



THE NINNES LONELY GRAVE

also known as *The Pioneer Grave*
and the legacy of Thomas and Maria Ninnes

No 14, June 2009

VALE Edith Lunn

Edith Lunn died in Bendigo on 3 April 2009, just short of her 102nd birthday.

In the late 1950's, Edith, then Mrs J D Checcucci, lived with her husband and family on Robin Hill Farm, which then incorporated the area of the Grave. The house, which retains the name, still stands, in Burra Burra Drive. Edith was intrigued by the wording on the headstone and set about finding out more about those buried there.

Gradually she pieced the story together, first making contact the family of Mary P Roach and Martha M Chapman, the two surviving daughters mentioned on the headstone. Thomas Ninnes, with Mary and Martha, then aged 12 & 9, had returned to South Australia, remarried and become a successful farmer and community leader in the Clare area. Amongst other things, Edith obtained an early photograph of the grave, taken soon after the headstone was added.

Edith also sought information locally. Her first article on the story of the Grave and calling for information, appeared in the Bendigo Advertiser on 17 July 1959. Others were published in February and April 1968, July 1969, and more recently in July 1995.



For the diary:

Planting day

Sunday 14 June 2009

Details —>

She received many responses to the articles and her enquiries; some people remembered the grave from their childhood, some remembered stories regarding visitors to the grave and others were able to refer her to publications which mention the grave.

The wealth of material she collected is now in the hands of the Friends of the Ninnes Grave and will be deposited in the recently-opened Bendigo Regional Archive.

As a result of Edith's quest for information we have an active 'Friends of the Grave' group, and the extended family now spreads worldwide. Many of us have met family we did not previously even know of.

And we have been able to negotiate the retention of the grave within a reserve on the Robin Hill Estate, and ongoing maintenance by the City of Greater Bendigo. Quite a legacy!

She made strong friendships with family members and was proud of her status as 'honorary' family. We will be forever grateful to her. Rest in peace Edith.

Planting Day / Working Bee:

The next Working Bee at the Grave Reserve will be on Sunday 14 June 2009 at 10 am.

Bring your lunch for a picnic and, for those who are keen, there may be an opportunity to do some additional planting in a nearby reserve in the afternoon.

Jaim Luxford, who oversees the Reserve on behalf of the City of Greater Bendigo Department of Parks and Natural Environment, will again be there to direct and assist our efforts.

If you are able to help - please let me know as soon as possible so we can confirm the arrangements with Jaim. (With apologies for the short notice to those who only receive the printed newsletter).

The seedlings ready for planting have been grown by the Parks & Natural Environment Department from seeds collected from plants indigenous to the area. Although it has been dry, conditions should be right for planting.

We were unable to arrange a day for seed collecting earlier in the year, but hope to be able to assist with this activity in the next seed-collecting period.

Conservation Management Plan:

As part of their commitment to maintaining the Grave Reserve, the City of Greater Bendigo has commissioned a Conservation Management Plan.

To prepare the Plan, a Heritage Consultant has been conducting detailed research into all aspects of the Grave, the Reserve and associated Ninnes family history. It is likely to be completed in the next month and will provide a comprehensive overview with scheduled actions for each aspect. There is a very strong emphasis on conservation of the grave and reserve and its cultural significance.

One especially interesting development relates to the National Trust Heritage Listing of the Grave — classified in 1998 as of 'local' significance. As we now have details of the family story from the notebook of Thomas Ninnes, the relevance of the Grave to the wider social history can be demonstrated. Nomination of the Grave to the Victorian Heritage Register is being investigated, this will give an extra level of recognition and statutory protection.

The Conservation Management Plan will be used by the council to direct their maintenance activities and for future planning.

A date for the diary - Eaglehawk Dahlia & Arts Festival 18-21 March 2010

As well as the Cornish language classes, singing, church service, and Bardic ceremony, there will be heritage lectures, displays, a street procession and tours.

The Ninnes Grave will be included in the program of tours, and people will be needed to greet visitors and act as guides. **The more the merrier.**

Details of the Cornish program are available from Cornish Association of Victoria website - <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~caov> or for the Festival generally - www.dahlia.bendigo.net.au

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Available via internet courtesy of the Cornish Association of Victoria Inc

- <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~caov/ninnes/LGNews14.pdf>

or to receive it by post or email contact: moiradrew@connexus.net.au