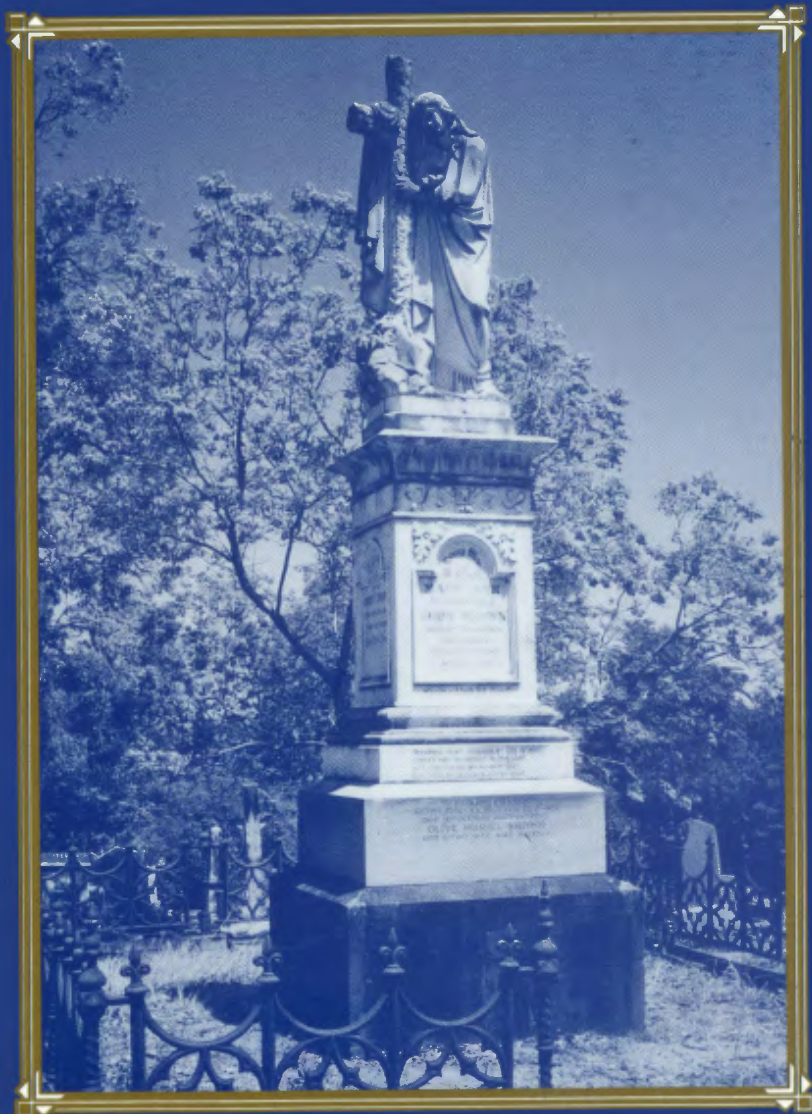# PIONEERS at PEACE

The story of
St John's Cemetery, Gordon

by Jill Lyons

Remember me when I am far away
Gone far away into the silent land.

— *Christina Rossetti*

[Fig.1] **A Bush Funeral**, *1865 watercolour by S.T. Gill, depicts the type of simple funeral prevalent at the time St John's cemetery began. Most early settlers in the district were sawyers and orchardists.*

(Mitchell Library)

PIONEERS AT PEACE

The story of
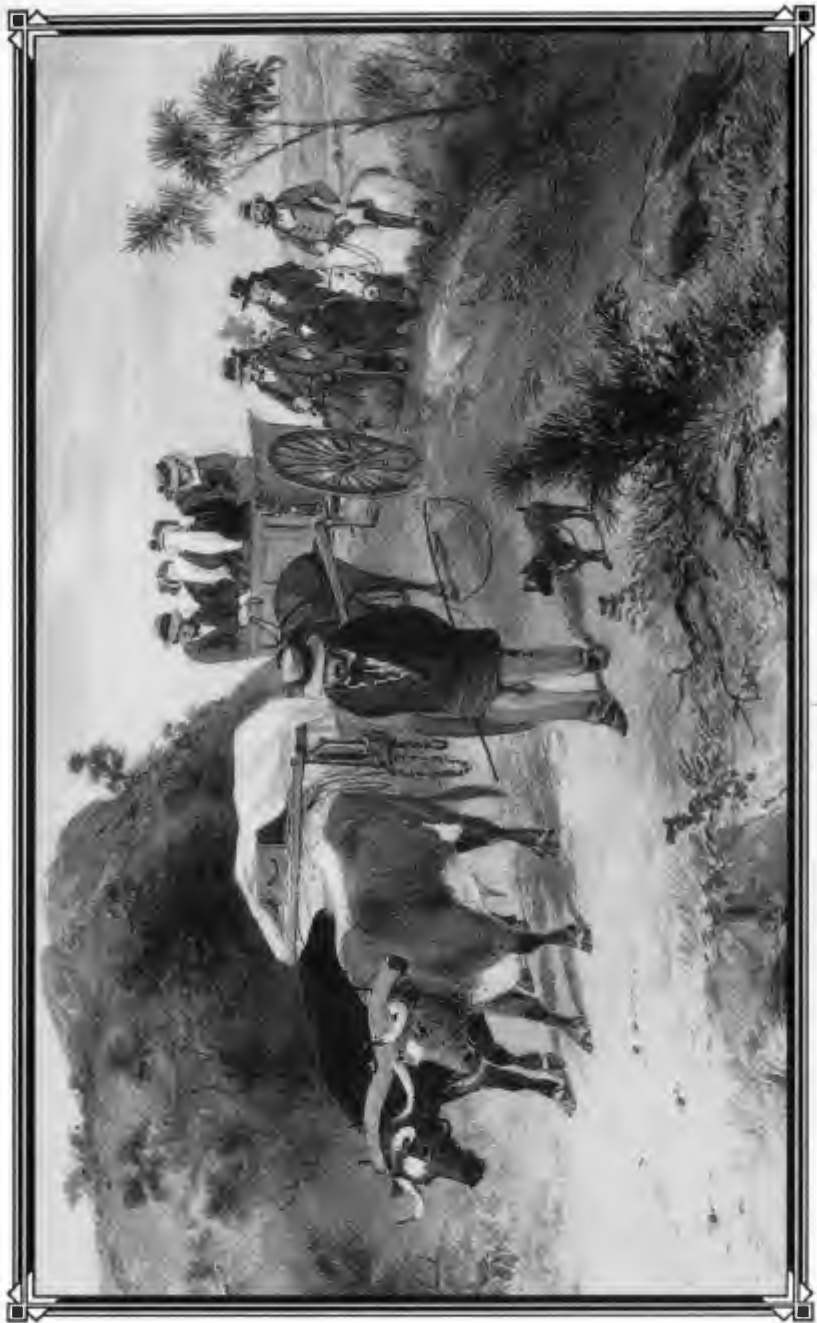## St John's Cemetery, Gordon

by

Jill Lyons

Spurwood Press, Sydney

CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I wish to thank everyone who has helped with this book.

J.L. October, 1994.

INTRODUCTION

A graveyard tells a story. St John's historic cemetery at Gordon provides a microcosmic view of life on Sydney's upper north shore from the early days of white settlement until the present. As we pause to read an impressive inscription on a grand monument or a simple epitaph on a child's homemade cross, we can empathise with the mourners, themselves long gone. Who were these people? Why such an early death or curious inscription? What sort of life did they lead and why were they buried here? The more we seek, the more we get only tantalising glimpses into lives that link our present with our past - and the more we are inspired to search deeper.

The three years' preparation for this book, written from an historical perspective, has been undertaken to mark the centenary of the official establishment in 1893 of the Church of England (Anglican) Parish of Gordon and Hornsby. We look at the development of the cemetery and the community it served, at the lives of some of the people interred there and at the changes in mourning and funeral customs since the first burial in 1867. Finally, we consider some of the issues involved in maintaining the cemetery as a valuable part of our heritage.

Many people and organisations have contributed to the research. However lack of available church records, particularly for early periods in the cemetery's development, has made the task difficult. Facts are as accurate as possible but any corrections or further information would be welcomed. Where discrepancies exist (in spelling of names, dates etc.), preference has usually been given to headstone inscriptions and family information rather than burial register entries, which are only as accurate as the recorder. With a total of over 1,800 interments in the cemetery and columbarium, it has obviously not been possible to mention all of them in a book of this size. However, I have been deeply impressed by the wonderful contributions made to the church and community by so many of the people commemorated there — and to them this book is dedicated.

TIME LINE

Local Events	Year	St John's Church/Cemetery
Ridge track = Lane Cove Rd	1840	
	1850	
First Gordon post office	1860	
	1865	Fire destroys school/church
	1867	First recorded burials
	1872	Original church dedicated
Suburb named Gordon	1879	
North Shore railway line open.	1890	Rev.Edward Crisford appt.
	1893	Establishment of Parish
		Rev. R. R. King appt.
		Rectory completed
	1900	
	1903	Erection of Parish Hall
Ku-ring-gai Shire gazetted	1906	
Lane Cove Rd = Gordon Rd		
North. Suburbs Cemetery est.	1922	Rev. Arnold Conolly appt.
	1924	Fnd. stone for new church
Electrification of N.S. railway	1928	
Kur-ing-gai bec.municipality		
	1931	Cemetery reinterments beg.
Sydney Harbour Bridge open.	1932	
Gordon Rd bec. Pacific H'way		
St John's Avenue widened	1933	Rev. William Pyke appt.
Post-war increased growth in	**1950**	Rev. Roy Wotton appt.
settlement leads to expansion	1959	War Memorial Parish Hall
of Gordon shopping centre	1963	1st stage of Columbarium
	1972	Centenary of church
	1979	Rev. William Weston appt.
	1981	Present church consecrated
	1990	Rectory renovated
Ku-ring-gai Town Hall open.	1991	Rev. Cecil Kelley appt.
		Rev. James Pettigrew appt.
Kuring-gai Civic Square open.	1993	Centenary of Parish

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

ows of crosses? Graves with ghostly shadows? Are these your images of a graveyard? To some people a cemetery is macabre, to others fascinating. For a burial ground is not only a reminder of death; it is also a looking glass which reflects our heritage and establishes links with those pioneers who helped shape our present society.

Today, Australians are searching for individual and national identity. By delving into our past, we can discover just who our ancestors were, how they lived and what they achieved. Our local cemetery is a good place to start.

White Settlement

From across Gordon's busy Pacific Highway, a bust of Australia's first Governor, Captain Arthur Phillip, surveys St John's church and churchyard. The replica reminds us that in April 1788, Phillip led a reconnaissance party from Manly Cove upstream through the Stoney Creek (St Ives) area, seeking fertile land for growing crops. On this journey, he noted the tall trees which were to provide much timber for the growing colony. This land had been home for centuries to Aboriginal people such as the Guringai but white settlement brought smallpox to which they had no resistance. By the 1850s most had vanished from the area.

A study of the occupations of those buried in the cemetery reveals that early white settlers were mainly sawyers and orchardists. In the early 19th century, settlement in Lane Cove

or Hunters Hill (as the present Ku-ring-gai district was then known) was sparse. Activity first centred around the Government Sawing Establishment near Fiddens Wharf on the Lane Cove River. Governor Macquarie also made a number of small grants in the area. As the land had first to be cleared, the earliest white inhabitants were mostly sawyers, some employing convict labour. They felled the huge trees, cut the logs in the sawpits and took them by bullock dray down to wharves on the Lane Cove River. From there the timber was floated downstream by barge to Sydney and Parramatta.

It was a rough and lawless life — the men worked hard and drank hard, living on salt beef and damper. Women were scarce. The Sydney Gazette of 25.2.1841 reported that *the Lane Cove district has long been noted as the resort of disreputable people, and we do not hesitate to say that there should be a military post to prevent smuggling and sly grog selling.* Fights frequently broke out and cock-fighting and bare-knuckle boxing were popular pastimes. When the timber supply dwindled, many itinerant sawyers moved on to Gosford or the northern rivers. A few stayed on and became orchardists.

Their lot was not an easy one. Early settlers such as Robert Pymble I and **Charles Buckingham**[1] began their orchards here in the 1820s. Other occupations recorded for early burials at St John's include *labourer, farmer, carpenter* and *gardener.* **John Harwood** (d. 1882) is listed as *servant.*

Beginnings of the Church and Cemetery

In this setting, the story of St John's church and cemetery began. The first building on the site was a schoolhouse, the

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[1] In the text, the names of all persons interred/commemorated in the cemetery and columbarium appear in bold print.

earliest official reference to it being a public appeal for subscriptions in the *Sydney Gazette* on 15 June 1816:

> *A School, under the sanction and approval of His Excellency the Governor [Macquarie], being about to be erected by voluntary Contributions in the District of Lane Cove, for the Cultivation of the Morals and promoting the Education of Children of both Sexes, and also to improve the Females in other duties of Domestic life...SUBSCRIPTIONS,however small, will be gratefully received...His Excellency, on the Part of Government, has been graciously pleased to bestow Ten Pounds Sterling...*

Sufficient funds were presumably raised as a school was built near the present church, with a teacher's residence attached. In December 1816, William Baker became its first schoolmaster.

The schoolhouse was a small weatherboard cottage which stood on part of 60 acres of land leased by the Anglican church for the nominal annual rent of a peppercorn. The school was not successful. In 1829 the building was in ruins and the timbered land, valued at only £15, was declared *bad and without water.*[2] However, a new school was built shortly afterwards and by 1839 was attended by 40 local children. It was reported that many of them were very young; only four could read the New Testament and write - both indifferently - and eighteen could do neither.[3]

[2] *Church and School Corporation Surveyors Reports*, Bowen, 1829–30. Archives Office, Sydney, 17/2705 pp. 41, 42.
[3] *State of Religion and Education in New South Wales.* Report by Judge W.W. Burton, 1839.

[Fig. 2] *1867 Plan of Church, School, Parsonage and Cemetery Sites,*
Parish of Gordon. *(St John's archives)*

At that time, a rough bush track (successively known as Pennant Hills Road, Lane Cove Road, Gordon Road and Pacific Highway) linked the district to Sydney, via harbour ferry. Settlement was sparse and along the Lane Cove Road, in what is now Gordon, only the school and a few scattered cottages existed.[4]

The schoolhouse was also used for worship. Before becoming a separate parish in 1893, the Lane Cove (Gordon) church district had been annexed to Hunters Hill parish (then including Ryde and Pennant Hills) and later to St Thomas' Willoughby (North Sydney). Anglican services in the early years were infrequent but by the 1860s, on the last Sunday afternoon of each month, a clergyman would ride on horseback from St Anne's Ryde or St Thomas' Willoughby to conduct a service at Gordon.

As there were no local cemeteries, burials sometimes took place on family properties. **Mary Ann Britton's** baby was buried in 1867 on Britton land - now Pymble golf links. **Sarah Tawyer**, an early settler at Pearce's Corner, wrote in her reminiscences that, when she arrived in 1843, *if a person had to be buried, such a person had to be taken either to St Thomas' [North Sydney], Ryde or Parramatta. Such being the state of things, it was time someone tried to alter them.* [5]

After a bushfire destroyed the schoolhouse in the mid-1860s, Sunday evening religious services were held at the homes of **James Pymble** (near present Pymble Station) and orchardist James Terry (St Ives). They were conducted by Rev. William Wood from Pennant Hills, who also performed the first ten recorded funerals in St John's cemetery (1867–68).

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[4] *NSW Calendar and Directory, 1832.*

[5] *You Are God's Building* by Dr R. Nobbs, p.17.

Mr. ROBERT PYMBLE.

Mr. WILLIAM HENRY McINTOSH.

Mr. JOHN BROWN.

[Fig.3] The three original trustees of St John's church and cemetery.
(H. Selkirk)

By this time a permanent local church was much needed to cater for the spiritual and social needs of the many Anglicans living in relative isolation on the upper north shore. Long distance travel was hazardous and most people were born, married and subsequently died in their own district. Many local families, such as the **McIntoshes**, **Pymbles**, **Browns** and **Waterhouses**, intermarried. Nearly everyone in the early pioneering families was related, however distantly.

A Church Is Built

Negotiations were begun in June 1866 for the purchase of three acres of land *for a church, school, parsonage and burial ground* on the site of the old schoolhouse (part of the original 60-acre church lease). Eventually a petition, signed by Rev. W. Wood and 36 local residents, was sent to the Governor by the Bishop of Sydney and the land sold to the church trustees at the following prices: [6]

Portion	1	Parsonage site	2 roods...... £6
	2	Church site	1 acre.......£15
	3	School House site	2 roods... .. £6
	4	Cemetery site	1 acre.......£10
			£37

Robert Pymble II, **William Henry McIntosh** and **John Brown** *(fig.3)* were nominated as church and cemetery trustees and the respective deeds delivered to **John Brown** on 1 September 1871. All three men were prominent local citizens.

The foundation stone of the Church of St John the Evangelist, designed by ecclesiastical architect Edmund Blacket,

[6] *History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist 1829-1923* by H. Selkirk, p.8.

was laid on 26 October 1872. The rector of St Thomas' Willoughby, Rev. W. C. Cave-Brown-Cave, was licensed to officiate. Below the foundation stone on a scroll, now missing, were the names of many well-known local identities present, including **John Brown**, **William Henry McIntosh** and **Robert Pymble** (original trustees), **Thomas Waterhouse**, **James Pymble** and **Robert McIntosh**, all of whom now rest in the churchyard.

Few early cemetery records remain. An 1867 map shows the cemetery with *poor soil timbered with black butt, gum and iron bark*. Various clergy officiated at church services and burials until the arrival in October 1893 of the first live-in rector, Rev. Raymond King (great-grandson of Governor King). Until then record-keeping seems to have been haphazard.

A New Era Begins

The 1890s ushered in a new era on the upper north shore. After the completion of St John's rectory, a continuous succession of rectors helped provide stability in church and community life.

When the **Rev. George McIntosh,** who officiated at St John's 1880–85, moved to St Paul's at Pennant Hills (Carlingford), St John's depended on lay help until the **Rev. Edward Crisford** was *licensed to officiate at Gordon and Hornsby* in 1890. There was still no rectory and he and his young family lived in a house on Pymble hill. Sadly, he died only weeks before the new rectory was finished. No cemetery burials were recorded during his time, though in fact they did occur.

In 1893 the church district officially became the Parish of Gordon and Hornsby Junction, extending from Roseville to the Hawkesbury River and Peat's Ferry. In 1888, mention was

made in church council minutes of a request to the Commissioner of Roads and Bridges for a surveyed road from Lane Cove Road (Pacific Highway) to the cemetery (St John's Avenue). In 1894 they reported on *the uncared for state of the cemetery*.

As the north shore railway line developed, Gordon Station was opened in 1890 and the line extended from Hornsby to Milson's Point in 1893. This encouraged the settlement of an affluent upper middle class, as evidenced by the occupations of many residents later interred in the cemetery. Some wealthy members of Sydney society, seeking a healthy lifestyle and escape from city pollution, began buying large blocks of upper north shore land from the developers. These new arrivals built architect-designed homes from Killara to Wahroonga and by 1900 the area had become Sydney's dress-circle — a far cry from earlier decades. They were mainly the families of successful professionals: lawyers, doctors, architects and the up-and-coming commercial classes. Many became regular parishioners at St John's.

By the turn of the century, the character of the district had changed from rural to suburban. As the population grew, Anglican daughter churches, such as Christ Church St Ives, St James' Turramurra, St Swithun's Pymble and St Martin's Killara, were formed. Many who helped establish them were eventually buried in the cemetery at St John's, where they had formerly been parishioners.

The Masonic movement gained a strong foothold on the north shore in the early twentieth century. **Rev. Arnold Conolly**, rector of St John's 1922–33, played a large part in the formation of the Gordon Lodge and meetings were held in the church hall or vestry. Known Freemasons buried in the cemetery include NSW Grand Master **John Remington**,

police sergeant **Edwin Hickey**, merchant **Thomas Dudgeon**, headmaster of *Abbotsholme College* **John Fitzmaurice** and longtime verger of St John's, **Thomas Whalley**.

By 1900, 232 burials had been recorded. However, despite the erection of elaborate monuments, grave maintenance seems to have been largely neglected. As families moved away, many graves were forgotten.

During World War I, St John's became the Garrison Church for the 18th Battalion (Ku-ring-gai Regiment) and its insignia now rests in the chapel. Inscriptions on headstones and church plaques commemorate those who fell. The Battalion's successor, the 2nd 18th, served in Malaya in World War II and rough wooden crosses from battlefield cemeteries in both world wars hang in the chapel. If memorials could speak!

ST.JOHN'S CEMETERY NO. BURIALS BY YEARS 1860-1994
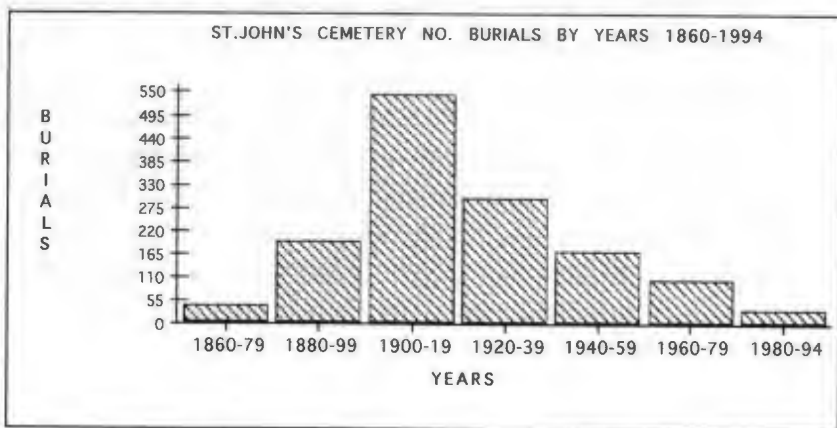
[Fig.4] Graph showing main burial periods for St John's cemetery

In the 1920s, the local population was outgrowing the original church and cemetery. **Dr J.J.C. Bradfield**, who initiated the design for a bridge across Sydney Harbour, realised

18

the increased population this would bring. **Rev. Conolly**, who had been an architect before entering the ministry, engaged **Dr Bradfield's** help and probably that of his predecessor's brother, civil engineer **Christopher King.** Together they planned an enlarged church, the cornerstone of which was laid in 1924. By that time, the 1900–20 peak burial period *(fig.4)* at St John's had already passed and the Northern Suburbs cemetery at Ryde had opened in 1922.

Widening of St John's Avenue

As the district grew, so did the problems. By 1923 St John's Avenue had been concreted, apart from the section outside the cemetery. In 1926 the Gordon Progress Association wrote to the NSW Health Department expressing belief that the cemetery was now full and recommending closure as *seepage from the cemetery created problems.*

There followed a series of controversies and compromises between Ku-ring-gai Council, trying to stop the burials and St John's Church, wanting to continue them. Then in 1928 the council decided to widen and concrete this section of St John's Avenue, which involved resuming land in the lower corner of the cemetery. Eventually an agreement was reached, with the church providing additional rows W and P for burials and the council paying for reinterments and transfer of headstones. These exhumations and reinterments, undertaken by T.J. Andrews in October 1931, numbered 18 and took 2 years to complete. It would appear that approximately 14 graves, mostly of infants without headstones, remained where they were.

Burials continued in the cemetery after this time but in diminishing numbers. By the 1950s the cemetery was overgrown and presented a problem. Major cleanups were attempted in the early 1950s and late 1960s.

Beginnings of the Columbarium

Although cremation had been practised for centuries by some Aboriginal people, it was not until 1895 that the first European was cremated in Australia.[7] Two arguments in favour of cremation at that time were hygienic disposal of the dead and a solution to the increasingly crowded graveyards. However, cremation was not widely practised in Australia until the 1930s and it was only in December 1963 that the first stage of St John's columbarium (from the Latin for *dove cote)* was built and niches made available at a cost of £40 each. Where plaques record earlier deaths[8], the ashes were probably transferred from elsewhere. The wall now has over 950 niches, nearly two-thirds of which have been occupied.

Recent Years

Under the capable ministry of the much-loved Rev. Roy Wotton and his wife **Marjorie Wotton** (d.1993)[Col.E-7], in October 1972 St John's church celebrated the centenary of the building of the original stone church. By then, all the original pioneers associated with its establishment had died and many had been laid to rest in the cemetery. From 1979–91, Rev. William Weston, a writer of numerous ecclesiastical books, was incumbent. Sadly, his successor for a few brief weeks, **Rev. Cecil Kelley**, died in office. The present rector is Rev. James Pettigrew, who has an active interest in cemetery administration.

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[7] *In The Midst of Life* by G.M. Griffin & M. Tobin, p.67.
[8] Earliest date of death on a St John's columbarium plaque = *Pauline Georgina Grant aged 5 years d.19.9.1937.*

CHAPTER 2

GOD'S ACRE

❦

As we inherited the Anglo-Saxon tradition, graves in St John's cemetery are laid out in simple rows, just as they are in the old churchyards of England. There, a consecrated acre of land with the church at its centre, was traditionally used for burials and became known as *God's Acre*. This explains why one acre of land was set aside for the establishment of St John's cemetery.

Burial Customs

Many Christian burial customs evidenced in the cemetery are of Roman or Celtic origin. In early Christian Rome, shrines were erected over the graves of saints and martyrs and in later centuries churches were often built over these sacred sites, which were enclosed in the crypt below. By the Middle Ages when burials occurred inside a church, the coveted place near the holy shrine or high altar was reserved for royals and high-ranking churchmen. The best for which lesser mortals could hope were plots in the churchyard, preferably beside the path from lychgate to church, where passers-by might pray for them.

The custom of resting the deceased's body on a platform before carrying it to the gravesite gave rise to the need for a shelter at the entrance to the cemetery. This was known as a *lychgate* (from the German word for *corpse)* – similar to the one in front of St John's church.

Before the 19th century, many churchyards were neglected and overgrown and sometimes became refuges for the lawless. If unfenced, grazing animals often strayed in (as they still do in some country churchyards), disturbing the headstones. So it became the duty of a churchwarden to fence the burial ground.

Sometimes individual graves were also protected by willow sticks or brambles — hence the 19th century practice of fencing graves with wooden or decorative wrought-iron surrounds. At St John's, a number of these grave fences survive — such as the wrought-iron picket fence enclosing the grave [E-20] of builder, **Francis List** (d.1884 aged 33). The **List** family erected *Lindfield,* a cottage on Lane Cove Road after which the suburb is named. Fences were also used to enclose family graves, such as that of the **Fowler** family [G-4], dating from 1882 *(fig.5).* **Herbert Cunningham Fowler** (d.1923 aged 91), a settler at Pearce's Corner, acted as an unofficial mailman for local residents.

[Fig.5]   Fenced graves of FOWLER family   (photo: J. Hunter)

Burial customs have always been influenced by the attitudes towards death prevalent at the time. In the 18th century, people were haunted by the spectre of death, so headstones depicted the grim reaper or the hour-glass. In the 19th century a softer attitude prevailed and people could more easily envisage heaven beyond. Many epitaphs include biblical quotations carrying messages of faith and hope.

However the horrors of World War I altered these attitudes to death as well as to life. A conspiracy of silence grew up and people tried to ward off death by not talking or thinking about it. These changing attitudes are reflected in the nature of the cemetery headstones and their inscriptions.

Types of Crosses

The custom of erecting a stone on a grave probably began in early pagan times with a person's desire for remembrance. Early Christians in Britain carved these standing stones with Christian crosses — hence the Calvary (Roman or Latin) cross used today. Around the 5th century Irish Celtic crosses appeared in England and tradition says that when the Celts first arrived there they carried this cross, representing non-sectarianism.

Both the plain calvary cross and more elaborate celtic cross were often used as headstones around the turn of the century. A weathered sandstone calvary cross marks the grave [AA–3] of **Rev. Edward Crisford**, curate-in-charge at St John's 1890–93, and a spectacular row of five marble calvary crosses *(fig.6)* commemorates the **Cardew** family [W24–28]. A similar cross garlanded with passion flowers signifying Christ's passion marks the grave of **Georgina Kidd** (d.1907) [E-7]. Another, on the grave [G-27] of **Rev. George Sheppard** (d.1907) and his wife **Edith** (d.1914), appears as rough-hewn stone but is actually made of concrete reinforced with wire.

[Fig.6] Five Calvary crosses on CARDEW family graves.

[Fig.7]ADAMS family Celtic cross [Fig.8] C. BUCKINGHAM's headstone
(Stonemason: Andrews Bros)   (Stonemason: J. Roseby)

One of the loveliest memorials in the churchyard is the tall celtic cross *(fig. 7)*, with elaborately carved passionflowers intertwined with lilies (crucifixion and resurrection) on the grave [JJ-1] of **Alice Emily Adams** (d.1906 aged 55). **Alice** was the first wife of William John Adams, founder of the Australia-wide engineering company, William Adams & Co., which sold *everything for the engineer*. William and their children are commemorated on her memorial.

A Maltese cross, as used by the Knights of St John, adorns the black granite obelisk [I-21] of civil engineer, **Thomas Birrell Marshall** (d.1901) and forms the headstone [KK-17] of **Alicia Hardy** (d.1911).

Symbolism

The Victorian attitude towards death is revealed on many early headstones in the cemetery. Examples are the dove (holy spirit /hope of resurrection) and open bible on the headstone of **Jane Baker** (d.1882)[G-16]; and the clasped hands (farewell/ reunion) on that of **Alberto Francis** (d.1914)[MM-22]. Other imagery includes a lily with broken stem for a life cut short (**Bridget** and **Daniel Bullock**, d.1885)[B17/18]; and a shrouded urn representing the grail of sorrow (**Charles Buckingham**, d.1868)[A-7]. Tiger-lilies and lily-of-the-valley symbolise grief on the grave of **Robert McIntosh II** (d.1899)[C-22] and roses represent everlasting love on the grave of **Minnie Pierce Thomas** (d.1903) and her daughter, **Annette Emily Jago** (d.1943)[H-23].

Class Differences and Background

19th century headstones tended to reflect class divisions. Like mourning customs, they made a permanent statement about the

place in society of the deceased and their families. Those who could afford it often purchased a double plot or received a second one free.[1] If wealthy, the family would erect a headstone at the time of the first burial, adding successive names as required. Sometimes a headstone was not erected until later when the family could afford one.

Some of the first settlers gained wealth and status in the community but most sawyers and orchardists toiled hard with few comforts. Most of their monuments were made of local sandstone and many early settlers, such as the **Mudie** family [GG5-6], could afford no memorials at all. Rows L/LL, now grassed over, contain the unmarked remains of many babies, some buried over a century ago, often in communal graves.

Most people buried at St John's were Church of England but as this was the only early local cemetery, a few folk of other denominations, such as Methodists and an occasional Roman Catholic, were also interred here. The majority of those buried were of British descent. Yet a surprising number of early families represented in the cemetery originated from other countries: the **Bjelke-Petersens**, **Tanges** and **Lofbergs** from Denmark; the **de Berengers**, **Bulteaus**, **le Bases** and **du Faurs** from France; and the **Gaukrodgers**, **Schmeisings**, **Swarzas** and **Dreis** from Germany. Others chose to anglicise their surnames.

Types of Headstones

In the earliest burial rows, A to C, the headstones are mostly upright stone slabs with carved imagery. When many settlers

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[1] Cemetery Trustee, Edwin McIntosh, noted in 1891 that persons who had purchased one grave plot measuring 8'x4' for 24 shillings, had received another plot free.

could neither read nor write, these symbols could be easily understood. The Burial Register shows no grave locations for the first hundred entries so unless a headstone has survived, the deceased's final resting place is usually unknown today.

Monuments in St John's cemetery represent most major styles over the last 127 years. Although style periods overlap, they fall into four main categories.

(i)   Upright slab headstones — with more intricate carving towards the end of the century — 1867–1890s. Footstones, at the foot of a grave and facing in the same direction as the headstone, usually bore the deceased's initials and year of death.

(ii)   Victorian-Edwardian free-standing headstones in imported marble (e.g. angels, shrouded urns on marble plinths, carved upright crosses) indicated the wealth and status of the deceased's family — c.1890–1910.

(iii)   Coloured and polished granite monuments — early 20th century.

(iv)   Smaller, plainer headstones — after World War I.

Examples of the above styles are:

(i) The earliest headstone erected at the time of burial is that of 11-month old **Frederick Presper Rose** [M-35], infant son of Thomas and Margaret Rose, early Wilberforce settlers. Frederick died on 3 December 1867. The grave is tucked away in the lower corner of the cemetery. On the small headstone are inscribed these verses, wherein the child comforts his bereaved family:

You cannot tell how soon 'twill come
There is an hour when you must die
A thousand children young as I
He called to death to bring them home.

Other early headstones are those of ex-convict, **Charles Buckingham** (d.1868) and his wife **Elizabeth** (d.1884), who were among the first orchardists in Pymble. **Charles** could write but **Elizabeth** could only sign her mark. A shrouded urn adorns **Charles'** memorial *(fig.8)* , erected by his twin brother. At the end of the grave is a footstone [A-7].

(ii) Examples of Victorian-Edwardian free-standing headstones are the two beautifully carved marble figures on the **Brown** family plot [E9-17] — a sorrowful figure clinging to a cross and an angel keeping watch. Draped urns on marble plinths (1903) adorn the graves *(fig.9)* [E1-2] of **John** and **Thomas Waterhouse,** early proprietors of the *Green Gate Inn,* and of **Reuben** and **Sarah Tawyer** [F21-22], settlers at Pearce's Corner.

(iii) Early 20th century memorials include the impressive grey/black granite monument [DD-21] to **Samuel Allen**, a prosperous retail merchant in Townsville, Qld (d.1908); the black granite column [BB-4] for **Thomas Dolan Bertinshaw** (d.1913) founder of Richard Hunt's clothing store; and the red granite obelisk [EE-31] commemorating **Joshua Percy Josephson** (d.1911) who was appointed Hon. Surveyor and Engineer for the building of St Martin's, Killara.

An unusual memorial *(fig.11)* [X-19], with a marble cross resting diagonally on plinths across the grave, is that to **Christopher Watkins King** (d.1924), great-grandson of Governor Phillip Gidley King, and his wife, **Violet King** (d.1938). Plaques commemorate other members of this branch of the family.

(iv) The simpler headstones which appeared after World War I often consisted of a plain marble tablet on a stone base, such as

[Fig.9] WATERHOUSE monument
(Stonemason: Ross & Bowman)

[Fig.10] S. ALLEN monument
(Stonemason: Ross & Bowman)

[Fig.11] KING family monument

the memorial to **Rev. Henry John Noble** (d.1940 aged 80), longtime rector of St Swithin's Pymble, and his wife **Ruth Eunice Noble** (d.1954 aged 88)[X-6]. Graves were sometimes faced with red terrazzo tiles or black and white squares. The **Bradfield** family grave is faced with polished grey granite and two granite plaques commemorate **Dr John Job Crew Bradfield** (d.1943), his wife **Edith Bradfield** (d.1954) and their daughter **Margaret Bradfield** (d.1984)[PP–1]. There are also several headstones with military insignia, such as those of **Patrick Simpson** (d.1950 aged 43) [K-30] and **John Nute** [d.1943 aged 41) [PP-10].

Today, grave memorials usually consist of small bronze or pewter plaques, attached to a concrete base. This is in keeping with the present lawn-type cemetery approach.

Headstones That Tell a Story

The oldest headstone in the cemetery [B-11] was moved here in 1901 and commemorates **Ellen McIntosh** (d.1826 aged 38) and her husband **Robert McIntosh** (d.1829 aged 48), bandmaster of H.M. 46th Regiment. They died *leaving 8 children to lament their loss.* Their graves were originally located in the old Sandhills (Devonshire Street) cemetery. When the land was resumed by the government for Central Railway Station, their monument and remains were transferred to the family plot in St John's at a total cost of £8.5s.0d.

The headstone [A-12] of **Mary Matilda Pymble**, daughter of **Robert Pymble II** (original church trustee) and his wife **Amelia**, shows the divine hand (*Dextera Dei* - right hand of God) holding a scroll which bears her epitaph. **Mary** died from scarlet fever at the age of eighteen in 1873. Her brother **Robert Pymble III** was the family poet and penned her dying thoughts in his poem *Departing:*

Dear brother, I am sinking fast,
I hear the angels whispering low —
Come, dear sister, we are waiting
To lead you now from pain and sorrow...

Before he died at the age of 79, **Robert** requested in one of his poems:

Bury me in the morning,
Let me have the light
Of one bright day on my grave
'Ere you leave me alone with night.

His wish was granted and his funeral took place at ten o'clock on Friday morning, 9 August 1935. A calvary cross marks his grave [GG-8].

[Fig.12] MARY M. PYMBLE
(courtesy Pam Ferguson)

[Fig.13] JANE SWARZAS' headstone
(photo: J. Hunter)

The headstone *(fig.13)* [A-11] of 20-year old **Jane Elizabeth Swarzas** depicts a sad scene: a lopped tree represents a life cut short and a dove with an olive branch (hope and peace) hovers above a kneeling figure gazing faithfully at the cross. The **Swarzas** family were early orchardists who lived beside the Lane Cove River. **Jane**, wife of **George Swarzas**, died in childbirth on 29 November 1875, followed by their baby's death two weeks later. Victorian resignation to divine will is epitomised in her inscription: ...*Then check the tear and bow beneath the rod, And meekly yield thy loved one up to God.*

On the memorial [B17-18] of **Bridget Bullock** and her husband **Daniel Bullock**, first licensee of the *New Inn,* the stem of the tiger-lily is broken near its end since **Bridget** died at 84 and **Daniel** three months later at 88. Also buried in the family plot are **Bridget's** daughter, **Charlotte Johnson** (née Oliver, d.1880 aged 63) and her husband **John Johnson** (d.1893 aged 86), licensee of the *Sawyer's Arms* and the *Green Gate Inn.* **Charlotte** was the local nurse and midwife who became a highly respected member of the community.

Particularly poignant are memorials to young children, often using themes of flowers and buds. The two little **Wood** girls, **Dorothy** (d.1901) and **Phyllis** (d.1903), died of diphtheria and are described on their headstone as *our little darlings...two little buds in heaven* [L-23]. On the headstone of 10-year-old **Violet Gregory** (d.1903)[F-3], a dove perches on a cross, below which is a scroll. This symbolises that her book of life has yet to be written, as opposed to an open book for an adult.

Another touching memorial [K-4] is a marble heart (love) draped with ivy (undying affection) on the grave of the four young daughters of Augustus & Helen de Berenger, **Ivy** (d.1887 aged 3 years), **Violet** (d.1890 aged 4 months) and

Dorothy (d.1896 aged seven months). Their longest-surviving daughter **Ruby de Berenger** died of meningitis in 1903 at the age of 15 years. The de Berenger history is interesting. The family lived in Italy in the 6th century and two members were kings of Lombardy. They later moved to France where they remained until the 18th century, fleeing during the Huguenot persecution. Augustus de Berenger and his wife Helen[2] eventually migrated to Australia and settled in Fox Valley.

The letters IHS, used in both Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches, were originally the first three letters of the Greek word for Jesus.[3] IHS appears on several headstones including that of **Margaret** and **William Bickell** [E3-4], a carpenter. It was carved by their neighbour Frank Ivey on stone from his Lindfield quarry.

As the original parish of Gordon and Hornsby extended to the Hawkesbury River, some early mariners found their final resting place at St John's. For example, **Joseph Byrnes** (d.1882 - plot unknown) was listed as *mariner - from Dangar Island, Hawkesbury* where the Byrnes were early settlers. The grave of **Captain William Champion** (d.1906 aged 71)[HH-10], a former sea captain at Barrenjoey, Broken Bay, carries a traditional sailor's epitaph, concluding:

> *...And tho' at anchor here I lie,*
> *With many of the fleet;*
> *Yet once again I must set sail,*
> *My Saviour Christ to meet.*

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[2] Her headstone inscription (1919) in Gore Hill Cemetery reads: *Gone to rest with her four angels* (daughters).

[3] Through error in translation, these letters are now used to mean *Jesus Hominum Salvator:* Jesus, Saviour of Man.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN

————— ✦❦✦ —————

The saddest of all ceremonies is that attendant upon the death of relatives and friends, and it becomes us to show, in every possible way, the utmost consideration for the feelings of the bereaved, and the deepest respect for the melancholy occasion. Of late, forms of ostentation at funerals are gradually diminishing, and by some people of intelligence even mourning habiliments are rejected in whole or in part.

> *- Australian Etiquette: Rules and Usage of the Best Society in the Australasian Colonies.* 1885.

ourning and burial customs have altered over time and reflect the changes in the society that created them. The customs we look at in this chapter originated in Britain when Australia was still a colony. Though convict transportation had ceased by the mid-19th century, it was really not until federation in 1901 that Australians began reaching for their own identity.

Victorian Mourning Customs

The Victorians came to terms with their grief through rigid mourning procedures. Romantics they were, but sentimentality helped ease their sense of loss in an age when many died young. Cemeteries were considered peaceful places where family members could rest together after death, visited by relatives and friends.

Mourning customs were never as elaborate in Australia as they were back in Britain. In the 1890s The Funeral Reform Movement in Sydney tried to discourage people from *the unnecessary expense and display which have gradually become a part of our Funeral and Mourning customs.*[1] Yet it was mainly the poor who followed these reforms, as observance of elaborate rituals mirrored one's place in society.

The **length of mourning** depended on one's relationship to the deceased. In the late 19th century, widows remained in **full mourning** for at least one year, wearing dull black dresses (nothing was allowed to shine) with black shawls, bonnets, veils and gloves. Then they ventured into the **half mourning** colours of white, violet, mauve and grey for a further year. Some, like Queen Victoria, wore black for the rest of their lives. Men also dressed soberly in black during mourning periods, wearing black alberts on their fob-watches and black crepe bands on their left arms. When someone in a poor family died, often the family's entire wardrobe was thrown into a pot and dyed black.

Victorian **mourning jewellery** was usually made of dull black jet (mined from Whitby in northern England) or black enamel. After the death of her husband, **Constance Remington** wore on her collar a pair of 'widow's bones', each consisting of a 3-cm. length of jet formed into a brooch.

[Fig.14] 'Widow's Bones' (courtesy June Lamb)

Lockets were worn, sometimes with seed pearls (tears) and carrying a lock of hair or portrait of the deceased. By 1900 gold and silver jewellery was allowed during half-mourning.

[1] *In the Midst of Life* by G.M. Griffin & D. Tobin, p.100.

[Fig.15] Small In Memoriam cards – late 19th c. On FRANK COPPIN's card, ivy symbolises undying affection.   (courtesy Edith Chase/Joy Wall)

In Memoriam cards in the mid-19th century were often large and impressive, designed for framing. They bore the deceased's name, perhaps a photograph, along with their age, date of death and an appropriate verse *(see fig.28)*. However, by 1900 they were usually small and plain, such as those of **Mary Jane Britton** (1891) and **Frank Coppin** (1899) *(fig.15)*. Condolences were sent on black-edged notepaper in black-trimmed envelopes. The custom of sending In Memoriam cards died out early this century.

Victorian Funeral Rituals

In the late 19th century, the mourning and funeral customs practised on the upper north shore would have been fairly simple since most early burials at St John's were those of the families of sawyers and orchardists.

People usually died at home. The bell-knob was draped in black crepe and tied with a black ribbon if the deceased were old or married, or with a white one if young or unmarried.The body was respectfully laid out in the drawing-room where blinds and shutters were drawn. The room was kept as dark and cool as possible while posies of fragrant flowers and other deodorants were strategically placed. Family and close friends would file by, paying their last respects. A family member would make the funeral arrangements and the local handyman the coffin.

In the 1880s–90s, professional undertakers emerged and began visiting the family home to organise funeral and burial details, including newspaper notices, In Memoriam cards and monumental masonry. The undertakers, Wood and Company, conducted many of the early burials at St John's.

The **funeral service** was normally held at the deceased's home a day or two after death (no refrigeration then).

After the service, the coffin was carried to the hearse (or cart) to proceed to the cemetery. For the wealthy, a horse-drawn hearse was used but for the poor it was often a cart drawn by bullocks (see *fig.1, A Bush Funeral)*. With the coming of motor cars, the term *motor funeral* in a newspaper notice hinted at family affluence.

Usually only men took part in the procession and graveside rituals.[2] The bell-ringer would toll the church bell. If the deceased had rank or affiliations such as Freemasonry, relevant insignia were placed on the coffin. Flowers were traditionally white; a wreath for a child, a cross for a married person. After the funeral, in polite circles callers dressed in black visited the bereaved family, leaving their calling cards.

Early Burial Regulations at St John's

St John's earliest funerals were conducted by clergy from neighbouring churches — Rev. William Wood, Rev. Edward Way, Rev. William C. Cave-Brown-Cave and from 1880–85 the **Rev. George McIntosh.** An extract from an 1878 list of burial charges during Rev. George Bode's time is shown below:

ST JOHN'S CEMETERY, LANE COVE
SCALE OF FEES

Child's burial, four feet deep	10s. 0d.
Burial in a Common Grave, 6 ft. deep	12s. 6d.
(clergyman 5s.- gravedigger 7d. 6d.)	
Fence around any grave	10s. 0d.
Headstone 5s.; Footstone 5s.	10s. 0d.
Permission to make Brick Grave	10s. 0d.

[2] In complete contrast, today's *White Ladies Funerals* are run by women wearing white instead of the traditional black.

For extra-parochial interments - that is, burial of people belonging to other parishes - the trustees could charge double.

20th Century Burial Customs

After World War I a new era dawned; elaborate funeral rituals and grand memorials all but vanished. Soldiers and civilians often died in hospital instead of at home and their bodies were laid out by a nurse or undertaker. From that time on, funeral services were usually conducted at a church or undertaker's chapel and expressions of grief were restrained.

Funeral of Sergeant Edwin Hickey

An example of an early 20th century funeral of which we have records is that of Police Sergeant **Edwin Stuart Hickey** (d.1913 aged 52), a well-liked and respected local figure. **Hickey** was transferred to the north shore from Darlinghurst where he had earned the respect of the larrikin gangs. By 1902 he had achieved the rank of Sergeant in the Pymble police district.

On 1 May 1913 **Sergeant Hickey** and Constable Barclay from Pymble Police Station visited the farm in Pittwater (Mona Vale) Road, Pymble of orchardist Tom Brown. The officers were serving two commitment warrants on him when trouble started between Brown, his son and Constable Barclay. **Hickey** moved forward to protect Barclay and was shot by Tom Brown. He died on the way to the Royal North Shore Hospital and was buried in St John's cemetery the following day. There was a huge public outcry.

Sergeant Hickey was accorded a full police funeral *(fig.16)*, recorded in detail in the *Daily Telegraph* of 3.5.1913:

The funeral of the late Sergeant Hickey, the victim of the St Ives tragedy, took place at Gordon cemetery yesterday afternoon and was attended by the largest concourse of people that has ever gathered together in the district....

From the church the funeral cortège made its way to the cemetery at the back, where the interment took place, the mourners and public standing round in a great mass...After the concluding...of the general service, the Oddfellows' ritual for the burial of the dead was read..., the members throwing a sprig of evergreen into the grave as they walked round it. The last rites of the Masonic Order concluded the proceedings.

A red granite obelisk was subsequently erected on his grave [CC-17] as a token of respect by the government of NSW with a memorial plaque attached by the Pymble Masonic Lodge.

[Fig.16] Funeral cortège (1913) of SERGEANT EDWIN HICKEY
(courtesy Ku-ring-gai Local History Centre)

CHAPTER 4

PIONEERS AT PEACE

———— ✦❀❖❀✦ ————

lthough St John's cemetery allows some interesting insights into the changing way of death on the upper north shore, it is perhaps the lives and achievements of the people resting there that provide the most interesting study. Many descendants have contributed information and it is unfortunate that space does not permit all their stories to be told.

Local Pioneers and their Families

Much has been written elsewhere on the well known local families of **Pymble**, **Brown** and **McIntosh**, who were instrumental in the development of the district and establishment of St John's Church.

The **Pymble** family has given its name to the suburb of Pymble. Among the many family members buried at St John's is **Robert Pymble II** (d.1910 aged 88)[BB-17] a successful businessman who was a churchwarden and an original trustee of St John's church/cemetery. The lovely window in the wall of the south nave is dedicated to **Robert** and his first wife **Amelia** (née Bartho, d.1880 aged 62) by whom he had four children. When he was 79 years old, the widowed **Robert Pymble II** married 20-year-old **Jessie** (née Loveday, d. 1936 aged 59) by whom he fathered another two children.

Before St John's church was built, services were often held at the home of his brother, **James Pymble** (d.1886 aged

71), also a churchwarden. **William Henry Pymble** (d.1950 aged 89)[A-13], a son of **Robert Pymble II**, worked ardently for the church as collector, organist and churchwarden. His cousin, **William Pymble** (d.1948 aged 78:)[DD-18] was also a churchwarden. The artistically-gifted **Pymble** family provided music for the church and district. **Ruby Bromley** (née Pymble d.1988)[Col. M-33] was a talented artist.

More **McIntosh** family members are commemorated in the cemetery than those of any other family. All are descended from **Robert McIntosh**, bandmaster of H.M. 46th Regiment, and his wife **Ellen**. Their son **Robert McIntosh II** (d.1889 aged 80)[C-22] and his wife **Jane** (née Pymble, d.1882 aged 71) had ten children and owned much property including an orchard on Lane Cove Road, opposite St. John's church. Their eldest son **Robert McIntosh III** married **Elizabeth** (née Archbold). On 9 June 1902, when in their seventies, the couple died suddenly from natural causes within minutes of each other at their Gordon home. The church pulpit stands in their memory and their headstone [B-23] simply reads: *God's finger touched them and they slept.* Other sons of **Robert** and **Jane** include **William Henry McIntosh** (d.1913 aged 78)[BB-10], an original church trustee who lived at *Gordondale,* the property on which Gordon Railway Station now stands, and the **Rev. George McIntosh**. Another son, **Edwin Archbold McIntosh** (d.1909 aged 66)[AA-11] owned a large orchard east of the present Pymble Station, on which he built his home, *Dalcross.* Though he and his wife **Susan** (d.1926 aged 69)[AA–12] had eleven children, they found time to be active in community and church life. **Edwin** was a churchwarden and for nearly 40 years superintendent of St John's sunday school. Daughter **Olive** was Matron of *Dalcross Hospital* and **Linda** an educational pioneer. McIntosh Street in Gordon is named after the family.

The **Brown** family's patriarch was **John Brown** (d. 1884 aged 58)[E-9] a self-made man of enormous energy and ambition, who rose from uneducated timber-getter to eminent landowner. He married **Mary Ann**, daughter of **Thomas Waterhouse**, and built their home in Gordon on the site of today's Ravenswood School. Affectionately known as 'the Squire', he developed a thriving orange orchard in Wahroonga. There he achieved his ambition to own a square mile of land.**John** and **Mary Ann Brown** are commemorated in the beautiful stained-glass windows above St John's high altar. The Brown men were renowned for their athletic prowess and bare-knuckle boxing. Despite a superior education, none of **John Brown**'s sons matched their father's achievements. One son, **Ernest Brown** (d.1921 aged 54)[E-13] a councillor on Ku-ring-gai Council, is buried with his wife **Georgina** (d.1940 aged 69). A number of streets in Wahroonga are named after **John** and **Mary's** children.

Among the many early pioneering families represented in the cemetery are members of the **Bartho**, **Bromley**, **Leal**, **Linigen**, **List** and **Reely** families. Others include:

John Britton *(Fig.17)* (d.1911 aged 92) an enterprising and hard-working sawyer and orchardist, owned 50 acres between Cowan Creek Road and Cowan Creek. Involved in community and church affairs, he provided the timber rafters for St John's original church, where he was a churchwarden and collector of stipend. The burial of his first wife **Mary Ann** is the first entry in the Burial Register. His second wife **Mary Jane** (Baxter, d.1891) also rests in the cemetery *(fig. 15)* [A-36].

Walter Cates (d.1901 aged 77)was brought out from England with his wife **Alice** (d.1898 aged 63), to work as a gardener on the Anthony Hordern property at Darling Point. The **Cates** family [M16-17] later owned a 16-acre orchard at St Ives.

James Gaukrodger (d.1913 aged 42)[HH-33] had an orchard in St Ives, with an abattoir in Woodbury Road. His aunt married the bushranger, Captain Moonlight .

Henry Loveday (d.1893 aged 62) and his wife **Isabella** (d.1898 aged 50) owned a 7-acre orchard in Merrivale Road, Pymble. St Swithun's Rectory occupies their former homesite [D-28].

Thomas Mazlin (d.1894 aged 76), was an early orchardist who helped establish the Methodist church in Stoney Creek (Mona Vale) Road. His son **David Mazlin** (d.1942 aged 78) a sawyer and bricklayer, ran a store on Gordon Road and an open air picture show in the vicinity of St John's Avenue [G32-33].

John Pearce (d.1886 aged 67), son of Aaron Pearce, ran a sawpit and orchard near Pearce's Corner.He married **Elizabeth** (d.1879 aged 65). Their son **Edward Pearce** (d.1925 aged

76) and his wife **Kate** (d.1926 aged 73) had an orchard in Stoney Creek Road, Gordon and were also prominent in the Hornsby (Pearce's Corner) community [B34-35].

Philip Fletcher Richardson *(fig.18)* (d.1901 aged 64), a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, settled in St Ives and married **Julia** (née Vernon, d.1924 aged 71). Unlike many orchardists, he was polished and educated although his wife was rough and hard-working. He died after falling from a horse-driven cart outside St John's. An active parishioner, he is commemorated in a window above the chapel altar [M9-10].

John Sainty (d.1882 aged 64) was an early settler. He had an orchard in Merrivale Rd, Pymble and later built *Downham* in Eastern Road, Turramurra for his second wife, **Amelia** (formerly Amelia Bryant d.1908 aged 75), who was a widowed glover. After **John's** death, **Amelia** cared for *Downham Farm*. Their grave has no headstone [II-10].

William Vernon (d.1890 aged 79) an English horticulturalist emigrated to work at Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens. He was gardener to T.S. Mort at *Greenoaks,* Darling Point (now *Bishopscourt,* residence of the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney) and at *Cranbrook*. **William** and his wife **Emma** (d.1892 aged 82) became orchardists at St Ives and were renowned for their lovely garden. Two windows in St John's chapel commemorate them [M19-20].

Thomas Waterhouse (d.1884 aged 74) became a north shore resident in 1835, prospering as a timber dealer, river boatman and carpenter at Lane Cove. He bought the *Green Gate Inn* from the Johnson family in 1853 and with his wife Lucy had thirteen children. The family was known for its sporting activities. Son **John Waterhouse** (d.1903 aged 67) was a celebrated bare-knuckle fighter, succeeding his father as

proprietor of the *Green Gate Inn.* John became a large land owner and orchardist. In 1875 he helped form the first committee to plan a north shore railway [E1-2].

Hornsby Pioneers

A number of early Hornsby pioneering families, such as members of the **Dawson**, **Dennis**, **Jordan**, **Knox**, **Semon** and **Yeoman** families, are buried at St John's where many were early parishioners. Some other Hornsby pioneers are listed below:

Andrew Beattie (d.1895 aged 56) and his wife **Elizabeth** (d.1933 aged 86) were Scottish emigrants. **Andrew** and his sons worked on the Woy Woy Tunnel and Hawkesbury River Bridge [M-11]. **Annie Harriett Beattie** [M-2], wife of their son Andrew, was the eldest daughter of **Jeremiah Fear**.

Burton Crossland (d.1920 aged 78) and his wife **Mary Ann** (d.1907 aged 69) were early settlers in the upper reaches of Berowra Creek. **Burton**, an orchardist and boat-builder, constructed the first bush tracks between Hornsby and Galston. **Mary Ann** lived a lonely life and was once visited by a bushranger [FF6-7]. Their daughter, also named **Mary Ann** (d.1897 aged 25), rests in the cemetery [E-5].

Jeremiah Fear (d.1899 aged 68) had been a sea captain who sailed a clipper to China. He and his brother **Jonas Fear** (d.1907 aged 81)[MM-2] owned adjacent orchards at Hookham's Corner, Hornsby. Two of **Jeremiah Fear's** daughters **Nellie** and **Annie (Beattie)** rest with him [M1–2].

Charles Leek senior (d.1907 aged 87) and his wife **Elizabeth** (d.1908 aged 77) were orchardists. **Charles** played an important part in the development of Normanhurst and helped

build St Paul's Anglican Church, Wahroonga [DD12–13]. Three **Leek** infants rest in the cemetery [A22–23].

John Tibbet (d.1922 aged 72) was the first proprietor of the *Hornsby Hotel* at Waitara (now the *Blue Gum Hotel)*. His wife **Caroline** died in 1903 after childbirth. Baby daughter **Ellen** died 10 days later. [D26–27].

Shepherds Unto Their Flock

Clergymen and their families usually received free grave plots. The following are those who served at St John's and who rest in the cemetery or columbarium.

Rev. George McIntosh (d.1917 aged 83), grandson of **Robert McIntosh I**, was a farmer before entering the ministry. He and his wife **Ann Jane McIntosh** (d.1939 aged 94) had fifteen children. He served as a visiting priest at St John's from 1880–1885. As there was no rectory, he was accommodated on these visits at his parents' home opposite the church. He subsequently became rector of St Paul's, Pennant Hills (Carlingford). Travelling on horseback to preach at Bayview, he always carried a revolver in case of bushrangers. **Rev. George** was also an accomplished bare-knuckle boxer. The story is told how, on a visit to Kurri Kurri, he found the people hostile towards religious services. He offered to fight the best man in town *after* each service. He not only won the first fight but, as a result, their high esteem [B-21].

Rev. Edward Crisford (d.1893 aged 54) originally from Sussex, England, was raised in a Methodist family but entered the C.of E. ministry. His first appointment was as Deacon in Booligal, where he married **Alice** (née Humphreys - d.1936 aged 88). In 1890 he was appointed to St John's at Gordon, living with his young family in a cottage on Pymble hill. He

travelled widely on horseback ministering to his flock between Roseville and the Hawkesbury River. **Rev.Crisford** collapsed and died during a city visit only weeks before the completion of the new rectory. The high altar is dedicated to his memory. His name is the first on the board listing St John's rectors [AA2-3].

[Fig.19] REV. G. McINTOSH
(H. Selkirk)

[Fig.20] REV. E. CRISFORD
(H. Selkirk)

Rev. Arnold Conolly (d.1933 aged 58)[W-20], second Rector at St John's 1922–33, was a churchman of great vision. He was also an artist, writer and lover of church music. Ably assisted by his parish councillor **Dr J.J.C. Bradfield**, he planned an enlarged church for St John's, the cornerstone being set in 1924. **Rev. Conolly** and his wife **Agnes Conolly** (d.1956 aged 81) were of great assistance to the needy in the Great Depression. The original church organ was given in appreciation of his ministry by **Mrs Ruth Ruddock** (d.1935 aged 90)[B-8].

Rev. William F. Pyke, third rector at St John's 1933–50 (d.1952 aged 67), was an English scholar and great preacher, whose family life ended sadly. His brilliant 27-year-old son **Nigel Philip Pyke**, a lecturer at Sydney University and researcher for UNESCO, died in 1949 aged 27. The following year his wife **Ruth Pyke** also passed away. Heart-broken, Rev. Pyke died two years later. The family headstone is inscribed: *To be with Christ which is very far better* [W7-8].

Rev. Cecil Kelley (d.1991 aged 58) had been incumbent at St John's for only 27 days, from 10 July to 6 August 1991, when he died suddenly from a heart attack [Col. O-15].

Clergy who served in *other parishes* and rest at St John's are listed below:

Rev. Robert Livingston (d.1902 aged 36) was the first incumbent at St Paul's, Wahroonga and St Peter's, Hornsby His early death cut short a promising career. His wife **Laura** (d.1958 aged 91) survived him by 56 years [L-12].

Rev. George Sheppard (d.1907 aged 67) was chaplain at H.M. Prison, Berrima, Canon of St Andrew's Cathedral and St James, and later vice-principal of Moore Theological College 1877-79. His wife **Edith** (d.1914) is buried with him[G26-27].

Canon William Hey Sharp (d.1928 aged 82) an Oxford scholar, was chaplain and assistant master at the Collegiate School of St Peter, Adelaide, where he married **Mary Edith** (d.1948), the headmaster's daughter. He became warden of St Paul's College, Sydney University. There are memorials to him at St Paul's College and St Andrew's Cathedral. An annual prize is awarded in his name to the top theological student by the Australian College of Theology, of which he was registrar for thirty years [S19-20].

Rev. John Henry Noble (d. 1940 aged 80) was rector of St Swithin's, Pymble, 1919–36. Before entering the church, he had been Registrar-General of NSW, and was a brother of M.A. Noble, Australian cricket captain. His wife was **Ruth Eunice Noble** (d.1954 aged 88) [X-6].

Rev. Frederick William Reeve (d.1940 aged 78), son of the founder of the Sydney City Mission, was the first rector at St Aidan's Annandale and St Luke's Mosman. He was also a recognised photographer. His wife **Florence Augusta** (d.1945 aged 79) was a daughter of Robert Pockley [AA23-24].

Others include: **Rev. Herbert Vindin** (d.1919 aged 56)[AA-25]; **Rev. Edward Meeres** (d.1920 aged 72) curate at Christ Church St Ives 1913-14 [P-28]; **Rev. Reginald Pitt-Owen** (d.1947 aged 68) Rector of St David's Arncliffe [P-18]; **Rev. Alan Laing** (d.1976)[Col.I-20]; **Rev. G.E. Julien** (d.1983) priest and army chaplain [Col. C-7].

Heroines on the Hill

Although often unheralded, women have played a vital role in the history of the area. A few (mainly unmarried) achieved personal recognition but the traditional function of a woman in the past was one of caring for her husband and family. She was the mainstay of home life. Often with up to fifteen children to nurture as well as other domestic duties, she would have had time for little else! The role of widows in society is revealed by such references as *relict of...* on their headstones. Many women are buried in family plots at St John's and to these pioneers, whose praises have been largely unsung, this is a special tribute.

Below are some of the women interred in the cemetery and columbarium who did achieve personal recognition:

Jane Baker *(fig.21)* (née Wood) convicted of stealing, arrived in the colony in 1827 aged 15. At the Parramatta Female Factory, she was reputedly chosen as a wife from a line-up of female convicts by ex-convict William Baker. (Was he the same William Baker who had taught at the local schoolhouse?) She bore him eleven children. The **Bakers** lived in a hut west of the Lane Cove River and later 'bettered' themselves by moving across the river. They became one of the early orchardist families in West Lindfield, famous for their peaches. When **Jane** died of diabetes at seventy in 1882, her funeral notice justifiably stated that *her end was peace* [G-16].

Henrietta Deane *(fig.22)* (née Barney, d.1922 aged 86 years) was an artist who, with her better-known sister Maria Scott, took drawing lessons from Conrad Martens. Henrietta is buried with her beloved son **George Deane**, who died of pneumonic 'flu in 1908 aged 31 [HH23–24].

[Fig.21] JANE BAKER
(courtesy Mavis Hibble)

[Fig. 22] HENRIETTA DEANE
(courtesy Cecily Deane)

Eliza Edwards *(fig.30)* (d.1928 aged 81), sister of **J.G. Edwards**, at the age of sixteen became postmistress of the first Gordon post-office. It was located at the back of the cottage, still standing in the grounds of Ravenswood School, where she and her mother lived. In 1860 **Eliza** received an annual government stipend of £12 for this position which she held for 34 years [K-18].

Helen Gillham (*(fig.23)* (d.1974 aged 86) who trained at Sydney Hospital and nursed in England and at Gallipoli, received a service medal from the Australian Imperial Force. Returning home in 1920, she worked as night sister at the *Eversleigh Hospital (Home of Peace)* in Petersham for 26 years. She was an active member of the Church of England Historical Society [Col.M-20].

Winifred Lloyd Jones (d.1916 aged 40) granddaughter of well-known congregational preacher Dr. Barzillai Quaife, married Charles (later Sir Charles) Lloyd Jones at Trinity Congregational Church, Strathfield in 1900. She was the first of his three wives. The couple lived in Red East Cottage, Mosman [JJ-30].

Olive McIntosh *(fig.25)* (d.1977 aged 87 years) graduated in midwifery after World War I and began *Dalcross,* a maternity hospital in Grandview Street, Pymble. She subsequently moved to *Dalcross* in Killara where she was the much-loved matron for forty years. This hospital has played a significant role in community life. She did not marry but loved children. Her headstone reads: *She gave of herself* [BB-11].

Linda McIntosh *(fig.26)* (d.1982 aged 88), sister of **Olive McIntosh**, was an educational pioneer. After graduating from Sydney Kindergarten College, she began her own pre-school *Dalcross* in Grandview Street, Pymble after **Olive** moved to

[Fig.23]   Nurse HELEN GILLHAM
(courtesy Frances Gillham)

[Fig.24]   Artist OLIVE NOCK
(courtesy Caroline Nock)

[Fig.25]Matron OLIVE McINTOSH
(courtesy Gwen Sewell)

[Fig.26]Teacher LINDA McINTOSH
(courtesy Gwen Sewell)

Killara. She later taught at the Methodist Mission Kindergarten in Lautoka, Fiji and at the Mt Lavinia School for Deaf and Blind Children in Ceylon. Returning to Australia, Linda became principal of the C.of E. Girls' College at Orange and later established her own school *Loch Maree* at Vaucluse. Her headstone reads: *A friend to all* [AA-11].

Olive Nock *(fig.24)* (d.1977 aged 84 years) was a textile designer and painter, who grew up amid Lindfield bushland. At sixteen she entered her father's hardware business of *Nock & Kirby's* and at the same time took drawing lessons from local artist George Collingridge. **Olive** worked in a great variety of arts and crafts, including fabric printing and china painting. She adapted Aboriginal motifs as well as native flora and fauna designs to suit traditional crafts. **Olive Nock** is represented at the Powerhouse and Mint Museums in Sydney [B-27].

Mary Augusta, Lady Poynter, daughter of the U.S. Consul-General in Constantinople, was the wife of baronet, Sir Hugh Poynter, cousin of British P.M. Stanley Baldwin. She was an accomplished poet and writer. In 1927 Sir Hugh became the Sydney Chairman of Directors of Baldwin's steelworks. The couple lived at *Bromley Cottage* in Water Street, Wahroonga.

(Fig.27) Coat-of-Arms – LADY MARY POYNTER'S grave   (photo: J. Hunter)

Lady (Mary) died in 1930 aged 62 [D-6]. Three years later, Sir Hugh married widowed Mrs Alice King (née Taylor), who

became **Lady (Alice) Poynter**. They lived at *Tikinui* in Heydon St., Warrawee. **Lady (Alice)** died in 1939 aged 50 and rests in the Taylor family plot [AA-9].

Mary Wall *(fig.28)* (née Hear - d.1910 aged 78) was an Irish nursemaid in Henry Parkes' home. She married **Nathaniel Wall** (d.1911 aged 93) and they reared their seven children in a rented house in Sussex Street, Sydney. **Nathaniel** purchased land in Asquith in 1880 and established an orchard. **Mary** bought 60 acres of Berowra bushland, developed an orchard and built a house with 14 rooms, one of which was used as a part-time public school in the 1890s. Before the railway came, **Granny Wall** took her fruits to the Sydney markets by horse and dray. Wall Street in Asquith is named after them [EE25–26].
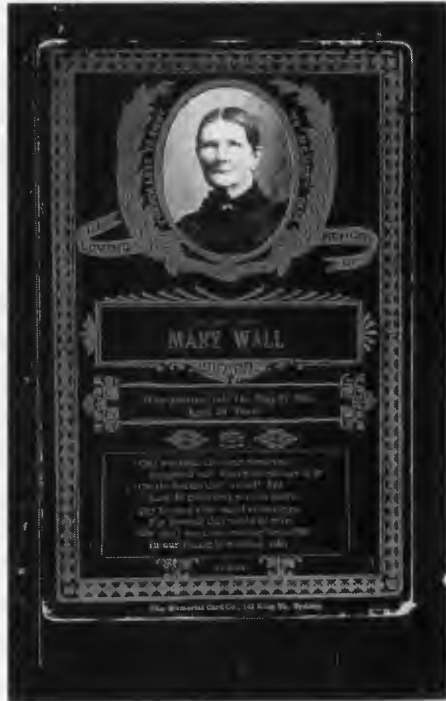
[Fig.28] MARY WALL"S In Memoriam card. (courtesy Hornsby Historical Society)

Suffer the Little Children

Babies' deaths were a frequent and inevitable part of 19th century family life. Measles, typhoid, diphtheria, whooping cough, gastro-enteritis and consumption (tuberculosis) all took

their toll. Until the advent of anaesthetics, surgery was limited. Many young mothers died in childbirth and some infants were buried with them. **Mary Gilles** survived only one hour and rests with her mother, 30-year-old **Millie Gilles**, who died the following day (1903). Their grave [C-29] is marked by a red granite cross. Ninety-one infants were buried in the cemetery before the turn of the century, with the Burial Register recording the father's name but seldom that of the mother. Infants were usually buried in unmarked graves, such as 2-year-old **Aspinall Harrison**, who died in 1888 while her father Rev. Thomas Harrison was serving at St John's.

A sad story lies beneath the headstones of the **Cook** family. **John Cook** (d.1931) and his wife **Maria** (d.1888 aged 43) were orchardists in Rosedale Road, Gordon. They lost four young children, **Louisa** 2 yrs, **Joseph** 6 yrs, **Emily** 9 months and **Lucy** 3 months, in a six-year period (1879–1885). Their mother **Maria Cook** died three years afterwards. Tragedy again struck five years later when 13-year-old daughter **Priscilla**, who no doubt helped run her father's household, also died. Yet **John Cook** survived these personal tragedies, becoming a churchwarden and cemetery trustee at St John's and living to a ripe 87 years. A son, **Mountford Cook** (d.1922 aged 43), lived alone in the bush behind the orchard and was found dead, reputedly murdered [C3–7].

A century ago many people could not swim and at least three burials resulted from drowning. The headstone [EE-11] of 12-year-old **George Penman** (d.1911) records that he was *accidentally drowned. The Pymble News* (21.2.1901) wrote:

> *A lad named **Arthur Dunningham** was drowned in a waterhole near Pymble on Monday. He went in for a swim and got beyond his depth. A finding of accidental death was recorded.* [L-13]

Civic Service

The following are some of the people interred in the cemetery and columbarium who made significant contributions to the local and wider communities:

Sir Kenneth McColl Anderson (d.1985), former Minister for Customs, Minister for Supply and Minister for Health and a senator for NSW 1953–75, was given a state funeral on 3 April 1985 [Col. C-12].

Dr John Job Crew Bradfield *(fig.29)* (d.1943 aged 76) is remembered chiefly for initiating the design of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Bradfield Highway is named after him. A brilliant engineer and planner, he worked for many years with the NSW Public Works Department and even planned to irrigate central Australia. **Dr Bradfield** was very influential in Ku-ring-gai Council planning. The model village of Bradfield was named after him.

[Fig.29] DR J.J.C. BRADFIELD (courtesy Dr K. Bradfield)

He, his wife **Edith Bradfield** (d. 1954 aged 83) and their family lived in Park Avenue, Gordon. Daughter **Mary Margaret Bradfield** is buried in the family plot [PP1–2].

John Heydon Cardew (d.1941 aged 90), son of an English clergyman, was a civil engineer and surveyor who became

assistant chief mechanical engineer of NSW Railways. He lived at *St Erme,* Ingram Avenue, Wahroonga, with his second wife **Gertrude** (née Steel, d.1942 aged 80) and children. A controversial figure, he was elected a churchwarden at St Paul's, Wahroonga in 1914. Many family members are buried in the plots beneath the five white marble crosses [W24–28].

David Clifford (d.1923 aged 65), son of the Mayor of Goulburn, moved to Sydney in 1900 to become Town Clerk at Petersham, a position he held for the next 23 years. He and his wife **Louisa Jane Clifford** rest in plot A-30.

James Conway (d.1926 aged 78) was training master at Fort Street Teachers' Training School and headmaster at Cleveland St. School before retiring in 1913. His SMH obituary states that *Mr Conway was one of the most eminent of the public school teachers of his generation.* His headstone records that he was devoted to public service as a teacher and mentor. Buried with him are his wife **Charlotte** (d.1918 aged 55) who taught music and daughter **Ruth** (d.1933 aged 48) also a music teacher and organist at St John's in 1903 [I13–15].

[Fig.30] ELIZA EDWARDS   *[Fig.31] J.G.EDWARDS*
(courtesy Ku-ring-gai Local History Centre - Thorne collection)

Eccleston du Faur *(fig.32)* (d.1915 aged 82), of French aristocratic descent, is known as *the father of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.* He and his second wife **Blanche du Faur** (née Woolley, d. 1906 aged 62) had two sons and a daughter. A quiet and cultured man, **Eccleston du Faur** helped found the Geographical Society of Australia and was an early trustee of the National Art Gallery.In 1899

[Fig.32] ECCLESTON DU FAUR (loan copy in Mitchell Library)

he moved to Turramurra, building his home *Pibrac* in Hastings Road. In 1894 he persuaded the government to dedicate 35,800 acres as *Ku-ring-gai Chase* and became its managing trustee/president. The Du Faur Rocks at Mt Wilson are named after him [FF16–17].

James George Edwards*(fig.31)* (d.1927 aged 83), grandson of Robert Pymble I, was known as *the father of Killara.* **'J.G.'** successfully petitioned for a post office at Gordon (which his sister **Eliza Edwards** ran) and was among the first to petition for a north shore railway line. He was the first headmaster of Gordon Public School, providing education for the children of timber-getters and orchardists. His pupils delivered local letters which were handed out at school. Involved in real estate, he subdivided and sold much land in Killara and was prominent in local developments such as Killara golf links and Killara railway station. He was also a journalist and much of our knowledge of early Ku-ring-gai has come through his writings [S-3].

The **Hon. George Bertrand Edwards** (d.1911 aged 56) was a gentleman farmer in North Turramurra, where he and his wife **Mary Ann Edwards** (d.1928 aged 71) were among the first settlers. They had six children. In 1895 he bought 50 acres of land there (incorporating the present golf course) and built his home, *Huon Park*. In 1901, he was elected member for South Sydney in the first Federal Parliament [EE-28].

John Fitzmaurice (d.1924 aged 41), an Englishman with a military background, was described as *big, vigorous and dominating*. He was the founding principal of the *Abbotsholme College* Killara from where the boys were marched to St John's for Sunday morning services. Former Prime Ministers, Harold Holt and William McMahon, attended his school. The sudden death from heart failure of **Fitzmaurice**, a single man, on 28 July, 1924, received a

[Fig.33] JOHN FITZMAURICE
(courtesy Mitchell Library)

wide press coverage. His burial service was conducted according to Masonic rites and the cortège from church to cemetery was headed by over a hundred Freemasons in regalia. Despite **Rev. Conolly's** efforts, no headstone was ever erected on **Fitzmaurice's** grave. The school ceased to exist only months after his death. *Abbotsholme College* Roll of Honour hangs in St John's Church [A-24].

Bartin Haigh (d.1928 aged 73) and his wife **Elizabeth** (d.1930 aged 76) lived in McIntosh St, Gordon. They were

early parishioners of St John's during Rev. King's time and **Bartin** was reputed to be one *who carried the parish through difficult periods of financial stress.* [1] He was a treasurer of the Wahroonga Progress Association and an original member of the Warrawee Bowling Club [A4-5].

Christopher Watkins King (d.1924 aged 54), great-grandson of Governor Philip Gidley King and brother of Rev. R. R. King, rests in the cemetery. He was a civil engineer and president of the Hunter District Water, Sewerage & Drainage Board and supervised the building of the Chichester Dam in the Hunter Valley. His wife **Violet King** (d.1935 aged 55) is buried with him. The Book Rest in the church is in his memory. Commemorated on the vault are other family members including his son **Copland Gidley King** (d.1968 aged 52) [X-19].

Joseph Henry Maiden (d.1925 aged 66), an Englishman, wrote a large number of botanical books and was an esteemed member of many learned societies. From 1896–1924 he was government botanist and director of Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens. He was also officer-in-charge of Centennial Park and sought to protect native forests. In 1924 he retired to *Levenshulme* in Turramurra Ave, Turramurra where he died of heart disease

[Fig.34] JOSEPH H. MAIDEN (painting by Norman Carter — courtesy Royal Bot.Gdns, Sydney)

[1] *History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist 1829-1923* by H. Selkirk, p.28.

He was survived by his wife **Jeannie** (d.1941) and four daughters. A devout Anglican, **Joseph** was a warden of St Andrew's Cathedral [S-18].

Sir Alfred Livingstone Parker *(fig.35)* (d.1935 aged 60] Lord Mayor of Sydney 1934–35, was knighted in 1935 for municipal services. A solicitor and councillor on the Hornsby Shire Council 1923–30, he was elected a city alderman in 1930 and represented the City Council on the Water Board. He sought to beautify the city and provide playgrounds for children. He lived with his wife **Annie Ethel** (d.1965)[Col. Q-12] and five children at *Willow Park,* Waitara. Dying in office, Sir Alfred was accorded a State funeral *(fig.41)*. After the service in St Andrew's Cathedral Sydney, the motorised cortège left for St John's cemetery [PP-8]. His parents, **William Parker**[CC-12] a chemist and **Lucy Parker** [BB-8], also rest in the cemetery.

John Cochrane Remington *(fig.36)* (d.1908 aged 58) was general manager of the Mutual Life Association of Australasia and travelled widely overseas. He bought *Pibrac* from E. du Faur and was largely responsible for the building of Warrawee railway station and the establishment of Warrawee Bowling Club. A Freemason, **Remington** was NSW Grand Master 1899–1905. His wife **Constance Remington** (née Dickinson d.1925 aged 57)) was a great-granddaughter of Colonel George Johnson of Rum Rebellion fame [FF21-22].

Henry Selkirk (d.1930 aged 74) served with the Department of Lands for nearly 50 years. He became research officer with the Royal Australian Historical Society, writing many learned historical papers. **Henry Selkirk** was a churchwarden at St John's for 15 years. He assisted with the choir and wrote the *History of the Parish of St. John the Evangelist, Gordon 1829–1923.* A keen naturalist, he lived at *Geraldine,* Culworth Avenue, Killara. Selkirk Park is named after him [BB-18].

Edward Johnstone Sievers (d.1932) was appointed first Valuer-General of NSW in 1916. He lived in Burns Road, Wahroonga. An active churchman, he represented St John's at the 10th synod of the Diocese of Sydney in 1895. Buried with him is his wife **Lucie Vernon Sievers** (d.1932) [X-23].

Walter Mullins Vindin (d.1928 aged 63), a solicitor, lived at *Kaludabah* on Pacific Highway, Turramurra. Active in local community affairs, he was president of the North Shore Hospital, a warden at St James, Turramurra and chairman of the Red Cross Homes and Hospitals Commission. He was also a member of Barker and Abbotsleigh school councils[2] [A-2].

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[2]*Blytheswood: history of Warrawee Public School* by R. Pye, p.47.

Greater Love Hath No Man

Many of those eventually buried at St John's defended Australia in wartime, especially during World War I, and lived to tell their tales. The following is a list of those, commemorated in the cemetery, who did not.

George Concanon, Anzac, KIA Gallipoli, 1915 (35 years)
Leonard Taylor, died of wounds, Malta, 1915 (23 years)
Stanley Bickell, KIA France, 1916 (20 years)
George Peacock Edwards, KIA Egypt, 1916 (28 years)
Harold Olver, KIA Egypt, 1916 (26 years)
Roy Robertson, KIA France, 1916 (16 years)
Harold Baker, KIA France, 1917
Wilfred Crisford, KIA France, 1917 (24 years)
Charles Golding-Howard, KIA France, 1917
Nowell Sievers, KIA France, 1917
Dudley Adams, KIA, France, 1918 (27 years)
Raynes Lord Royle, KIA Belgium, 1918 (28 years)

Other Interesting Identities

John Alt (d.1935 aged 68) and his family were early parishioners at St John's church. **John Alt** was the first stationmaster at Gordon Railway Station, a position he held for 9 years. He rests with his wife **Mary** (d.1929 aged 67), and 3-year-old son **Colin** who died of diphtheria in 1904 [CC3–4].

In 1890, fifty-year-old **Alfred Baker**, son of William and **Jane Baker**, was drowned in the Lane Cove River, *slightly under the influence of drink,* as reported by the SMH (20.5.1890). One night while being rowed home up the river he stood up at the nose of the boat, capsizing it. His lady friend was saved by the boatman, but he was not . [No grave location]

George Bjelke-Petersen (d.1923 aged 78) was a farmer and land-developer in Copenhagen. He and his wife **Caroline** (d.1909), grandparents of former Queensland Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, migrated to Hobart in 1891 with their five children. Eldest son Carl became a pastor in New Zealand, where Sir Joh grew up before becoming a Queensland farmer and politician. In 1906, three of **George's** sons, Christian, **Harald** (d.1936) and **Johannes** (d.1910 aged 28) opened a medical gymnasium in Sydney with branches at Turramurra, Mosman and Killara. A devout family, they promoted mental health and physical fitness [KK30-31].

Eric John Blanchard (d.1926 aged 36) was killed accidentally by a train on the railway line at Gordon. Grandson of the first free Greek to arrive in Australia, Eric acquired some wealth as a stonemason. **Blanchard's** coffin, with its solid silver handles, cost £27. His widow **Florence Mary** (née Redden, d.1981 aged 89) is buried with him [G-35].

George Boyne (d.1928 aged 74) ran the first shop in Wahroonga near the railway station. His wife **Anne** (d.1898 aged 46) acted as railway gatekeeper/postmistress at a salary of £5 p.a. In 1896 the first telephone line in Wahroonga was erected from Hornsby Junction post-office to their store [J-10].

Alexander V. A. Bulteau (d.1911 aged 53) was a lecturer in French at Sydney University in the 1880s. He taught at various private schools and at the Sydney School of Arts. He and his wife **Mary** (née Sullivan, d.1937 aged 88), were early parishioners at St John's and

[Fig.37] A. BULTEAU medallion (courtesy Sydney University)

and lived in Edward Street, Gordon. One night, while returning home by harbour-ferry, some papers which he was correcting blew overboard. In trying to save them, he was drowned. **Bulteau** was vice-president of the French Benevolent Society of NSW, which paid £3.3.0 for a memorial tablet on his headstone [FF-29].

Isabel Commons is the second oldest woman buried in the cemetery (d.1966 aged 97)[3]. Her father had been secretary in England to art critic John Ruskin. In the 1890s **Isabel** and her husband, artist Donald Commons, built their home *Narelle* in Pymble bushland (now Narelle Avenue) where many leading artists of the day visited them. Buried with her is daughter **Helen Wiggan** (d.1986 aged 89) [P-7].

Henry Cornwell (d.1918 aged 69)[M-0], husband of **Eleanor Cornwell** (d.1917 aged 60)[L-13), was attorney for the British and Foreign Marine Insurance Company. He loved sailing and was Hon. Secretary (1870–98) of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron where his portrait still hangs. **Eleanor** taught needlework to many local girls. Both were actively involved in St John's church and community activities.

Many members of the **Hinder** family rest in the cemetery, including **Dr Henry Vincent Critchley Hinder** (d.1913 aged 48), well-known Sydney surgeon (in whose memory the church lectern stands) and **Dr David Hinder**, ophthalmic surgeon (d.1989 aged 79). Also interred here is artist **Frank Hinder** (d.1992 aged 86), pioneer of modernism and abstract art, who decorated the walls of the Sydney restaurant, *Prince's*. In 1979 he was awarded the Order of Australia for his contribution to art [BB-24].

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[3] The oldest person buried in St John's Cemetery is Anna Barton (d.1945 aged 98 years) [P-8].

William Johnson (d.1934 aged 92), *the original grave digger of St John's Cemetery,* [4] was a grandson of **Charlotte** and **John Johnson**. He could neither read nor write and signed his name with a cross [M-36].

Thomas Nock (d.1951) and his partner Herbert Kirby began the city department store, *Nock & Kirby's* in 1894. In the family plot rests his wife **Eliza Nock** (d.1934 aged 72) and their eldest son **Harold Nock** (d.1925 aged 41), who gave up a promising military career for the family business [B27–28].

A number of **Pockleys** are buried in the cemetery. They are members of the branch that lived at *Lorne*, Killara, built by Captain Robert Pockley. They include his brother **George Fulcher Knott Pockley** (d.1900 aged 62)[M-13] and his son **Harold Pockley** [d.1941)[M-13)] who played an important role at St John's in Rev. King's time. **Harold** married Ethel Turner's sister **Rosie** (née Turner, d.1950)[M-13]. A window in the church commemorates another son of Captain Pockley, **Dr Norman Vanderbyl Pockley** (d.1910 aged 40) and his wife **Florence May** (d.1935 aged 58)[GG-24].

Charles John Royle (d.1911 aged 66), a former Freeman of the City of London, was a successful Sydney merchant and insurance agent who lived in *Wahroonga House,* Burns Road, Wahroonga. He was Consul-General for Paraguay and an original administrator of Warrawee Bowling Club. Other members of the **Royle** family are buried with him in the family plot [BB31–CC31].

John Lionel Suckling (d.1909 aged 61) was descended from 16th c. English poet Sir John Suckling (alleged inventor of cribbage) and from Captain Maurice Suckling, an early patron of

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[4] As recorded in *St John's Burial Register* - entry no. 810.

Lord Nelson. **John Suckling** became a successful sheepbreeder and woolgrower on his property*Woodton* near Quirindi. He bought a half-share in a newly invented shearing machine, known as the Suckling Machine. He and his wife **Mary Maria** (d.1936 aged 94) later retired to *Barsham* in Turramurra with their library of books and memorabilia, including Nelson's dress-sword. The Gordon Parish Gazette (7.8.1909) records that *by his [Suckling's] death the Church on earth has lost a loyal , devoted and generous son* [JJ-20].

John Sulman (d.1903 aged 84) and his wife **Martha** (d. 1905 aged 87), parents of noted architect Sir John Sulman, emigrated from England and lived at *Blytheswood* (site of present Warrawee public school). They were parishioners at St John's [F6–7].

John Ure Smith (d.1919 aged 68), a Londoner, was the husband of **Kate** (née Ure, d.1931 aged 72) and father of the publisher and artist, Sydney Ure Smith. In 1899 he arrived in Melbourne and became a hotelier, managing the Menzies Hotel and subsequently the Hotel Australia in Sydney [JJ28–29].

William (Billie) Wilkes (d.1907 aged 57) ran the horse-drawn coach service from Pymble to Milson's Point before the north shore train service began in 1893. The return trip along the bush track (now Pacific Highway) took a whole day and on hilly stretches passengers often had to disembark and help push the coach [FF-13].

LESSONS FOR THE LIVING

An oft-quoted reason for studying history is that by looking at the past we can better plan for the future.

We may well ask, therefore, what lessons can be learnt from our study of St John's cemetery?

Lessons for Legislators

Having looked at the development of the church and cemetery, their roles in the life of the north shore, along with the achievements of those buried there, one cannot but be impressed by the cemetery's importance as a local heritage site. Indeed, it encapsulates the story of this area's development and that of the pioneers who made it possible. This secluded churchyard, tucked away on prime north shore land, is a *living* reminder of our heritage and those who formed it. It is important, therefore, that it be preserved as such and that future legislators both at state and local levels recognise this.

This is not to deny the fact that legislation governing the administration of cemeteries may well need revision. It is important to note that in St John's cemetery, and indeed in many others, the purchase of a plot does not carry with it *ownership* of that small parcel of land. Rather does this purchase allow for the *right of burial* in that particular plot. Up until now, this right has tended to be *in perpetuity* and some plots have been purchased by families, sometimes a century ago, but for various reasons have not been used. Thus,

although some burial sites are still available at St John's, if the *in perpetuity* continues to apply, remaining space in the cemetery is limited.

As graveyards throughout Australia fill or have been filled, legislators and cemetery administrators are starting to consider other options. The Department of Natural Resources has advised that a bi-partisan committee is being formed to look at the implementation of *renewable tenure*.[1] If approved, this would involve unused burial rights older than 50 years being cancelled and returned to the relevant cemetery authority subject to certain conditions. Burial rights might then be on a basis of a 40-year lease, at the end of which the grave would be available for re-use unless the original family chose to renew their rights for a further 20-year term. Re-use could well involve re-interment at a greater depth and removal of existing monuments. Although economically plausible, the subject is a touchy one which to date politicians and cemetery administrators in Australia have preferred to avoid.

The trend towards cremation in recent years has helped to take the pressure off dwindling burial sites and niches are still available in St John's columbarium wall. Although columbaria are easier to maintain, people have their own preferences regarding burial or cremation.

Lessons for the Church and Community

The maintenance of the cemetery has been an on-going concern. Weeds grow, branches break and headstones fall. As one rector commented on his former parishioners: 'They're more trouble dead than alive!'

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[1] *Australian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association, Melbourne Conference, 1993.* (Speakers' Notes)

Although the basic responsibility for grave maintenance rests with the family, two or three generations down the track relatives often don't know or don't care about family graves. Thus over the years the cemetery trustees, namely the rector and churchwardens, have come to realise that family members, many of whom have passed on or moved from the district, cannot be relied on for grave maintenance.

Back in 1951 St John's cemetery was over-run with blackberries, lantana and weeds, with the fence-rails between the cemetery and church falling down. Though accepting responsibility for pathways, the trustees considered graves the responsibility of owners or their descendants. One helpful parishioner offered her goat to keep down the weeds, but mindful of the damage a goat could cause, the trustees sprayed them instead.

In the late 1960s another cemetery clean-up was undertaken and in 1984 the parish council formed a heritage committee, launching an appeal known as the *Friends of St John's*. This committee tried to trace relatives for historical information and donations and sought National Trust advice on cemetery conservation.

The church community has recently undertaken *regular* cemetery maintenance. A group of parishioners has devoted the first Saturday morning of each month to tending the cemetery and columbarium gardens. This maintenance work by volunteers, coupled with the regular mowing of paths by

[Fig.38] An example of a recent lawn-style grave. [W- 10]

[Fig.39] A cemetery maintenance group (l. to r.) R. Ainge, J. Harvey, P. Winkworth, P. Lyons, S. Pash, J. Hudson. (photo: R. Norrington)

[Fig.40] 1st Gordon Venturers (1994) with St John's Rector, Rev. J. Pettigrew, at grave of Rev. E. Crisford. (photo: J. Ross-Edwards)

ground staff to encourage a lawn-cemetery effect, has greatly improved the cemetery's overall appearance.

It is also pleasing to note that this attention to maintenance has helped promote the cemetery's image as an important local heritage site. As a result students, community members and municipal council groups are visiting St John's cemetery as part of their heritage and conservation studies. In 1994 Venturers in the First Gordon Scout Unit, working towards their Queen's Scout Award, have helped undertake practical conservation work in conjunction with the cemetery maintenance group. Each Venturer has also been given the life of someone interred in the churchyard to research. It is tremendously pleasing to see today's youth, tomorrow's citizens, involved in such a community project.

Personal Lessons

Headstones in St John's cemetery provide valuable evidence of the changing attitudes to death over the last century and a quarter. Today its worth for the living has changed. In earlier times, families were likely to visit loved ones' graves fairly regularly. Sadly, in our present society this is more the exception than the rule. Yet for someone seeking a temporary retreat from the rush of modern life, the cemetery provides a peaceful haven. Here we can meditate on things temporal and eternal, on life's brevity and on our attitude to God and our fellow man.

As early as 1886, *The Book of Australian Etiquette* advised bereaved families that *in fulfilling our duties for the living, we best show the strength of our affection for the dead.* These sentiments are as valid today as ever. **NOW** is the time to show people that we love and care about them: a friendly word of encouragement, a task quietly done. In the words of my

schoolmistress: *Please put your flowers on my table   - not on my grave!*   So let us remember:

If with pleasure you are viewing
  Any work a man is doing,
And you like him, or you love him,
  Tell him now!

Don't withhold your approbation
  Till the parson makes oration,
And he lies with snowing lilies
  O'er his brow.

For no matter how you shout it
  He won't really care about it,
He won't know how many tear drops
  You have shed.

If you think some praise is due him,
  Now's the time to give it to him,
For he cannot read his tombstone
  When he's dead.

[Author unknown. Contributed by the late
Dr Don Dawkins]

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[Fig.41] State funeral cortège of **SIR ALFRED PARKER**, *Lord Mayor of Sydney 1934–35, passes Sydney Town Hall (S.M. Herald 22.10.1935) en route to St John's cemetery, Gordon. It is interesting to compare this event with early funerals at St John's in the 19th century (c.f. fig.1).*

Plan of St John's Church of England Cemetery

Gordon

ST JOHN'S AVENUE

CAR PARK

COLUMBARIUM WALL

CEMETERY GATE

Compass: N S E W

Row labels: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, W

Section labels: W, P, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, X, S, M, O, A, MM, OO

Lower section labels: WW, PP, AA, BB, CC, DD, EE, FF, GG, HH, II, JJ, KK, LL, XX