

Media Release



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NEW SOUTH WALES

The Burial Files – new podcast unearths Sydney’s spooky past

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More than 250,000 people travel through Sydney’s Central Station every day! But, did you know it was once the final destination for thousands of Sydneysiders?

The State Library of NSW’s new podcast series – **The Burial Files** – digs up the forgotten stories of the Devonshire Street Cemetery and the remains of some 30,000 Sydneysiders buried there between 1820 and 1900.

Over six episodes, you’ll hear from leading historians, curators, archaeologists, forensic experts and railway enthusiasts – each revealing a little-known piece of history about a place we thought we knew!

“You’ll be transported to 19th century Sydney – to the dodgy end of town where insalubrious activities took place after dark, where epidemics took young lives and grim accidents didn’t always make the news – to the city’s first major cemetery which quickly became overpopulated, overgrown and abandoned,” says State Library curator Elise Edmonds.

Elise has spent years researching the Library’s collection for evidence that sheds light on Central Station’s deep dark history. Her extraordinary and often grim discoveries can be experienced in the Library’s new exhibition *Dead Central*, and in *The Burial Files* podcast.

“*Dead Central* pays tribute to the Devonshire Street Cemetery and to local history buffs Josephine and Arthur Foster who were determined to document the site before the remains were exhumed in 1901,” says Elise.

“*The Burial Files* digs deeper into this part of old Sydney where dodgy deals and all types of crime flourished under the cover of darkness. You’ll learn about the building of Central Station, from tin shed to enormous stone edifice, and how it transformed the city.”

The Burial Files has been produced by Sabrina Organo, the State Library’s Creative Producer of Multimedia.

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Episode 1 – Hidden History (now available): Human remains were recently discovered at Central Station. How long have they been there?

Featuring: Dr Paul Irish, an historian and archaeologist, Ronald Briggs, Indigenous curator, State Library of NSW and Dr Denise Donlon, forensic anthropologist.

Episode 2 – Consecrated Ground (available 17 June): From a peaceful resting place to an abandoned wasteland.

Featuring: Dr Lisa Murray, City Historian and cemetery expert, Dr Peter Hobbins, historian of science, technology and medicine, and Dr Catie Gilchrist, historian and author.

Further episodes will be released over successive weeks.

The podcast is available to subscribe, download and stream from Apple Podcasts or your favourite podcast platform.

Visit the website: <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/dead-central>

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