

# R.I.P

## Rookwood In Profile

*Newsletter of FRIENDS OF ROOKWOOD Inc. Volume 29 Number 1*

### Frazer Mausoleum

#### ***Frazer Mausoleum Progress Update***

*The reconstruction of the alabaster sarcophagi in the Frazer Mausoleum is in progress! With the new stained glass windows (and their protective brass grilles in place), it is finally time that the wonderful two-tiered sarcophagi in English alabaster can be safely repaired.*

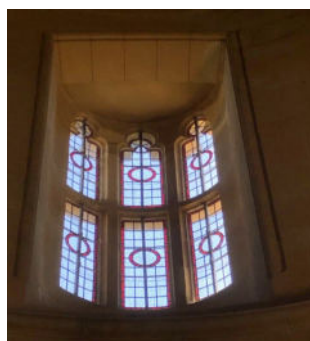
*After working towards this point with the Friends of Rookwood for so many years, it is a very exciting time.*

*Matthew Johnson led the main repair project with the team cleaning the full exterior and interior; removing soluble salts; pointing open joints with lime mortar; replacing three failed stones with new hand-carved stones in Sydney Yellowblock sandstone; repairing the damaged window mouldings with Natural Hydraulic Lime (Roman quarry in France); and then coordinating the like-for-like replacement of the old shattered windows with new stained glass in lead windows. The work was completed in accordance with heritage best practices, following the Frazer Mausoleum Conservation Management Plan, completed with funding from the Friends of Rookwood, and including specifications from Jaspar Swann. The only alteration to the building has been the addition of protective grilles over the exterior of the windows to prevent a repetition of the previous vandalism.*

*Sach Killam, who has worked with the Friends for the past 15 years to get to this point, is now leading the reconstruction of the alabaster sarcophagi. The repairs are being completed like-for-like with the original construction, which was ingeniously designed to allow for dis-assembly and reconstruction, with the addition of a small number of new pins and cramps where required structurally due to damage caused by the masons in 1974.*

*A final aspect of the work will be pruning, landscaping and grounds maintenance inside the gates and around the neighbouring areas in advance of the upcoming ceremony to unveil the works with the Friends of Rookwood.*

*Article by Sach Killam*



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## FRAZER MAUSOLEUM—Plantings

More new tours are coming up this year. There is always something new to discover. We will keep you up to date with events happening throughout the year, both with the Friends of Rookwood and in the cemetery.

We are pleased that the conservation work on the Frazer Mausoleum is continuing. The sarcophagi are being restored with Friends of Rookwood funding.

Don't forget that the award winning book about the Frazer story, written by our own Stephen O'Regan, is available for sale.

The graves of George McRae and Dr William Bland are being restored. These are being funded by the money we raised during the "HIDDEN" event.

We are hoping for better weather on tour days this year. We look forward to seeing many visitors on the first Sunday of each month from March - November. *Robyn Hawes, President*

### THE FRAZER FAMILY & THE MAUSOLEUM - A SNAPSHOT

John Frazer (Jnr) was born in Northern Ireland in 1827 - the youngest of five children.

He emigrated with his brother and two sisters arriving as bounty immigrants on the 'Margaret' in January 1842.

Soon after arrival he accepted an engagement in the country, intending to learn something of squatting. He returned to Sydney and obtained employment where his duties were heavy and at length became determined on starting his own business.

In 1847 he established a grocery business which expanded to become one of the most influential mercantile houses in Sydney. His commercial success was such that three years later he had to seek more commodious premises. He married Elizabeth Ewan in 1853.

He held many directorships of Companies and was an Elder of the Presbyterian Church. In addition, he was an active philanthropist and supported numerous charities.

In April 1874, he accepted nomination to the Legislative Council on which he served for close to 10 years. Though never prominent in the House, it was noted that he contributed much-needed common sense.

John died at age 57 in 1884 and as was characteristic of Victorian times, his funeral was quite elaborate. The mausoleum he had envisaged as the final resting place for him and his family had not yet been built.

However, by 1894 it had been completed and John and other family members were relocated into it. This included his father (John Snr.), who had died at the age of 100 and had originally been interred at the Devonshire Street Cemetery.

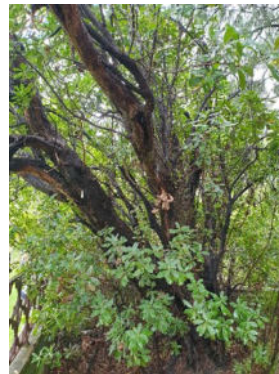
During the 1960s there was considerable vandalism in the cemetery, vaults were broken into, coffins smashed and bodies desecrated. The family decided to have the remains removed and cremated. The mausoleum remained in bad repair for many years and recent efforts after 130 years of its existence restoration to its former glory, makes it one of the architectural glories of Rookwood.

Article by Stephen O'Regan

The whole site is notable for retaining substantial physical evidence of its original plantings, both species and location. As with much of Rookwood's nineteenth century development, and Victorian cemeteries generally, the trees used were selected for both their formal (i.e., architectural) and symbolic functions which would have been understood and appreciated by contemporary visitors. Specific plantings include cypress species — the most notable being the two Chinese mourning cypress (*Cupressus funebris*) on either side of the eastern entry gate — and a number of Himalayan strawberry (*Arbutus*) trees, both species associated with mourning and commemoration of the dead.

A good example of the relevant 'strawberry' tree (*Arbutus*) is in place at the rear of the mausoleum. It may have been chosen to connect to the Frazer name. 'Fraser is a Scottish clan name. There are various possible origins for the name. The most likely is the heraldic term 'fraise' which describes a strawberry. The clan were known as "strawberry bearers" from their coat of arms. Alternative spellings are Fraser, Frazer and Frazier ... Frasers from Scotland would become Frazers in Ireland.'

'The selected trees were arranged with a formal, symmetrically balanced layout either side of an east-west centreline through the mausoleum, emphasising their ceremonial role in the functions of the place.



The Arbutus tree with its fruit resembling strawberries

Article from Rookwood Cemetery/The Frazer Mausoleum book by Stephen O'Regan

### CONTENTS

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| President's Report | 2 |
| Rookwood News      | 3 |
| Helping Hands      | 4 |
| Tours Information  | 5 |
| Cemetery News      | 6 |

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# ROOKWOOD NEWS

## ***WOMEN OF NOTE***

Friday 8th March, is International Women's Day, and as a way of honouring this day, why not join us on tour day, this Sunday 3rd March, when we meet some of the brave and hardy women who fought for societal norms and overcame tragedy to make their way in a world dominated by men.

Hear about the lives of women who were leaders in the suffragette movement, nurses, politicians, an opera singer, a poet are just a few. And let's not forget...the last woman to be hanged in NSW—**LOUISA COLLINS!**

### ***LOUISA COLLINS***

Last woman hanged in NSW

Louisa Collins—reputed to be bushranger Ben Hall's sister, was mother of 7 children. She took in boarders at her home in Botany (Sydney) where she had affairs with several of these men,

When her husband objected she poisoned him with arsenic. Later, she married the "Star" boarder. He apparently didn't live up to her expectations, so she poisoned him as well.

Louisa was found guilty of murder in December 1888 and in 1889 she became the last woman to be hanged in NSW.



### ***LOUISA LAWSON***

Louisa Lawson (nee Albury) was born at Guntawang, near Mudgee NSW. She was the second daughter in a family of twelve.

When Louisa finished school, she married Niels Larson and after birth of their first son, they anglicised their family name to Lawson. The couple had five children, including Henry Lawson, who became the famous poet and writer.

Following the breakdown of their marriage, Louisa moved to Sydney with the children. Here she supported the family by sewing, washing and taking in boarders, before rising above these hardships to become a leading feminist.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Louisa purchased a newspaper where she and Henry were editors and writers. She later went on to launch the magazine "Dawn", which reported extensively on women's affairs.

In 1889 Louisa campaigned for women's rights and suffrage. In 1902, she was acclaimed as the originator of the suffrage movement in Australia.

Louisa's legacy of social reform for women's rights changed Australia forever.

Louisa Lawson's grave was restored in 2018 by the Friends of Rookwood in partnership with Rookwood General Cemetery.



Article by Julie Rusten



## **Hello Friends of Rookwood**

Helping Hands team are looking forward to the New year, after having a bit of a break over summer. That said, several people kept their hand in over the hot summer months through doing some lighter work, so thanks to Helen, Gail, Marion and Laurie.

For the next few weeks, we will be focusing on cleaning gutters, weeding and pruning around monuments and headstones in the area around Frazer Mausoleum, in preparation for its re-opening. There's quite a lot of opportunity for improvements in this area! We'll then be working in the Old Anglican area around the top of the Serpentine canal to tidy up the area, as our tours get underway for the year.

If you are interested to help us for a couple of hours on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month between March and November (weather permitting), you would be very welcome. Just bring a few tools (gloves, garden spade, pruning shears) and lots of enthusiasm. Bring a hat, sun lotion, insect repellent, appropriate clothing, sturdy footwear, something to sit on and some lunch. It isn't hard work, but you put in as much effort as you want! It's voluntary, so you are not obliged to stay for the whole time or turn up every gardening day. We will be grateful for any help or suggestions you can provide.

**Our Gardening Days for 2024 are as follow-conditions permitting:**

**Saturday 9th & 23rd March**

**Saturday 13th & 27th April**

**Saturday 11th & 25th May**

**Saturday 8th & 22nd June**

**Saturday 13th & 27th July**

We meet at 9:30am in the Village Green carpark opposite All Souls Chapel in Hawthorne Ave. If you are running late, ring Geoff on 0419 296 267.

Enjoy the weather, the sounds of nature and open air of Rookwood. We break for lunch at midday then work for an hour or two after lunch depending on the weather. At quitting time we gather for a coffee and enjoy a chance to socialise.

If you need any more information or have suggestions contact:

**Geoff Bovard email: [geoff.bovard@gmail.com](mailto:geoff.bovard@gmail.com)**

Article & photos by Geoff Bovard



Laurie and Carolyn clearing graves in front of Frazer Mausoleum



Gail & Helen removing overgrowth near Frazer Mausoleum



Carolyn confronting the bamboo behind Frazer Mausoleum



Cleared overgrowth before Frazer Mausoleum

## TOURS

### TOURS FOR 2024

10am—12:30pm

All these tours are walking tours and depart from the grassed area near St Michael the Archangel Chapel (on the left, just off Necropolis Drive). Enter the cemetery via the gate at the corner of Victoria and East Streets, Lidcombe

**Our tours are all separate tours and  
*are subject to change without notice.***

|             |       |  |
|-------------|-------|--|
| 3 March     | 10 am | Women of Note  |
| 7 April     | 10 am | The ANZAC tour.  |
| 5 May       | 10 am | Ships and Shipwrecks  |
| 2 June      | 10 am | Irish tour            |
| 7 July      | 10 am | Jewish Tour  |
| 4 August    | 10 am | Railway Walk          |
| 1 September | 10 am | Rookwood Heritage  |
| 6 October   | 10 am | Murder and Mayhem  |
| 3 November  | 10 am | Military   |

### TWILIGHT TOUR FOR 2024

**A TWILIGHT Tour will be held on Sunday 17th March 2024**

### **BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL**

**and can be made and paid for via**

**Eventbrite Australia.**

Log on to [Eventbrite.com.au](https://www.eventbrite.com.au)

Search for Friends of Rookwood.

Select the tour you wish to take.

Click on 'Tickets' for the tour and then follow the process to book and pay for your tour.

Please bring along your Eventbrite receipt to the tour.

### **TWILIGHT TOURS - 5.15 pm\* to 7.30pm**

These are held in the 'cool of the evening' and depart from the small pedestrian gate in East Street Lidcombe,  
(near Railway St, opposite Davey Street).

***Meet up with your guide at the East Street gate at 5.15pm sharp.***

***IMPORTANT - Please park in East Street, Lidcombe – not in the Cemetery.***

**Cost: ( all tours) \$15 per person. Members \$10 per person.**

**For information & bookings ring Julie 0419 986 589**

**All money raised is used to help with restoration projects within the cemetery.**

**Please bring a friend along and enjoy your tour.**

**Email: [friends\\_of\\_rookwood@hotmail.com](mailto:friends_of_rookwood@hotmail.com)**

**Website: [www.friendsofrookwoodinc.org.au](http://www.friendsofrookwoodinc.org.au)**

**Or find us on Facebook**



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# CEMETERY NEWS

## *Rookwood Catholic Cemetery*

### **Mortuary 1: Monument Safety & Conservation Programme Brief Progress Report**

We are continuing good progress with the Mortuary 1 Monument Safety & Conservation Programme and are on track for completion of the scheduled works for Year 4.

**Key Points** The full survey of all monuments in Mortuary 1 has been completed: including all 5 areas as per the 5-year survey plan map, encompassing Areas A through E. A dataset of all high safety priority monuments has been compiled. Photographs have been taken of all high safety priority monuments to provide documentation of before states.

The safety repair program is continuing, with the current financial year being Year 4 of the works. Safety repairs have been completed to a total 656 high priority monuments, following standard Best-Practice repair methodologies for State Heritage Register listed fabric. Where reinstallations and repairs require pins, these have been completed with pinning lengths and pin-to-drill-hole differences meeting or exceeding AS4204:2019. All repairs are being reported and documented in the working Mortuary 1 dataset, along with project hour tracking.

This year's safety repair project has included 51 completed repairs, with an additional 8 monument repairs in progress.

This year's project is on track for completion of the target of 200 monuments for the allocated number of hours. (Survey year 5 plus 51 of 200 repairs completed being approximately 35% of anticipated work resources for the year, with 37% of allocated hours actually used). As per the programme plan, repairs are being completed to maximise efficiency while prioritising the highest potential risk monuments.

By the end of this year (Year 4 of works), all of the highest risk monuments (Class X) will have been made safe, with almost all having been repaired, and any remaining Class X monuments made safe for repair in Year 5.

By the end of Year 5, as per the project plan, all of the second highest tier of high priority monuments (Class A) will have been made safe, with almost all have been repairs, and any others being made safe for future repair.

As per the project plan, the end-of-year report for Year 4 (this financial year) will document that all of the highest risk monuments (Class X) in Mortuary have been made safe.



Story by Jo Davenport

2024 monument repairs in progress in Mortuary 1  
Sections S & N

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## *Rookwood General Cemetery*

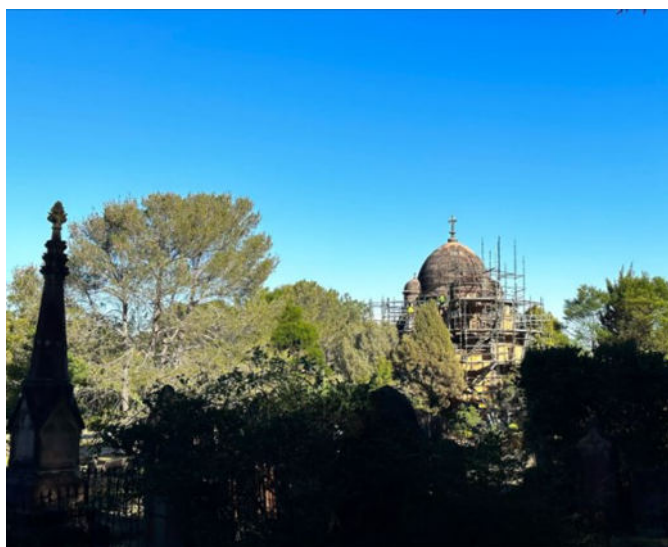
### **Re launch of Frazer Mausoleum**

The Frazer Mausoleum, one of the most iconic and grand mausoleums in Rookwood Cemetery, is set to reopen to the public after undergoing major restorations.

The mausoleum, built in 1894 by wealthy businessman and politician John Frazer, was once the resting place of seven family members but was emptied and abandoned in 1974 by a distant relative. Since then, the mausoleum has suffered from vandalism, neglect, and decay, losing much of its original splendour.

A big thank you to the efforts of Rookwood's heritage restoration and conservation team, The mausoleum has been brought back to life with the reconstruction of the original design, removal of years of pigeon droppings, and replacement of stained-glass windows.

The reopening of the Frazer mausoleum is a rare opportunity for us to witness the beauty and history of this remarkable monument.



Story by Crystal Lindsay

## *ROOKWOOD NECROPOLIS LAND MANAGER*

The Rookwood Necropolis Land Manager (RNLM ) continues maintaining the operations of Rookwood cemetery.

In 2024, we hope to move forward with digitisation of records at RNLM office preserving for the future.

### ***HONEY***

Honey is on sale at Rookwood on four days—please feel free to purchase—it's pure honey ...



### **R.I.P.—ROOKWOOD IN PROFILE**

Edited by Robyn Hawes & Teresa Ciaglia

Published by the Friends of Rookwood Inc.

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# ROOKWOOD-

## a part of Australia's

### history.



Rookwood Necropolis Trust  
PO Box 2059  
Homebush West NSW 2140

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the application details below. **Note:** Our membership year is based on a financial year – there are no pro-rata membership rates.

I / We wish to join the Friends of Rookwood Inc.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that your email address will be used for notices about meetings, Friends' activities and the quarterly newsletter.

## SCHEDULE OF MEMBERSHIP FEES

|                         | 1 year  |  |
|-------------------------|---------|--|
| Individual              | \$20.00 |  |
| Household               | \$25.00 |  |
| Corporate               | \$30.00 |  |
| MEMBERSHIP TOTAL        | \$      |  |
| DONATION (Most welcome) | \$      |  |
| TOTAL                   | \$      |  |

Please circle your method of payment.

Cash - Cheque/Money Order\* - Direct Deposit

\*Cheques/money orders should be made payable to:

Friends of Rookwood Inc and posted to PO Box 66 Lidcombe NSW 1825

Direct Deposit details#: Westpac, Miranda -

BSB No. 032-059 Account No. 259785

or scan this page and email to friends\_of\_rookwood@hotmail.com

#For direct deposit, please add your name for verification.