

# *Beneath the clock tower*

A story-telling experiment at the State Library of NSW

Elise Edmonds

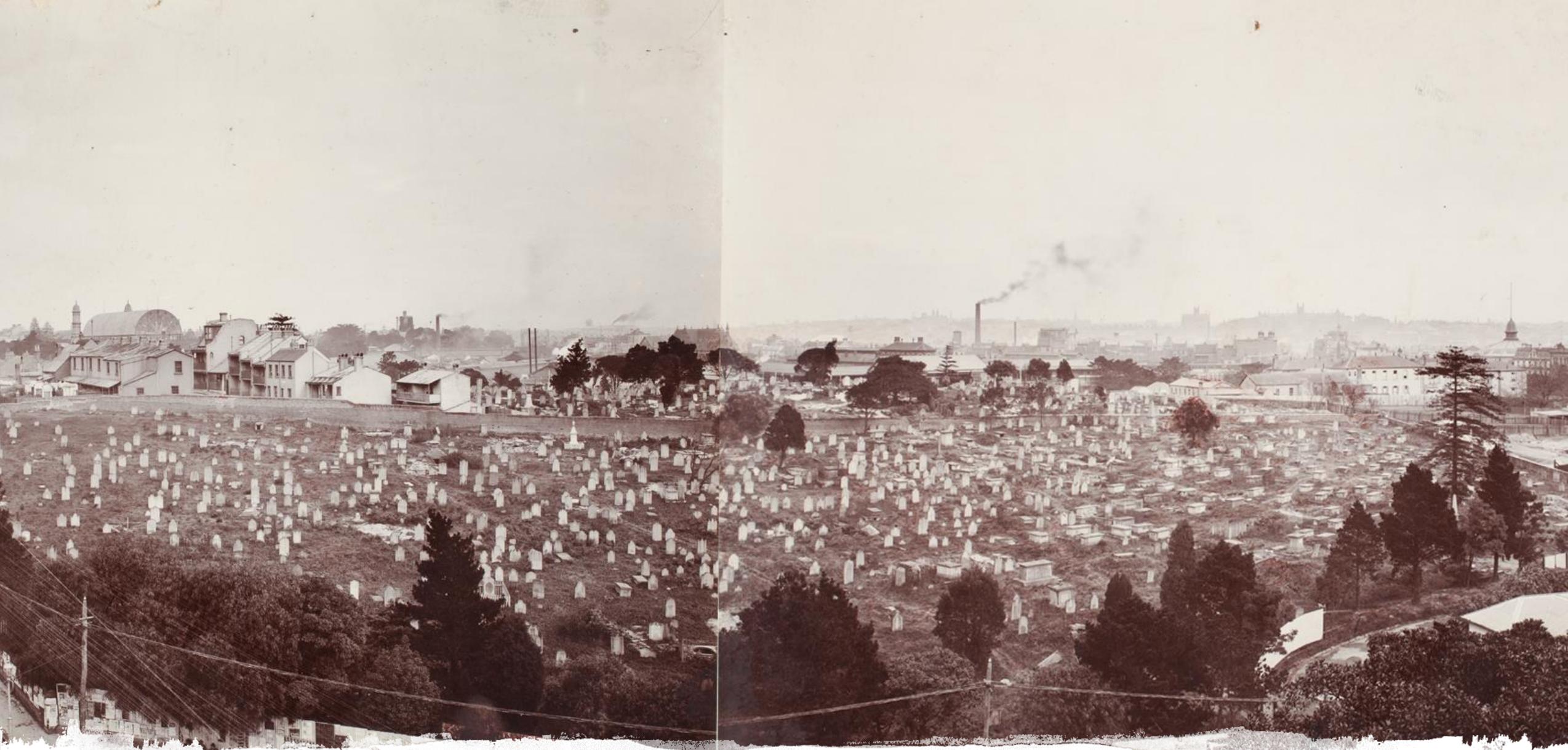


|            |                           |      |           |   |
|------------|---------------------------|------|-----------|---|
| 113        | C. F. W.                  | 1836 | Headstone | <p>TO THE<br/>MEMORY<br/>OF<br/>G. F. W.<br/>WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE OCTOBER 1836</p>  |
| S. N. 1106 | Removed to La Perouse     |      |           |   |
| 114        | MISS ELIZABETH JOSEPH     | 1841 | Headstone | <p>SACR<br/>TO the memory of<br/>MISS ELIZABETH JOSEPH<br/>WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE<br/>JULY 8 1841<br/>AFTER A SHORT ILLNESS OF TWO DAYS<br/>OF THE SCARLET FEVER<br/>SHE WAS A LOVING AND AFFECTIONATE CHILD<br/>FOR INNOCENCE AND GOODNESS OF HEART<br/>Aged 11 years &amp; 4 Months</p> <p>FAREWELL DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER<br/>FOR NOW THE LORD MY SOUL BOTH CALL<br/>THE LORD BOTH CALL MY SOUL AWAY<br/>AND WITH YOU I CAN NO LONGER STAY<br/>ALL THAT PASS THIS WAY ALONG<br/>OH THINK HOW SUDDEN I WAS GONE<br/>GOD DOES NOT ALWAYS WARNING GIVE<br/>THEREFORE BE CAREFUL HOW YOU LIVE.</p> |
| S. N. 1153 | Removed to La Perouse     |      |           |   |
| 115        | ELIZABETH COHEN           | 1845 | Headstone | <p>TO<br/>THE MEMORY OF<br/>ELIZABETH COHEN<br/>LATE WIFE OF<br/>MICHAEL COHEN<br/>WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE<br/>ON THE 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 1845<br/>AGED 41 YEARS<br/>ALSO<br/>MARGARET ELIZA SOLOMON<br/>WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY 1841<br/>AGED 9 YEARS<br/>ALSO<br/>AMELIA ELIZABETH THORNTON</p>   |
|            | MARGARET ELIZA SOLOMON    | 1841 |           |   |
|            | AMELIA ELIZABETH THORNTON | 1841 |           |   |



|            |                           |      |                   |   |
|------------|---------------------------|------|-------------------|---|
| S. N. 1150 | Removed to La Perouse     |      |                   | <p>TO THE MEMORY OF<br/>JOHN ROBERTSBATTEN<br/>AGED 30 YEARS<br/>A NATIVE OF SAINT STEPHEN<br/>CORNWALL<br/>HE WAS TO THE GREAT REGRET<br/>OF ALL WHO KNEW HIM<br/>UNFORTUNATELY DROWNED IN THE<br/>HARBOUR<br/>OF FORT JACKSON<br/>BY THE CAPSIZING OF THE YACHT<br/>BREEZE<br/>13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 1843</p>   |
| 118        | WILLIAM HILL<br>Born 1771 | 1840 | ALTAR TOMB ON TOP | <p>SACRED<br/>TO THE MEMORY OF<br/>WILLIAM HILL<br/>WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup> 1840<br/>AGED 69 YEARS<br/>AND<br/>MARY HIS WIFE<br/>WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE JAN<sup>Y</sup> 29<sup>TH</sup> 1852<br/>AGED 72 YEARS<br/>ALSO TO THE MEMORY OF<br/>ANN<br/>WHO DIED JUNE 13<sup>TH</sup> 1843 AGED 21 YEARS &amp; 8 MONTHS<br/>AND<br/>WILLIAM SMITH<br/>WHO DIED AT SEA JAN<sup>Y</sup> 30<sup>TH</sup> 1844<br/>AGED 31 YEARS<br/>AND<br/>CHARLES HENRY<br/>WHO DIED NOV<sup>Y</sup> 21<sup>ST</sup> 1844 AGED 24 YEARS &amp; 5 MONTHS<br/>CHILDREN OF THE ABOVE<br/>WILLIAM AND MARY HILL</p> |
|            | MARY HILL<br>Born 1750    | 1852 |                   |   |
|            | ANN HILL                  | 1843 |                   |   |
|            | WILLIAM SMITH HILL        | 1844 |                   |   |
|            | CHARLES HENRY HILL        | 1844 |                   |   |
|            | HANNAH HILL               | 1850 |                   | <p>NORTHERN END SACRED<br/>TO THE MEMORY OF<br/>HANNAH<br/>THE WIFE OF<br/>DAVID HILL</p>   |







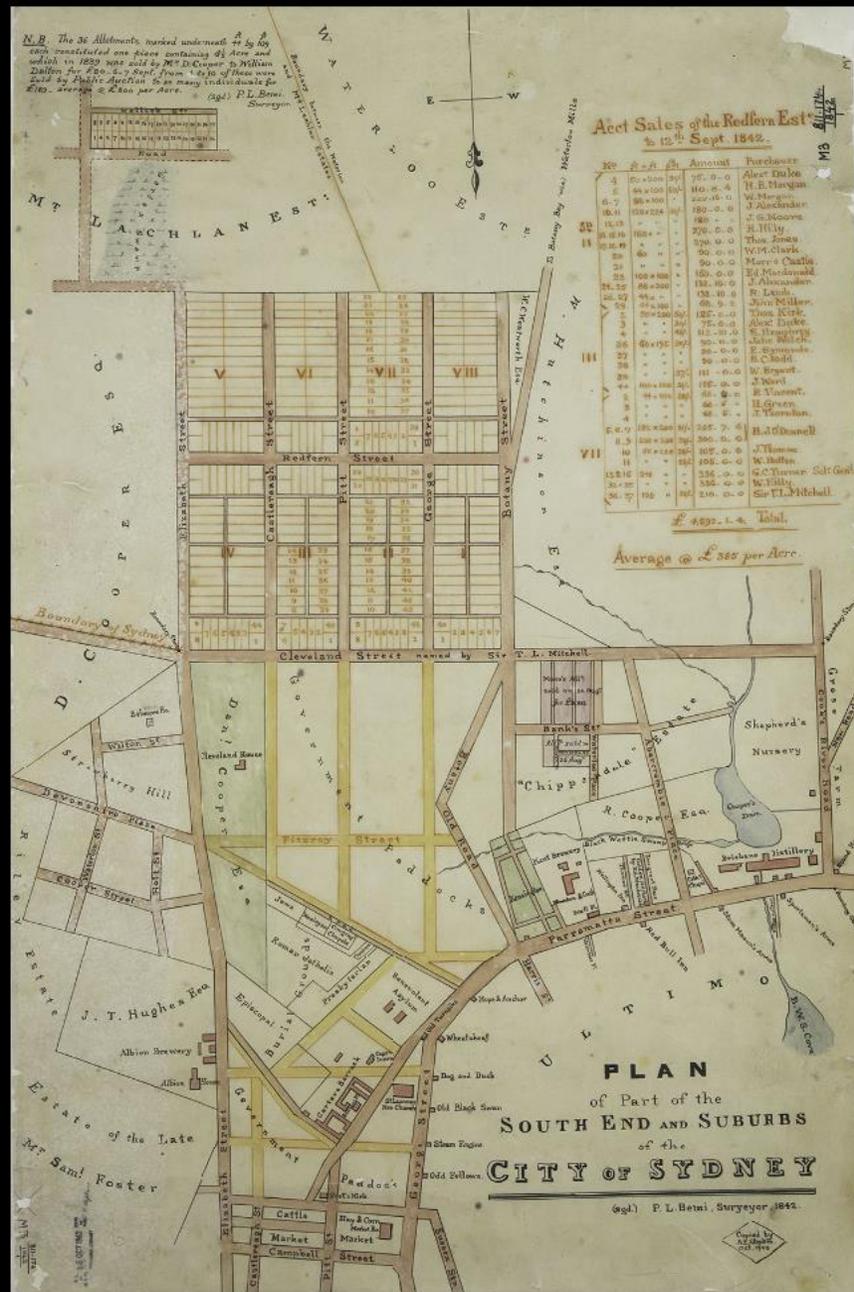
**BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.**  
CONTRIBUTIONS *Respectfully solicited for the relief*  
*of the distressed and suffering poor.*  
2500 *deserving persons, principally widows & orphans*  
**IN URGENT NEED.**

STRATHMILL  
SCOTCH WHISKY  
W & GILBEYS BOTTLED  
CHRISTIE  
25-46  
11th STRAND  
FOR YOUR WELCOME  
GILBEY  
Reckitt

ON 260 / 389

ON 260 / 4-62





N.B. The 36 Allotments, marked underneath A & B, which constituted one piece containing 45 Acres and which in 1829 were sold by Mr. D. Cooper to William Duffin for £20,000 Sept. 1829, 1/10 of these were sold by Public Auction to many individuals for £10, average 20 Acres per Acre. (Sgd.) P. L. Bemi, Surveyor.

**Acct Sales of the Redfern Est<sup>d</sup>**  
to 12<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1842.

| No. | Acres | Amount | Purchaser    |
|-----|-------|--------|--------------|
| 1   | 20    | 75     | Abert Enke   |
| 2   | 20    | 100    | H. E. Macdon |
| 3   | 20    | 100    | W. Morgan    |
| 4   | 20    | 100    | J. Alexander |
| 5   | 20    | 100    | J. S. Moore  |
| 6   | 20    | 100    | H. Hill      |
| 7   | 20    | 100    | Thos Jones   |
| 8   | 20    | 100    | Wm Clark     |
| 9   | 20    | 100    | Mary Castle  |
| 10  | 20    | 100    | Ed Macdonald |
| 11  | 20    | 100    | J. Alexander |
| 12  | 20    | 100    | R. Laid      |
| 13  | 20    | 100    | John Miller  |
| 14  | 20    | 100    | Thos Kirk    |
| 15  | 20    | 100    | Abert Duke   |
| 16  | 20    | 100    | E. Stanger   |
| 17  | 20    | 100    | John Welch   |
| 18  | 20    | 100    | E. Stanger   |
| 19  | 20    | 100    | R. C. Hall   |
| 20  | 20    | 100    | M. Regent    |
| 21  | 20    | 100    | J. Ward      |
| 22  | 20    | 100    | E. Vincent   |
| 23  | 20    | 100    | H. Green     |
| 24  | 20    | 100    | H. Green     |
| 25  | 20    | 100    | R. Thorsen   |
| 26  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 27  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 28  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 29  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 30  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 31  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 32  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 33  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 34  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 35  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |
| 36  | 20    | 100    | H. Thorsen   |

£ 430 - - - Total.

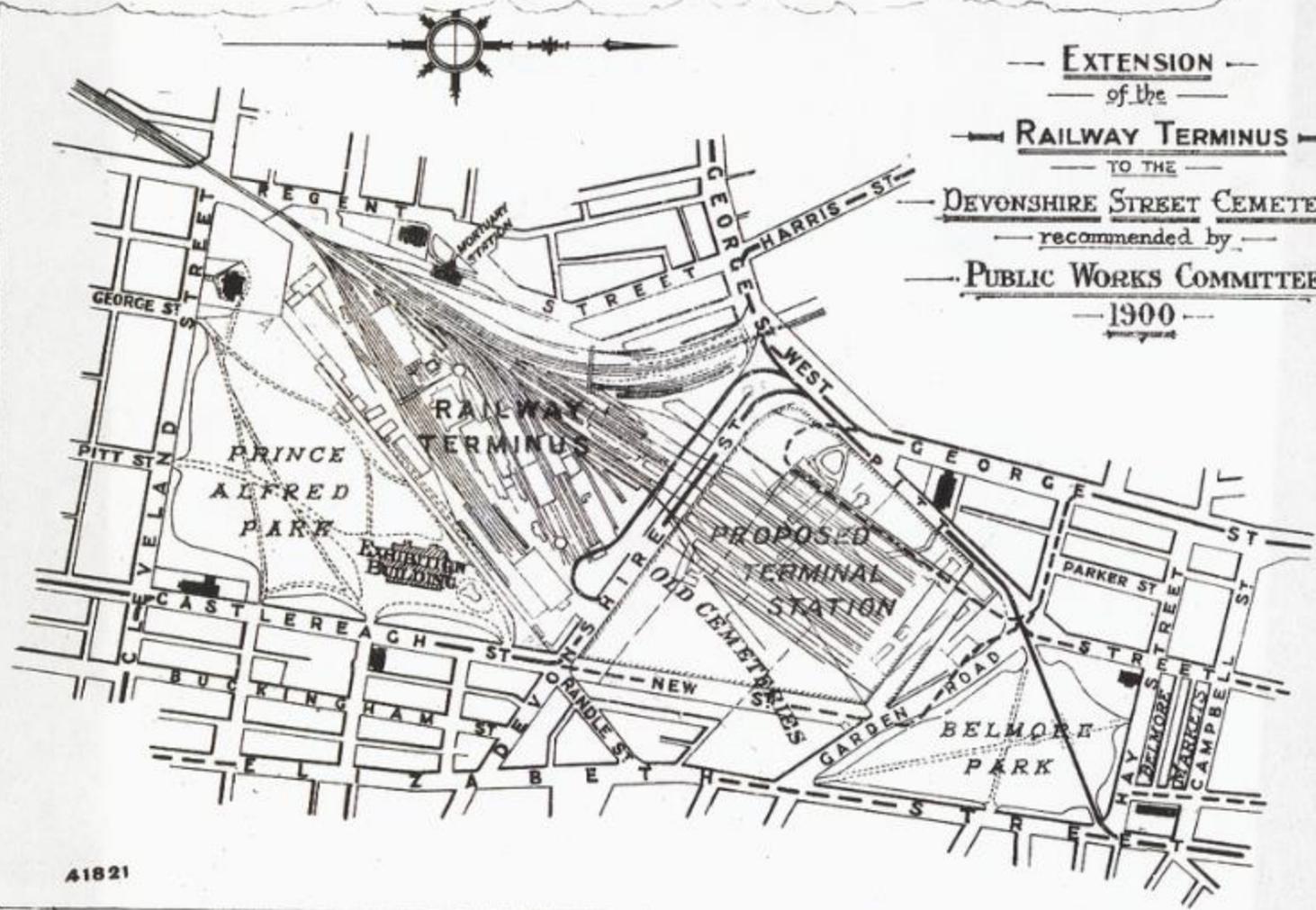
Average @ £ 22 per Acre.

**PLAN**  
of Part of the  
**SOUTH END AND SUBURBS**  
of the  
**CITY OF SYDNEY**

(Sgd.) P. L. Bemi, Surveyor, 1842.



— EXTENSION —  
 — of the —  
 — RAILWAY TERMINUS —  
 — TO THE —  
 — DEVONSHIRE STREET CEMETERY —  
 — recommended by —  
 — PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE —  
 — 1900 —







7



*Sacred  
to the memory of  
William Oliver  
who was accidentally killed  
by a Bullock Cart  
April the 2d. 1821  
Aged 34 Years*

*Sacred  
To the memory  
Of  
Richard Webb  
Only son of Richard and Mary Webb  
Of Goulburn Street Sydney  
Who  
Departed this life 30<sup>th</sup> Oct  
1841  
Aged 4 months and 9 days  
Sleep on sweet Babe  
Let not our sighs awake thee  
We only wait until our turn  
And then will overtake thee*

*Sacred  
To the Memory of  
Joseph King  
William Anderson  
Thomas Robinson  
And James McMurtry  
Seamen of H.M. Sloop Bathurst  
Who were unfortunately drowned  
By the upsetting of a Boat  
August 18<sup>th</sup> 1822  
This stone is erected by a  
Lieutenant of the Bathurst  
Who was upset with them.*

*Sacred to the memory of  
Catherine Jane  
Reclit of Alexr Hamilton  
Late Assistant Surgeon 48<sup>th</sup>  
regiment*

*She departed this life the 26<sup>th</sup>  
June 1822  
In the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of her age*

*Having never recovered from  
the shock and  
Affliction occasioned by the  
awful and sudden  
Death of her Husband who  
met his fate by the  
Falling of his horse in Van  
Diemens Land  
On the 18<sup>th</sup> of Jany. 1820*

*Likewise  
Their son Alexander aged 2  
days*

Inscribed  
By John Meyrick Roberts  
In memory of his affectionate uncle  
Joseph Meyrick  
Surgeon Late of Tahiti  
Who departed this life Decr 19<sup>th</sup> 1844  
Aged 53 years  
He was unfortunately assassinated  
By a lunatic in this city  
He was a man of strict integrity  
Beloved and respected by all who  
Knew him.  
*Tis finis'd tis done the Spirit is fled  
Our Brother is dead the Christian is gone  
The Christian is living in Jesus's love  
And gladly receiving a kingdom above*

In memory of  
Joseph Charles Tremayne  
Only son of  
Joseph Hyde Potts  
Of the Bank of N.S. Wales  
Who resigned his spirit  
On the 9<sup>th</sup> day of November  
1838  
Aged 3 years 5 months and nine days

Also  
Harriet Mary Sheba  
**Only daughter of**  
**Joseph Hyde Potts**  
**And sister of the above**  
**Who ceased to breathe**  
**On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of December**  
1838

*Let us not murmur at thy dispensations  
Oh Heavenly father thine were but loans  
Let us return them to thee  
With cheerfulness in perfect submission  
To thy blessed will*

Corp Stephen Kirk  
And  
Trooper Luke Dunn  
Of the Mounted Police Corps  
Who lost their lives in the zealous performance of their duty by  
the fury of  
bushfire in the vicinity of Bottle Forest  
on the 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 1845  
This stone is erected  
By his comrades as a lasting memorial  
Of their affection and esteem  
Corp Kirk expired on the spot  
Trooper Dunn lingered 9 days

Both in their 33rd year.





*Photo by Geo. J. Reeve.*

*Tomb of Queen Gooseberry of the Sydney Tribe of Aborigines  
showing the old Sydney Railway Station in the background*



IN THE MEMORY OF  
ELIZABETH COHEN,  
LATE WIFE OF  
MICHAEL COHEN,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
ON THE 26 FEBRUARY 1843,  
AGED 41 YEARS.

ALSO  
MARGARET ELIZA SOLOMON,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 1 JULY 1841  
AGED 72 YEARS

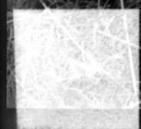
ALSO  
AMELIA ELIZABETH THORNTON  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE 14<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY 1841  
AGED 41 MONTHS

IN THE MEMORY OF  
NATHANIEL LLOYD  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1835  
AGED 68 YEARS

IN THE MEMORY OF  
CATHARINE LLOYD  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1831  
AGED 52 YEARS

Sacred to the Memory  
of  
CATHARINE LLOYD,  
who Departed this Life the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1831  
*Aged 52 Years.*

Also  
to the Memory of  
NATHANIEL LLOYD  
who Departed this Life February the 8<sup>th</sup> 1835  
*Aged 68 Years*





“A thick, disorderly and in some places almost impenetrable scrub covers most of the ground and tombstones lie scattered in careless confusion all over the place. Where standing, they present grotesque attitudes like a party of drunken men crossing a field. Dense, tangled undergrowth has forced its way through the railings of the graves and has obliterated all traces of paths ... The fences bear marks of having been well climbed and over the whole scene is an indescribable air of careless contempt for a spot that should be hallowed.”

*The Daily Telegraph*, 22 Oct 1900

## **PREPARING for the RAILWAY STATION. THE OLD AND NEW CEMETERIES**

'RAPID progress is being made with the work of removing bodies to the new cemetery at La Perouse from the old Devonshire-street cemeteries, so that a start may be made with the foundations of the big railway station. So many graves were found under paths and in unindicated places that it was found necessary to trench over the whole ground to a depth of several feet in order to get at all the remains ... In the Roman Catholic section relatives are in constant attendance to assist at the transference of their dead. There is a mortuary, and a great supply of coffins, and as the graves are opened up, the relatives reverently transfer them to new coffins, which are at once placed on trucks and taken out by the special tram line to the new cemetery. Some strange finds are being made by the men in trenching the soil. In one grave three bodies had been buried one on top of the other. A pair of great coarse boots with long flaps were found over the bones of a pair of feet, which had evidently been part of some poor prisoner, buried as he died. In another grave were a beautiful pair of Chinese slippers with bones of a woman's feet inside them. The grave was opened on Saturday and on Monday morning when the men went back to work they found small candles tied in bamboo burning over the open grave. Evidently the relatives of the Chinese lady had found her grave thus during the Sunday, and placed their offerings upon it— a touching instance of the reverence for ancestors which is one of the great Chinese virtues.'

***Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Saturday 31 August 1901, page 54***

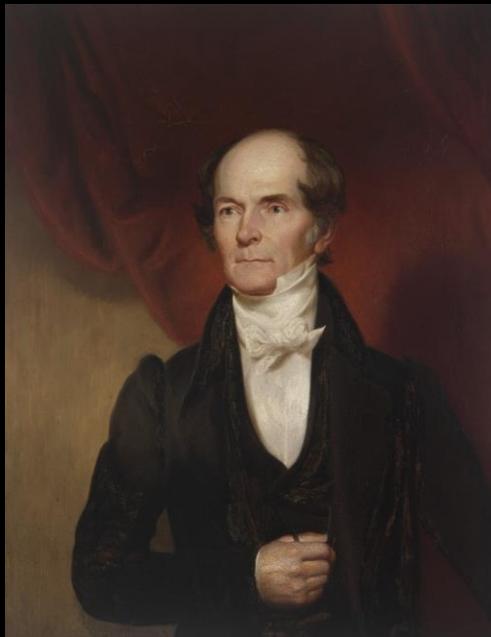
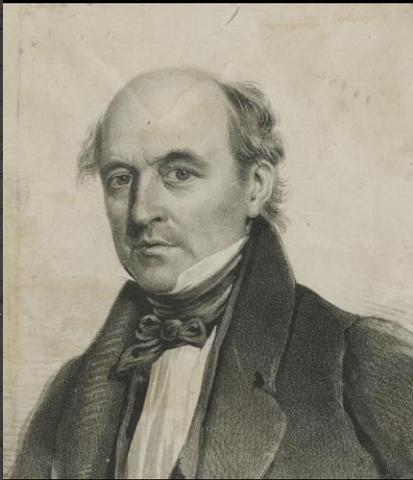








*Goosberry  
wife  
of King B.*



## ***Beneath the clock tower***

Much of the recent literature in museology and heritage studies are very much in keeping with the themes of today's symposium; the idea of the past as another world and our attempts as museum professionals to inspire imaginative engagement of our visitors which then leads to historical understandings, utilising a combination of imagination, empathy, emotion and historical sources to stimulate an interest in the past and our heritage collections, and to be convinced of the importance and the value of these collections, to learn more about the topic – and ultimately, to get more people through the doors.

Museum exhibitions are expected to reveal personal stories, portraying the effects of historical forces on the individual and are also expected to be innovative, respond to current issues and debates and remodel their exhibitions constantly in order to engage meaningfully with society's changing perceptions of history.

We are now surrounded by experiential and immersive technologies – VR continues to be a public draw card in many arenas, not just museum spaces. Traditional methodologies of museums producing and disseminating knowledge are no longer sufficient for contemporary audiences.

At the State Library, we have been exploring some of these new methodologies for engaging exhibition visitors with historical content from our collection, drawing on elements of story-telling and performance; creating a personal, emotional connection to past inhabitants of our city.

The State Library's collections of original material are essentially paper-based. Original, hand-written diaries, correspondence, drawings, paintings, photographs, maps and plans are historically significant items which document the people who went before us and are primary sources which provide evidence of our shared history. Whilst unique and significant and highly valued, they can be challenging to display and to attract new and younger audiences to our exhibitions. 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century hand-written texts can be a barrier to engaging with the object, despite the often-extraordinary stories which reside there.

So, our story-telling experiment will be delivered via soundscapes and narrative story-telling, using personal headsets. The experience aims to create an atmospheric, impactful story-world that supports the physical and digital display of collection items. The audio experience replaces curatorial text – instead, a script has been written, comprising multiple voices of narrator and individual voices from the past who will guide the visitor through the experience.

The collection items act as evidence and illustration for the narrative that is woven by the audio. Recent feedback from a prototype test phase revealed that people responded very positively to being taken on a journey, immersed in an atmospheric soundscape where voices from the archives emerge from the pages, re-creating a lost world of 19th century Sydney.

The story focuses on a particular Sydney location, where Central Station now stands. Prior to the construction of Central, lay an overgrown, semi-abandoned

graveyard. Known as the Devonshire street cemeteries, it covered the entire block where Central Station now stands. Almost 40,000 bodies were buried there, in the sandhills, just beyond the brickfields. The entire block took up a total of 11 acres (4.5 hectares) and significant early colonial buildings were also razed to make way for Central; the Benevolent Asylum (built in 1820), Christ Church parsonage (built 1852), the Police Barracks and Inspector General of Police, a morgue, the Sydney Female Factory, the Convent of the Good Samaritan and the Tram Depot.

Some of the key collection items that we want to display include a collection of glass negatives, recently digitised, which document the old cemetery that lay in the centre of Sydney, along with hand-written transcriptions of some of the gravestones that stood there.

Approximately 5,000 memorial stones, ranging from humble markers to lavish and ornate monuments were erected in the Devonshire street cemeteries during the 50 years, 1819-1868

Consecrated in 1820, the cemetery soon became overcrowded as the city continued to grow. By the 1840s, complaints were beginning about the lack of planning, the haphazard nature of many of the burials and health concerns.

The unruly manner in which burials had been conducted became obvious when the cemetery began to be cleared. Bodies were discovered buried under paths, and in all the spare ground regardless of line or order. Many were found just under the surface. The morgue buildings were erected over graves. The total number of burials may never be known with certainty. Approx. 8,500 remains were claimed by descendants and removed with their associated monumentation to other cemeteries. Those remains left unclaimed (around 30,000) were exhumed

I think there is a real resonance with this rather gothic, high Victorian era cemetery, with extraordinary, emotive gravestone inscriptions and images of an over-grown cemetery and think about what it was replaced with – what many of us are familiar with - the frenetic, loud and busy Central Station. When you look at the photographs – taken just before the cemetery was resumed in 1900, and you hear read out some of the inscriptions; detailing the nature of the person, how they died, or who is buried alongside them, you cannot help but be moved to think about the vulnerability of human life, how much more fragile life was then, ideas around death and faith, as well as broader themes of population growth, urban infrastructure and overcrowding, which pervade our lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Some examples of the headstones:

Sacred

to the memory of

William Oliver

who was accidentally killed

by a Bullock Cart

April the 2d. 1821

Aged 34 Years

Sacred

To the memory

Of

Richard Webb

Only son of Richard and Mary Webb

Of Goulburn Street Sydney

Who

Departed this life 30<sup>th</sup> Oct

1841

Aged 4 months and 9 days

Sleep on sweet Babe

Let not our sighs awake thee

We only wait until our turn

And then will overtake thee

Sacred

To the Memory of

Joseph King

William Anderson

Thomas Robinson

And James McMurtry

Seamen of H.M. Sloop Bathurst

Who were unfortunately drowned

By the upsetting of a Boat

August 18<sup>th</sup> 1822

This stone is erected by a Lieutenant of the Bathurst

Who was upset with them.

Sacred to the memory of

Catherine Jane

Reclict of Alexr Hamilton

Late Assistant Surgeon 48<sup>th</sup> regiment

She departed this life the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1822

In the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of her age

Having never recovered from the shock and

Affliction occasioned by the awful and sudden

Death of her Husband who met his fate by the

Falling of his horse in Van Diemens Land

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of Jany. 1820

Likewise

Their son Alexander aged 2 days

Inscribed

By John Meyrick Roberts

In memory of his affectionate uncle

Joseph Meyrick

Surgeon Late of Tahiti

Who departed this life Dcr 19<sup>th</sup> 1844

Aged 53 years

He was unfortunately assassinated

By a lunatic in this city

He was a man of strict integrity

Beloved and respected by all who

Knew him.

*Tis finis'd tis done the Spirit is fled*

*Our Brother is dead the Christian is gone*

*The Christian is living in Jesus's love*

*And gladly receiving a kingdom above*

In memory of

Joseph Charles Tremayne

Only son of

Joseph Hyde Potts

Of the Bank of N.S. Wales

Who resigned his spirit

On the 9<sup>th</sup> day of November

1838

Aged 3 years 5 months and nine days

Also

Harriet Mary Sheba

**Only daughter of**

**Joseph Hyde Potts**

**And sister of the above**

**Who ceased to breathe**

**On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of December**

1838

Let us not murmur at thy dispensations

Oh Heavenly father thine were but loans

Let us return them to thee

With cheerfulness in perfect submission

To thy blessed will

Corp Stephen Kirk

And

Trooper Luke Dunn

Of the Mounted Police Corps

Who lost their lives in the zealous performance of their duty by the fury of  
bushfire in the vicinity of Bottle Forest

on the 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 1845

This stone is erected

By his comrades as a lasting memorial

Of their affection and esteem

Corp Kirk expired on the spot

Trooper Dunn lingered 9 days

Both in their 33rd year.

We get small insights into the day to day life of Sydney-siders and we get this great sense of grief; life was often short

Between 1820 and 1866 this was the principal burial ground for Sydney. It was sometimes colloquially referred to as Sandhills Cemetery that reflected the nature of the land at the edge of Surry Hills. Many prominent people were buried here, along with many children and people from every social class.

Notable burials included:

John William Lewin, coroner, artist and naturalist (died 1819)

George Howe, publisher of the Sydney Gazette, first government printer

Mary Reibey (died 1855), convict, businesswoman and trader

Richard Murray (died 1861) cricketer

Norton and Allen legal families

Newspaper proprietor, John Fairfax and family

Merchant, David Jones and family

First Fleeters such as James Squire, the brewer (died 1822), Isaac Nichols (died 1819) the first postmaster, also Allan Cunningham (died 1839), botanist and explorer and merchants and businessmen such as Samuel Terry (d. 1838), Simeon Lord (died 1840).

Even a queen was buried at Devonshire St. Cora Gooseberry, an Aboriginal elder, also recorded as Kaaroo, Carra, Caroo, or Ba-ran-gan. She was wife of Broken Bay elder Bungaree and daughter of Moorooboora, leader of the clan south of Port Jackson.

On her death in 1852, aged somewhere in her 70s, a Mrs Stewart and Mr Edward Borton, erected a tombstone in her memory. She had been given the European title of 'Queen Gooseberry' by Governor Macquarie who had presented her and her husband with gorgets (or breastplates) to mark their status as leaders of the Aboriginal community and importance within the wider community of Sydney.

Edward Borton was the publican of the Sydney Arms Hotel, who gave her shelter for several years (she would sleep in his kitchen and the back of the hotel). She was buried in the Presbyterian section;

*This stone is erected by Mrs Stewart and Edward Borton*

*In memory of*

*Gooseberry Queen of the Sydney tribe of Aborigines*

*Who died 30 July 1852 aged 75 years*

The people who documented sections of the cemetery just before it was resumed were the Fosters. Mr and Mrs Foster were amateur historians interested in the history of Sydney, they were some of the founding members of the Royal Australian Historical Society. After their marriage in 1895 they lived in a boarding house – new terraces in the upper part of Albion St (no. 141, now demolished), and located close to the cemetery.

It was while standing beside Mary Reibey's grave that Arthur Foster and his wife, Josephine determined 'with pen and camera' to preserve for posterity – some of the historic graves of the pioneers. This work was begun early in 1899 and occupied a full two years of their leisure time.

Mrs Foster (Josephine Ethel) took photographs of many of the gravestones and Arthur copied down the words engraved on the headstones.

The Fosters began their work in the year before the resumption work began. Their investigations were undertaken on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays and occupied all their spare time. Before documentation could take place, the Fosters had to clear away all the undergrowth from around the headstones and clean them before they could be recorded and photographed.

Along with the cleaning of the stones, Mr Foster highlighted the engraved text with a black paint so that it made it easier to read in the photographs. Mr Foster transcribed each headstone prior to Mrs Foster taking the photograph. He had a passion for accuracy and the epitaph books where he recorded the names, highlight his fastidious attention to detail. His series of notebooks are now held by the Library and will be some of the central items to be displayed in the exhibition.

Josephine Foster was a skilled amateur photographer and is even mentioned in a newspaper article written at the time; A reporter for the *Australian Star* wrote in February 1901;

'A LADY PHOTOGRAPHER with her attendant genius holding the umbrella to shield her from the bright and ardent sun of an easy and cool summer's day, was there and she even wanted to take the photographs of Constable Williams and the representative of the "Star", doubtless under the belief that such persons were part and parcel of the whole panorama...'

Arthur transcribed 617 inscriptions from the 1,229 monuments in the Church of England portion of the burial ground, along with segments of the other portions of the cemetery (Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Jewish sections).

Mrs Foster also photographed many old Sydney buildings before their demolition leaving an invaluable collection. She wrote in 1921 in her, 'Oddbits of Old Sydney',

*'We all realise how rapidly the old is giving place to the new, and only by means of pictures will those who come after us know what Sydney was like once upon a time. And in looking at pictures of quiet streets, quaint old homes, beautiful gardens and fine old trees, they will understand why many today still call this queenly city "Dear old Sydney"'*.

By the time the cemetery was resumed, it had been closed for several decades and it was dramatically overgrown and seemingly uncared for. There were many newspaper articles published during the resumptions remarking on the unkempt state; the 'vine-entangled monuments', but also a burgeoning interest in some of the people buried there – an interest in some of the colony's earliest white inhabitants, many from the Fleets and a fascination of some of the 'finds' that were being made as the remains were dis-interred and moved by tram out.

'A thick, disorderly and in some places almost impenetrable scrub covers most of the ground and tombstones lie scattered in careless confusion all over the place. Where standing, they present grotesque attitudes like a party of drunken men crossing a field. Dense, tangled undergrowth has forced its way through the railings of the graves and has obliterated all traces of paths ... The fences bear marks of having been well climbed and over the whole scene is an indescribable air of careless contempt for a spot that should be hallowed.' (The Daily Telegraph, 22 Oct 1900)

Relatives and descendants were invited to claim remains and monuments and have them removed at government expense to other cemeteries. People were given just 2 months to make an application for re-internment. Those remains left unclaimed (around 30,000) were exhumed and removed to Bunnerong Cemetery, an extension of Botany General Cemetery (now Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park), along with about 2,800 memorials. Due to one hundred years of air pollution and weather, these headstones are now almost unreadable, the words have eroded away. If the Foster's hadn't recorded so many, we just would not have this information any more – lives summarised on stone – weathered away, vanished forever.

The process of removing the remains and transporting to the new cemetery was described in detail in the press – some articles over-flow with sentimentality and purple prose; *'it seemed like taking the veil off some sacred thing'*, while others describe pragmatically the process and the interesting finds as though it's an archaeological dig.

**Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Saturday 31 August 1901, page 54**

#### **PREPARING for the RAILWAY STATION. THE OLD AND NEW CEMETERIES.**

'RAPID progress is being made with the work of removing bodies to the new cemetery at La Perouse from the old Devonshire-street cemeteries, so that a start may be made with the foundations of the big railway station. So many graves were found under paths and in unindicated places that it was found necessary to trench over the whole ground to a depth of several feet in order to get at all the remains. ...

In the Roman Catholic section relatives are in constant attendance to assist at the transference of their dead. There is a mortuary, and a great supply of coffins, and as the graves are opened up, the relatives reverently transfer them to new coffins, which are at once placed on trucks and taken out by the special tram line to the new cemetery. Some strange finds are being made by the men in trenching the soil. In one grave three bodies had been buried one on top of the other. A pair of great coarse boots with long flaps were found over the bones of a pair of feet, which had evidently been part of some poor prisoner, buried as he died. In another grave were a beautiful pair of Chinese slippers with bones of a woman's feet inside them. The grave was opened on Saturday and on Monday morning when the men went back to work they found small candles tied in bamboo burning over the open grave. Evidently the relatives of the Chinese lady had found her grave thus during the Sunday, and placed their offerings upon it— a touching instance of the reverence for ancestors which is one of the great Chinese virtues.'

So, the remains were cleared, the sandhills re- appeared in the landscape before the ground was completely carved out to begin the building of the foundations of Central.

The station opened to the public in June 1906. In 1915 the second construction phase began, involving extensions to the north and west wings and the clock tower.

By 1918 the stonework had been completed on the north and west wings and the clock tower was completed in 1921. In the mid 1920's suburban lines were electrified and Platforms 16-23 were constructed. The Central Electric Station was completed in 1929.

Yet further construction was undertaken, including new platforms created for planned new lines in the 1970s. Which brings me to the ghost platforms – platforms 26 & 27 which are located above active train platforms 24 and 25. These are known as the 'ghost platforms'. They have the same dimensions as the platforms below, but are unfinished. The platforms are lit with bright fluorescent lighting, but the walls are not tiled. Instead, there is raw, unfinished concrete and abandoned station furniture. There are spaces for tracks, but no sleepers or rails. There is a short length of tunnel which extends from each end of the platform, but goes nowhere.

They were constructed at the same time as the Eastern Suburbs railway (1970s). Although they were only spares at the time of construction, they would have fitted in with John Bradfield's plans for a railway to Manly and Narrabeen.

Where the train tracks would have been laid is damp, clay soil which continues along the trench to the 'tunnel' which ends abruptly in a concrete wall.

The ghost platform is another aspect of the story – the location where exhibition visitors meet 19th century Sydney residents and hear their stories via large-scale image projections and through soundscapes. We envisage a room with a projection of a slow-moving film of the ghost platform, accompanied by images of the cemetery, the gravestones and voices reading out their inscriptions.

There's an urban myth which continues to endure of people hearing voices down there. Workmen have heard voices, especially children's voices at the ghost

platform. People who have been down there, including employees of Sydney Trains, love to tell these ghost stories and admit to hearing voices... There is something magical that we want to experience in these hidden, unloved spaces that have escaped modernisation and renovation – we seem to want a visceral connection to the past – we want to believe that remnants survive somehow of old Sydney – even hearing ghostly voices.

The ghost platform continues to be a fascination for Sydney-siders – a hidden part of the city, abandoned, but mysterious, surrounded by frenetic commuters and trains and city life. A bit like the old cemetery, which sat, surrounded by factories, commercial and industrial sites and housing pressing in on it, until the govt decided to clear it away.

*Beneath the clocktower* is a journey of discovery, revealing the surprising stories hidden beneath the seeming permanence of the present. Key to this experience is the idea of rediscovering our city's past, peering through the layers of history beneath our feet to meet some of the people who walked the same streets as us.

We want visitors to become immersed in this story and to emotionally respond to the narrative and the original items. Evoking empathy with past lives is one of the goals in this project. As I outlined at the beginning of this talk, this has been a trend in museology over the past couple of decades - to not offer one authoritative master narrative, but to concentrate on everyday life, personal stories and individual biographies. This evoking of empathy, eliciting emotional responses from visitors hopefully facilitates experiential learning.

'In focusing on the unheard stories of individuals and by reinventing exhibitions as performative spaces, they adopt or enhance modes of representation that are more familiar from the theatre, the cinema or literature. (Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: performing cultural memory in the Americas*, 2003).

We hope that visitors will be emotionally and imaginatively engaged with the exhibition, which will foster a better historical understanding, using this mode of communication as a way into telling a history of a place.