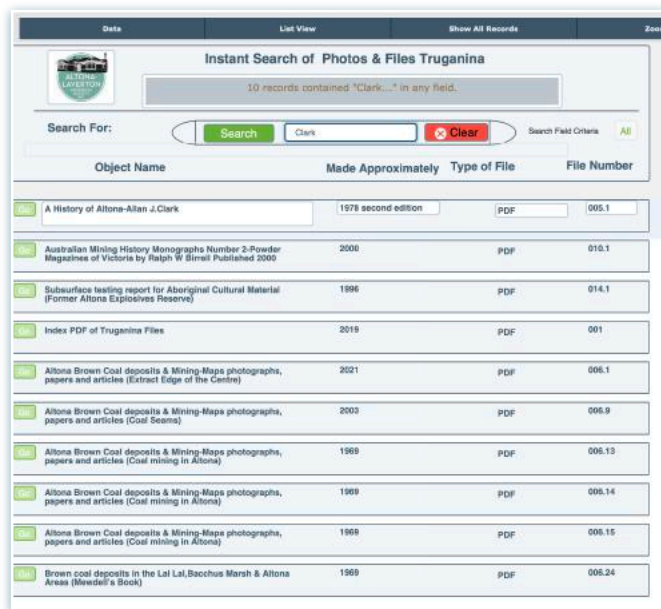
As mentioned on Page 4 we have commenced to catalogue records using a database, (Claris-FileMaker),this is a database program that is available for use within Windows 10 and MacOS software programs thus being quite versatile.

The program allows for a data search for words contained within all fields and will display a list of all records that contain that word.

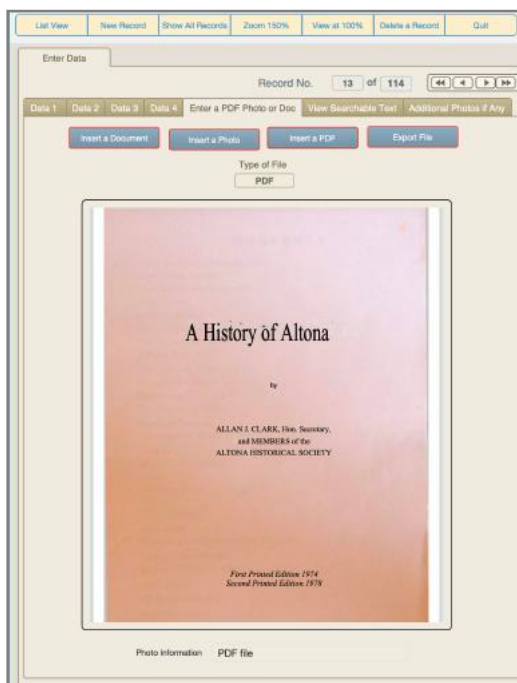
A recent plug in feature allows the search to be carried out within document or PDF files which at times will reveal records in which the searcher may be unaware that a reference appears, this is a valuable aid for research purposes.

All documents, images or PDF files can be exported out of the database if required.

The data is currently being compiled and below are screen shots showing a search carried out using the name “Clark” which reveals that currently the database contains 10 records containing that word.



The list showing 10 records contain the word “Clark”



The layout containing the PDF file “A History of Altona”

Shown above is the record holding a PDF copy of Allan Clark’s, “A History of Altona” as an example.

The PDF file could be read by scrolling within the database or exported out for printing, copying or e-mail purposes if necessary.

Another hidden field contains any text obtained by OCR purposes which is used for word search purposes.