

# MISSING



# MEMORIES

The Story of the Moorngag Cemetery, Unmarked Graves Project  
completed by the Tatong Heritage Group 2016/17



The Moorngag Cemetery reserve was created on 23rd April 1884. The first trustees were appointed and reported in the Government Gazette July 1884. The first trustees were Robert Wallace, George Dodd, George Exton, John Mc Donald and Thomas Powell. The cemetery is still operated by volunteer trustees to this day.

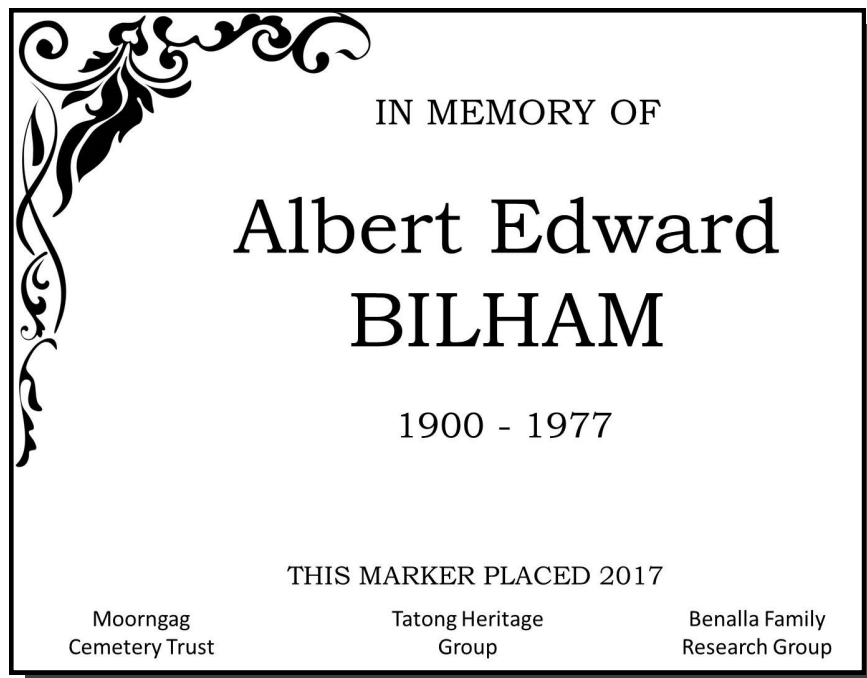
In 2016 the Tatong Heritage Group, as part of the ANZAC Centenary activities, embarked on a check of cemetery records to ensure that no returned servicemen, or women, had been interned and were in unmarked graves. The search commenced in conjunction with Beverley Walker and Wendy Maxwell from the Benalla Family Research Group, who were at the time digitising the cemetery records. The resources were combined and with the assistance of cemetery volunteer Ted Exton, a comprehensive list of unmarked graves was compiled. During the investigation three servicemen were located in unmarked graves, along with a number of other citizens, some of whom had made significant contributions to the local community. The following pages detail the unmarked graves and the research information that has been located for each.

The information contained in the following pages comes from a number of sources, including death certificates, family records, personal interviews and newspaper articles and notices.

The contribution of Wendy Maxwell and Beverley (Chick) Walker from the Benalla Family Research Group is gratefully acknowledged. Moorngag Cemetery Trust member Ted Exton also provided a considerable amount of information during this research. Also acknowledged is the contribution by Mrs. Edna Murray, who along with her husband Ted, formerly operated the Swanpool Post Office and Telephone Exchange. Edna is a daughter of William O'Connell, former transport operator from Tatong.

The project is planning to mark all of these graves with a concrete plinth and a marker plate similar to the one below. Estimated cost for material alone is \$100 for each grave. All installation work to be done by volunteers.

Abbreviations: B/D/M—Births, Deaths and Marriages.



**BILHAM Albert Edward:** Albert died in 1977 at the age of 77 and is buried in Church of England plot 144. He is believed to be the only surviving son of John and Annie Bilham. Albert was a member of the Samaria Bush Fire Brigade and later a foundation member of the Samaria Rural Fire Brigade. His service record is listed in the history book on the Samaria Rural Fire Brigade, '184 Samaritans'.

**BILHAM John and Annie:** Husband and wife. John died in 1953 at the age of 88 years and Annie in 1942 at the age of 77. They are buried alongside each other in Church of England plots 98 and 99.

From the Benalla Ensign 18th September 1942:

One of the district's oldest residents, Mrs Annie Bilham, passed away at her home at Swanpool on Monday last at the age of 77 years. The late Mrs Bilham was born at Birregurra, and was a daughter of John and Catherine Plummer. She was married at Benalla at the age of 35 years to Mr John Bilham, who now survives her as well as one, son, Albert Edward. She possessed a kind disposition, and made many friends who will regret to learn of her passing. The funeral was to the Moorngag cemetery on Wednesday. Rev. Canon R. C. H Crigan read the burial service. The coffin was carried by Messrs A. Bowdern, E. Dodd, R. Newman and D. Ginnivan. The pall was supported by Messrs, W Burns, J Duffy, G Ladson, P Burns and G Ginnivan. Mr. E A. Abbott had charge of the funeral arrangements.

From the Benalla Ensign 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1953:

One of the oldest and most highly respected residents of the district Mr. John Bilham, passed away at "Rosemore" Hospital this morning at the great age of 88 years. He was a native of Tasmania and lived in the Samaria district for well over 50 years. He was married to Miss Annie Plummer, of Thoona who predeceased him many years ago. He is survived by one son, Albert, for whom sincere sympathy is felt in his bereavement. The late Mr. Bilham possessed many good qualities which won him a host of friends who will regret to learn of his death. Burial will take place tomorrow (Friday), leaving Holy Trinity Church after a service at 2 o'clock.

**BILHAM Robert:** Son of John and Annie who was killed in 1898 at the age of 7 years. He is buried in Church of England plot 17.

Bairnsdale Advertiser 12 Feb 1898:

A most shocking incident occurred at Moorngag. A little boy, 7 years old, a son of Mr Bilham, a well-known settler of the locality, wandered thoughtlessly away about 3 chains from his parents' home into a paddock, wherein there was a young Jersey bull. Soon afterwards an elder brother, who was sent to look for the missing child, saw the animal named butting something on the ground. Later on it was found that the bull had killed the little fellow, whose clothes were all in rage, and whose body contained several fearful looking wounds. The father of the child was away from home at the time. So ferocious was the animal that he appears to have jumped out of one enclosure into another to attack his inoffensive victim, and considerable difficulty was experienced before he could be driven away from his brutal work. The bull was subsequently destroyed.

*Edna Murray believes that there are now no living relatives of the Bilham family.*

**BROWN Hanah:** Died in 1898 at the age of 85 years. She is allegedly buried in the Methodist section, plot 22. There were no records located to support the existence of this person. There are no official records or newspaper notices in relation to this burial.

*The site was surveyed and the evidence points to the fact that there is a person buried in this plot. From the recollections of long term Tatong locals it has been suggested that Hanah Brown was from a local family of aboriginal descent and therefore no written records would exist. It is assumed that this is the case, and the grave was duly marked from the burial register records in 2017.*

**BRYCE James:** Died in 1896 at the age of 8yrs. He is buried in Church of England plot 19. B/D/M reg. 8595. Father, James Bryce, mother Helen (Jones).

*Edna Murray believes that Bill Bryce, now living in Benalla may be a descendant of this family. This has not been confirmed.*

**BUCKLEY William John:** Died in 1941 at the age of 83. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 15.

Benalla Ensign 20th June 1941:

The death occurred at his home at Lima on Monday last, of Mr William John Buckley at the age of 83 years. The late Mr Buckley was born at Bendigo, and was married at Lima at 38 years of age to Miss Emily Burgess. He has resided in this district for many years, and made many friends who will regret to learn of his death. He is survived by his wife, and a family of one son and four daughters viz., Lillian, Emily (Mrs Dawsey), Amy (Mrs Munson), Harriet and Michael. One son (William) and one daughter, Mary (Mrs Riddock). pre-deceased their father. The funeral to the Moorngag cemetery on Wednesday afternoon, was attended by a large number of friends who paid their last respects. The coffin bearers were Messrs H. Thompson, C. Munson, R. Newman and I. Tolliday. The pall was supported; by Messrs W. Renkin, A. N. A. Jones, J. P. Gawley, P. Nelson, C. Essenhigh and G. Horsburgh. The flower bearers were Mrs Horsburgh, Miss Jean -Tolliday and Mrs Ethel. Father Shanahan read the burial service. The Funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. Clancy and Diggle.

*No living members of this family traced. The Riddock family currently living in the Baddaginnie area are not related to William Buckley.*

**BURGESS Henry Robert Roy:** Died in 1900 at the age of 10 months. The son of Robert. S. Burgess and Mary Ann Bilham. Henry is buried in the Church of England plot 21. No notices or newspaper articles can be found for this death. No record on B/D/M.

*Edna Murray believes that there are no living members of this family still in the region.*

**CADBY Thomas:** Died in 1975 at the age of 63. He is buried in the Roman Catholic section, plot 138.

From Benalla Ensign 26th March 1975 (courtesy of the Walker collection):

The death occurred at Wangaratta Base Hospital on March 12th of Mr. Thomas Cadby, late of Swanpool. He was the son of Thomas and Nellie Cadby of Birmingham, England, where he was born 63 years ago. He came to Australia 52 years ago and 35 years ago married Miss Mary Catherine Lynch who survives him, as do two daughters Lynne Mary (Swanpool) and Susan Thomasina (Mrs Van Der Korput). The late Mr. Cadby had only resided in Swanpool for the past few years, but during that time proved a wonderful neighbour and friend, and was well liked by a large circle of friends who will regret his passing. Burial took place at the Moorngag cemetery on March 14th, following requiem mass at St. Joseph's Church, Benalla by Rev. Dean O'Reilly, who also officiated at the graveside. The casket was borne by Messrs F. Van Der Korput, A. Harris, I. Lyons and G. Lyons. Supporting the pall were Messrs L. Biggs, C. Maxwell, N. Ackerly, N. Tranter, J. Molomby, F. Milne, W. Jones and W. Lyons. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr. E. A. Abbott.

*Edna Murray relayed a story surrounding the circumstances of this unmarked grave. The Cadby family was very 'well off', and it is believed that following the death of Thomas, it was revealed that he was having an affair with a woman in Melbourne. The grave was deliberately left unmarked by the family.*

**CLARKE George:** Died in 1893 at the age of 63. He is buried in the Church of England section, plot 15.

His grandson Lesley Lawther who died in 1917 and only lived for 2 hours is also buried in this plot. The only reference found for George Clarke was a listing of deaths in the North East Ensign 12th January 1894, which shows him dying of 'rupture' at the age of 63. No B/D/M records.

*Edna Murray believes that the grandson Lesley Lawther was buried with his grandfather due to family financial issues. She believes that there are no living relatives of either the Clarke or Lawther families.*

**DAVISON Arthur:** Died in 1904 at the age of 10 from tetanus. He is buried in the Methodist section, plot 73. From The Benalla Standard 1st March 1904:

A lad named Arthur Davison, aged 10 years met with a serious accident about a week ago at the residence of his father. Mr Robert. Davison, farmer, of Fern Hills. The boy was sitting on the top of a picket fence when his mother called him, and in jumping down he became impaled on a picket which inflicted a severe wound on his thigh. For some days after the accident he was treated at home, but on Saturday last his condition was such as to necessitate his being brought in to Dr. Nicholson for medical attention. Dr. Nicholson pronounced the case to be one of incipient tetanus, or lockjaw, and telegraphed to Melbourne for a supply of Pasteur's anti-tetanus serum, which has been much vaunted in the treatment of this almost invariably fatal disease. The supply arrived on Saturday night, but its use proved quite ineffectual, as the symptoms continued to increase in severity, and death, after great pain, ensued on Sunday night. The serum, however, can hardly be said to have had a fair chance, as the disease had twenty-four hours start. This is a rare disease in this district, this truly being the third case that has come under the doctor's notice since he has been living here. The interment took place yesterday in the Moorngag cemetery.

*Edna Murray believes that there are no living relatives remaining in the region.*

**DENNIS Infant:** This unnamed infant died in 1896 having lived only 8 days and is buried in the Church of England plot 20. His father was Hy Dennis and his mother Emma Anna (Miles). Other than death certificate 4071, no records could be found for this person.

*Edna Murray believes that there are no living relatives remaining in the region.*

**DENNIS George Henry:** Died in 1969 at the age of 80. He is buried in Presbyterian plot 58.

*Some variance here, as his military record and death certificate shows his name as George Thomas DENNIS. Parents William Dennis and Margaret (Clarke). George is a returned serviceman from World War 1. He enlisted on 21st February 1916. He was a Private in A company 38th Battalion, service no. 261. He embarked from Melbourne on 20th June 1916 and returned on 12th May 1919. He was awarded the British War Medal 1914-18 and the Allied Victory Medal. *His service records show his religion as Church of England?* His full service record can be found in 'Lest We Forget' written by Greg Kirk.*

His unmarked grave has been reported to the Benalla RSL for referral to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

*Edna Murray believes that George was not related to the Infant Dennis above.*

**DRUMMOND William Andrew:** Born 1859 and died in 1900 at the age of 41. He is buried in the Church of England section plot 23. Death certificate 4564. Both of William Andrew Drummond's sons served in WW1. They were John Thomas Private 254. 4th Light Horse, 23rd Reinforcements and William Alfred Private 60912, Recruit Depot Battalion. Full details of their military service can be found in 'Lest We Forget' written by Greg Kirk. The names of the daughters were Margaret born 1883, Rose 1885, Emma 1893 and Angelia (Ellen) 1895. John was born in 1887.

From Benalla Standard 19th June 1900 (from the Walker collection):

General regret was expressed in Benalla when it became known that Mr. W. A. Drummond, head teacher of the Samaria Primary school, had breathed his last on Saturday. The cause of death was consumption, from which he has been suffering for some time past. He was a native of Donnybrook, Victoria, where he was born in 1859, and during the last 20 years he had been in charge of the Samaria State School. When the Mounted Rifles were formed, Mr. Drummond took a prominent part, and some years ago he was given the commission as lieutenant, which position he held up to the time of his death with credit to the regiment and to himself. In the Samaria district Mr. Drummond has always been ready and willing to lend assistance in any movement for the advancement of the district. In the latter portion of 1882 he was married to Miss. Powell, daughter of the late Mr. T. S. Powell, and for the widow who is left with six children, two boys and four girls, the keenest sympathy is felt. The remains were interred in the Moorngag cemetery yesterday afternoon, the deceased being accorded the full honour of a military funeral. (continued over)

(continued from page 6):

The local detachment of the V.M.R. led the way, and marched in single file on each side of the hearse, and then came 42 buggies and upwards of 40 horsemen. The pall-bearers were Corporal Redding, Privates Harrison (4), Heaney and McIntosh. The coffin was covered with a number of beautiful wreaths, which were sent from all parts of the district. The burial service was read by the Rev. A. C. Mc Connan, and the funeral arrangements were satisfactorily carried out by Mr. Hanlon.

This unmarked grave has been reported to the Benalla RSL for referral to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

**DRUMMOND Margaret Florence:** Died in 1910 at the age of 2 years. She is buried in Church of England plot 28. Other than death certificate 4234, no other records can be found for this person. Father John Patrick Drummond, mother Christina (McDonald)

Benalla Standard 26th April 1910 (courtesy of the Walker collection):

On Thursday 29th inst. At 8 o'clock, Margaret Flora, dearly loved daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Drummond of Fern Hills, aged 2 years.

**DRUMMOND John Patrick:** Died in 1913 at the age of 51. He is buried in the Church of England plot 29. Death certificate 8109. Father John Drummond, mother Jane (Holden).

From the Benalla Standard 15th August 1913:

The friends of the late JOHN DRUMMOND are respectfully invited to follow his remains to the place of internment Moorngag cemetery. The funeral will leave his late residence, Fern Hills, at 11 am. on SATURDAY (tomorrow). W. G, ABBOTT, Undertaker.

From the Benalla Standard 15th August 1913 (from the Walker collection):

It will be learned with deep regret that the death took place yesterday morning of Mr. Jno. P. Drummond, of Fern Hills. About a fortnight ago Mr. Drummond contracted influenza which developed into pneumonia, six days ago. The deceased was a native of the district, having been born in Warrenbayne in 1862. Upwards of twenty two years ago he was married to Miss. Christina Mc Donald, who survives him. There are five sons and three daughters, whose ages range from 21 years down to 7 years and for them and Mrs. Drummond very deep sympathy is felt. The remains will be interred in the Moorngag Cemetery on Saturday.

**DRUMMOND Gertrude Maude:** Died in 1915 at the age of 28. She is buried in the Church of England plot 32. Death certificate 12082. Mentioned as 'Maude' in death notice of Mary Gonner Drummond. Father William Andrew Drummond.

The Argus 20<sup>th</sup> November 1915:

DRUMMOND. - On the 17th November, at "Drumrosse," Samaria, Gertrude Maude, beloved daughter of Mary and the late Lieut. W. A. Drummond.

**DRUMMOND Christine:** Nee Mc Donald. Died in 1926 at the age of 57. She is buried next to her husband, John Patrick Drummond, in Church of England plot 30. Death certificate 980. *There are a number of references that suggest the correct spelling of her name is Christina, including the notice below. Her grave was marked as 'Christina'.*

The Age 14th January 1929 (courtesy of the Walker collection):

On the 12th January, at private hospital, North Fitzroy. Christina, widow of the late John Drummond, of Moorngag, Benalla, beloved mother of John, Annie (Mrs. W. Dillon), James, Ken, Norman, Jean, Mary, William and the late John Drummond, aged 57 years.



**DRUMMOND Mary Gonner:** Nee Powell. Wife of William Andrew Drummond plot 23. Died in 1942 at the age of 79. She is buried in the Church of England plot 33. She had seven children including William Junior in Samaria. *Some records show her second name as Sonner, but it is suggested that it was Gonner.*

From the Benalla Ensign 2nd October 1942.

Following a brief illness, the death took place at the Bush Nursing Hospital, Benalla, on Friday, 25th September, of Mrs Mary Gonner Drummond, widow of the late Mr William Andrew Drummond, who pre-deceased her 42 years ago. Deceased was a daughter of the late Thomas and Margaret Powell, and was born at Tatong, then known as Dairy Flats, in 1863. Two years later, she went with her parents to Samaria, and has resided there ever since. She was married at Benalla. Deceased possessed a kind disposition, and made many friends who will regret to hear of her death. She reared a family of seven children, viz., Margaret (Mrs D. McGauran. W.A.). Maude (deceased), John (Melbourne), Rose (deceased), Emma (Samaria). Ellen (Mrs J. Haig, deceased), and William (Samaria). Following a service at Holy Trinity Church, Benalla, on Saturday last, the cortege left for the \*Benalla cemetery where interment took place. Canon Crigan officiated at the church and graveside. The coffin bearers were Messrs D, and G. Ginnivan, H. Bilham and J. Duffy. The pall was supported by Messrs N. Drummond, S. and J. Evans. T. Powell, M. Duffy, and R. Daws. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr E A. Abbott.

\*Note: She is actually buried at Moorngag.

**DRUMMOND Janet Warnock:** She died in 2002 at the age of 91. She is buried in the Presbyterian plot 62.

From Benalla Ensign 16th October 2002 (courtesy of the Walker collection):

Drummond (Campbell). A graveside service for Mrs. Janet Warnock Drummond will be held on Friday October 18th at the Moorngag Cemetery commencing at 11am. A memorial service in thanksgiving for Janet's life will be held on Friday at the Kingdom Hall, Samaria Road, Benalla commencing at 2pm. In lieu of flowers, donations to Benalla Hospital would be appreciated. Envelopes available at the church. (inserted by N. J. Todd, funeral director).

There was a donation of \$500 received to mark the Drummond graves.

**EVANS Infant:** Died in 1905 and shown as 'stillborn'. Buried in Church of England plot 1. No death certificate or other records located.

**EVANS Thomas:** Died in 1906 at the age of 46. He is buried in the Methodist plot 27. Death certificate 11840. Parents 'unknown'.

From the Benalla Standard 30th October 1906:

The death occurred Sunday last of Mr. Thos. Evans, Methodist home missionary at Lima East. Mr. Evans has been suffering for some time from tubercular disease. He was a native of Gippsland, and came to the Lima district about two years ago, and since then he has gained the respect and esteem of the people in that district.

*Robert and Jean Evans have searched their family records and believe that Infant and Thomas Evans were not directly related to the Evans family of the Swanpool area.*

**FOCK John August:** He died in 1940 at the age of 6 months. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 70. Death certificate 1140. No other records or articles can be found.

*His father was Bill Fock who was employed for a time by Janet Hauptmann's father. Bill Fock is believed to have moved to Rowville when he left the Hauptmann's employ. A donation has been received to mark this grave.*

**GINNIVAN Infant:** Stillborn in 1901. Buried in Roman Catholic plot 49. No certificate or records located.



**HEADLAND Francis Carr:** Died in 1954 at the age of 73. He is buried in the Church of England plot 142. Death certificate 24068.

**Benalla Ensign January 1942 (courtesy of the Walker collection):**

On 19th January, at the Wangaratta Community Hospital, Ada beloved wife of F. C. Headland, late of Hawthorn. Aged 60 years.

**From Ancient faces website:**

Francis Carr Headland (born 1880) Francis Carr Headland was born in 1880 in Melbourne, Australia. He was born to Henry Headland and Ella Dawes Headland, and was an only child.

**HOUEX Peter:** Died in 1901 at the age of 76. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 48. Death certificate 8437.

**From the North Eastern Ensign 26th July 1901.**

Mr. Peter Houex, of Swanpool, aged 76, died last week, after about 18 months' illness. Deceased, a Frenchman by nationality, was a colonist of 52 years, the greater part of his life in Victoria being spent in Benalla district where he married Mrs Harvey at the age of 45, the fruit of the union being one son; now 30 years of age. The late Mr Houex was much esteemed by those who knew him well and a man of a most genial character. His remains were interned at \*Benalla, the Very Rev. O. Davy, D.D., reading the burial service, Mr W. G. Abbott discharging the duties of undertaker. \*Buried in Moorngag.

**LARKIN Charles Joseph:** Died in 1928 at the age of 11. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 53. Death certificate 4418.

**The Argus 25<sup>th</sup> April 1928**

Charles Larkin aged 11 years, son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Larkin Tatong, died from poisoning caused by his boot producing a sore.

**North East Ensign 25<sup>th</sup> April 1928:**

Charles J. Larkin, the eleven-year old son of Mr and Mrs T. Larkin, of Tatong, died under very distressing circumstances on Saturday last. A few weeks ago he sustained a scratch on his foot. It became septic and he was at once removed to a private hospital in Benalla where he died. The remains were interred in the \*Rothesay cemetery. Rev. Fr O'Reilly officiated at the graveside, and Mr J. T. Connolly had charge of the mortuary arrangements. \*Buried at Moorngag.

*5th October 2016. Relatives have come forward and donated \$100 for the marking of this grave. Edna Murray advised that Tom and Betty Larkin had fifteen children.*

**LAWTHER Lesley:** Died in 1917 after having lived for only two hours. He is buried in the Church of England plot 15 with his grandfather George Clarke. Death notice 26352.

*A donation has been received to mark this grave.*

**LAWTHER Thomas:** Died in 1918 after living for only six hours. He is buried in Church of England plot 40. Death certificate 11607.

*Edna Murray advised that both of these Lawther boys were related to the Clarke family, but there are no relatives remaining in the region. A donation has since been received to mark this grave.*

**Benalla Standard 15th October 1918:** Yesterday Mr. Geo. Walker, deputy coroner, held a magisterial enquiry concerning the death of the infant child of Mr. and Mrs. J. Lawther, of Swanpool. The medical evidence was that the child was prematurely born, and lived six hours. A verdict that death was due to natural causes was recorded.

**GINNIVAN Leo James:** Died in 1908 at the age of 6 months. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 46. Death certificate 444. Father William John Ginnivan and mother Jane Isabella Dempsey. No other articles or records can be found.

*In January 1929 is was reported that William John Ginnivan was elected President and Captain of the Samaria Bush Fire Brigade. It is known that he had previously been Secretary of the Benalla Urban Fire Brigade.*

**GINNIVAN John Joseph:** Died in 1966 at the age of 62. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 101. Death certificate 17530.

From The Benalla Ensign 4th August 1966 (courtesy of the Walker collection):

The death occurred at the Benalla District Hospital on Monday of Mr. John Joseph Ginnivan, of 62 Clarke Street, Benalla, at the age of 62 years. He was late of Samaria and was the son of the late John Ginnivan. He is survived by one sister, Evelyn, for whom sincere sympathy is felt. Two brothers, George and Leo pre-deceased him.

*Edna Murray advised that John Ginnivan had an intellectual disability and his sister Evelyn cared for him until his death. Evelyn never married and died in 1980.*

**GINNIVAN Evelyn:** Died in 1980 at the age of 85. She is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 104. Death certificate 26716.

From Benalla Ensign 20th November 1980 (courtesy of the Walker collection):

Ginnivan Evelyn—So suddenly you were taken, we could not say good-bye, all we have are memories, that will never die. A true friend of Margaret, Gary, Kellie and Tracey. (Inserted by Gary Exton and family).

*It is believed that Evelyn was the matriarch of the family and had made provision for the other graves to be marked, however in later years she was in care for an extended period and upon her passing there were insufficient funds remaining to mark the graves. Edna Murray believes that there were two families of Ginnivans in the district that were not directly related. There are no relatives of the Ginnivan family shown here, remaining in the region.*

**HAIG (Amelia) Ellen:** Nee Drummond. Died in 1931 at the age of 35. She is buried in the Church of England plot 36. Death notice 97. Mentioned in the death notice of her mother Mary Gonner Drummond. From births, deaths and marriages— Amelia Ellen Haig Father- William Andrew Drummond, Mother- Mary Gonner Powell. Death place Bairnsdale 1931 Age 35 Reg. no 97.

**HAMILTON Caroline May:** Died in 1902 at the age of 13. She is buried in Church of England plot 3, within the Hamilton family plots, but there is no headstone to indicate this. Death certificate 12550.

Benalla Standard 14th October 1902 (courtesy of the Walker collection):

Mr and Mrs. Hamilton of Fern Hills, on Friday last had the misfortune to lose their daughter, Caroline May, age 13 years, from peritonitis. The remains were interned in the Moorngag cemetery on Sunday. The burial service being read by Mr. Connell. The funeral arrangements were satisfactorily carried out by Mr. Hanlon.

*Caroline is buried in the family plot, but there was no marker to indicate this.*

**HAMILTON James:** Died in 1939 at the age of 84. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 18. Death certificate 16065.

Benalla Ensign 1st September 1939:

The death occurred on Wednesday list.at the home of his niece, Mrs. W. Rhodes, of. Bridge, Street, Benalla, of Mr James Hamilton, of Tatong. Deceased who was 84 years of age, was a son of the late Mr and Mrs Daniel Hamilton, and was born at Tatong. He was not married. The funeral will be to the Moorngag cemetery today. *Edna Murray advised that James Hamilton was not related to the other Hamilton family.*

**MAHER Michael:** Died in 1949 at the age of 89. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 122.

Benalla Ensign 5<sup>th</sup> January 1950

The death occurred at his residence at Tatong on December 29th, 1949, of Mr. Michael Maher at the age of \*81 years. Deceased was a son of the late Michael and Catherine Maher, and was born at Stewarton. He was married at West Melbourne at 20 years of age to Miss Catherine Alice Cummins. He is survived by a family of three sons, Michael, Edward and John. For many years he was noted for his step dancing and as a resident of the Tatong district for nearly 20 years, he made many friends who will regret his passing. The funeral left St. Joseph's Church, Benalla, for the Moorngag cemetery, following a service by Rev. Dean Rohan, who officiated both at the church and the graveside. The casket was borne by Messrs. M. J. Maher, E. P. Maher, J. J. Maher, A. Ritchie and J. Connolly. Supporting the pall were Messrs. Geo. McAuliffe, Brian Coleman, J. Urquhart, Geo. Sullivan, W. O'Connell, A. Lewis, A. N. A. Jones. The flower bearer was Mr. L. Farrell. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. Todd and O'Brien. \*Burial register shows his age as 89.

*Edna Murray advised that her father William O'Connell was one of the pall bearers. She also advised that she believes that the other two sons, Michael and John have also passed away,*

**MAHER Catherine Alice:** Wife of Michael Maher above. She died in 1953 at the age of 82. She is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 121. *Some discrepancy about the spelling of her name, however two sources spell her name as Catherine Alice.*

Benalla Ensign 15<sup>th</sup> October 1953

The death took place yesterday at the Benalla District Memorial Hospital of Mrs. Katherine Ellis Maher at the age of 83 years. Mrs. Maher, who was born at Kilmore, is the daughter of the late Edward and Katherine Cummins, and was one of the old residents of Tatong. She was married to Mr. Michael Maher at Tatong, who predeceased her in 1949. She was well known throughout Tatong and surrounding districts, and was highly respected. The funeral left St. Joseph's Church, Benalla, this afternoon for the Moorngag cemetery. She is survived by a family of three sons Michael (Tatong), Edward (Tatong) and John (Mansfield). The funeral arrangements were conducted by Mr. N. Todd.

**MAHER Michael John:** Died 1968 at the age of 69 years. Buried in Roman Catholic Plot 120. Believed to be a son of the above. B/D/M Reg.17009.

**MAHER Edward Patrick:** Died in 1970 at the age of 70. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 119. B/D/M Reg. 30242. Believed to be the son of Michael Maher and Catherine Alice Maher, above.

*A donation from the Tatong Recreation Reserve Committee was made to cover the cost of marking the four Maher graves. The family is believed to have previously donated land for community use.*

**McINTOSH Infant:** Stillborn in 1906. Buried with brother William James in Presbyterian plot 8. No other records found. Father Kenneth Mc Intosh, mother Sophia (Conway).

**Mc INTOSH William James:** Died in 1907 at the age of 9 months. He is buried with Infant McIntosh in Presbyterian plot 8. B/D/M Reg.388. Father Kenneth Mc Intosh, mother Sophia (Conway).

**MONAGHAN Mary:** Died in 1916 at the age of 62. She is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 55. B/D/M Reg. 8384. Father Hickey John Monaghan, mother Matilda (Quinlivan).

The Advocate 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1916

Your prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of Mary Monaghan, relict of the late Terence Monaghan, who departed this life on the 10th January at Tatong; also Terence Monaghan, who died 6th May, 1912. May their souls and the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Inserted by their loving children John and Annie Monaghan.

**MORGAN Truland Edward:** Died in 1904 at the age of 70. He is buried in Church of England plot 55.

Appears to have been a wealthy person from Queensland. Reported to have discovered Mount Morgan. This is not supported by research into the discovery of Mount Morgan. It was discovered by Frederick Morgan and developed by his three sons. Truland Morgan was not one of the sons. 1903 Census places him in Tolmie.

**Benalla Standard 29<sup>th</sup> November 1904**

SUDDEN DEATH.— On Sunday morning information was brought in to the police at Benalla that a farmer, named Truland Morgan, 74 years of age, had died at the residence of Mr. Wright on Saturday night. Constable Gleeson, who is in charge of the station during Sergeant Keegan's absence in Melbourne, immediately communicated with the coroner, who directed that an enquiry should be held by a justice. The facts are that the accused had been ailing for a fortnight from influenza, and had not been attended by a doctor. The body was brought down to the Tatong hotel, and arrangements were made by Mr. Heaney, J.P., to hold an enquiry there yesterday.

**Benalla Standard 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1904**

An inquest was held at the Tatong Hotel on Monday last by Mr. W. Heaney, J.P., concerning the death of Truland Edward Morgan, who died at Mr Wright's residence without medical attendance, as reported in our last issue. The deceased is reported to have been the discoverer of Mt. Morgan, in Queensland, and some years ago was in very affluent circumstances, being the owner of Kobyboyn station. John W. Wright said the deceased lived on a selection at Dueran for about four years. During the last six months witness father, Aaron Wright, had resided with him. Deceased was about 74 years of age. Witness on being told that the deceased was ill went to his place on Nov. 23rd, but on the road he met him. He then appeared to be very weak, and was apparently suffering from a chest complaint. He said that he found it difficult to get his breath. Witness took him to his place, and deceased said he would go to Benalla and see a doctor. On Thursday and Friday he appeared to improve, and on Saturday was fairly well until about 6.30 p.m. At that time witness went into his room and noticed he appeared to be getting weaker, and was breathing very heavily. At his request hot fomentations were put on his breast to ease his breathing, and after this he said he felt easier, and there was no actual pain. He also had a cup of boiled milk and sago. He gradually got weaker, and about 10 minutes after midnight he died. A. R. Cunnington gave corroborative evidence, and Constable O'Neill deposed to having examined the body, which bore no external marks of violence Mr. Heaney found that the deceased died from natural causes.

**MURRAY Patrick Vincent:** Died in 1926 at the age of 19 months. He is buried in the Roman Catholic plot 96 along with his brother Michael. B/D/M Reg.12642. Father Thomas Matthew Murray, mother Letitia Alicia O'Callaghan.

*Edna Murray advised that due to financial circumstances a marker for Michael was placed by a friend of the family who did not realise that Patrick was buried with his brother.*

**MURRAY Colvin Henry:** Died in 1970 at the age of 50. He is buried in Roman Catholic plot 140. Colvin is a returned servicemen from WW2. Signaller VX 64497. He saw overseas service and experienced considerable ill health. He was discharged from the army on 10th January 1946. His expanded history is featured in Greg Kirk's book 'Lest We Forget' a history of service people from Swanpool and District. Information that later came to hand, included a photo which shows Colvin was a member of the 1940 Tatong football team.

His unmarked grave has been reported to the Benalla RSL for referral to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

*Edna Murray advised that Colvin had mental issues and had never recovered from his war experiences. He committed suicide in 1970.*

**MURRAY Harry Evans:** Died in 1973 at the age of 82 years. Buried in Church of England Plot 271. His parents were James Murray and Catherine (Murphy). This person is not directly related to either of the above Murray's. B/D/M Reg. 24603.

**O'CONNELL Francis:** Died in 1894 at the age of 66. He is buried in Roman Catholic plot 2.

### The North East Ensign 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 1892.

Francis O'Connell, an old resident of Benalla, was brought up at the General Sessions, Melbourne, on Monday last, charged with embezzling certain monies belonging to the St. Francis No. 1 Branch of the H.A.C.B.S. Mr. Alfred Deakin appeared for the defence, instructed by Mr. Marshall Lyle. It appeared from the evidence of Michael Sheehan, one of the trustees of the society, and James Mulally, auditor, that the accused was engaged by the society as secretary at a salary of £70 per annum. On one or two occasions he remained away from the meetings of the Branch without giving an 'explanation, and as the balance sheet for the quarter ending December, 1890, was not submitted for audit until April, 1891; the auditor complained to the members. A special audit was made about the 15<sup>th</sup> of November last, and the accused had been suspended on the 16<sup>th</sup> September. An examination of the books showed that in the passbook of George Burke, and, under date of 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1891, was entered "amount due contributions, 29s," in prisoner's handwriting, and opposite this entry the words, " amount paid" in the handwriting of the accused.' There was, however, no entry in the other books of the money having been received. In the passbook of Joseph Wright, under date, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1891, there was an entry in the prisoner's handwriting of the receipt of 30s, but there was no entry of the transaction in the cash book. The passbook of Joseph Wright, showed that on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 20s' paid and received by the accused, but it was not entered in the cash book. After examining 300 passbooks the auditor found a deficiency of £33 1s 3d, but the total amount is supposed to be much larger. The accused was arrested on the 5<sup>th</sup> January. Mr Deakin said that sufficient evidence had been placed before the jury to show that the books of this society were in a very muddled condition, and when to this was the circumstances that, as stated by some of the witnesses, the accused was nearly always drunk at the meetings, they would see what was the aspect of affairs under which the prisoner carried out his duties, The witnesses had given evidence most damnatory as to the way in which the business of the society was conducted, and some of them had been compelled to admit that one section of the books had not been properly kept for seven years. They had to confess that they had five secretaries during the past five years, and everyone of them had been called upon when leaving office to make up some deficiency. It had not been charged against any one of the five men that they were guilty of, criminal conduct, but it appeared that in the confusion they had made mistakes. On coming to square up they had, however made good any deficiency, and got off scot free. Mr. Deakin drew a picture of one of the meetings of the members, with the accused surrounded by a crowd to pay their subscriptions, and clambering to get away whilst the president or some other member interrupted the proceedings, and withdrew the attention of the secretary for the purpose of answering some question. By this means confusion came about, some monies were received which he failed to account for, little mistakes cropped up, and at length the poor secretary became so muddled that he was unable to explain matters. The accused was found guilty and remanded for sentence. *(He received eighteen months in prison)*

### North Eastern Ensign 18<sup>th</sup> December 1894:

The residence of Mr Thos. Redding, was the scene of a lamentable occurrence on Friday night. The premises consist of a four-roomed house and a detached building, used as a kitchen, bedroom, store room and harness room. The bedroom was occupied on the night in question by Francis O'Connell, 65 years of age. During the night the kitchen took fire, and the flames got complete mastery over the tenement before O'Connell was awakened. He immediately made for the door, but found his exit blocked by the conflagration, the only chance of escape left being a small window, 4in by 12in in dimensions. O'Connell tried to get out of the burning building through this window, but, being a large-framed man, about 14 stone in weight, he got jammed, The fiery element had by this time reached him, and he was horrified to find that he could neither get out nor back again. His cries for assistance awoke the inmates of the adjacent house, but before they came to his assistance, he had managed to extricate himself from his perilous position, not however, before he had been burnt more or less all over the body. Though severely injured, the sufferer appeared a great deal better on Saturday, and no anxiety was felt concerning him, but he had evidently received severe shock, for towards Sunday morning he gradually got worse, and, sinking rapidly, died during the day. The matter was reported to Mr Dobbin, district coroner, and in accordance with his directions a magisterial inquiry was held by Mr J. Heaney, J.P, and a verdict returned to the effect that death was due to shock from the system, caused by injuries received in the fire. Various surmises are given as to the probable cause of the conflagration, the most feasible being that some clothing, which had been hung at the kitchen fireplace to dry over night; had by some means got alight, and thus set fire to the building. The kitchen and the harness and stores contained therein were completely destroyed, and as there was not a penny of insurance on the premises, Mr Redding has sustained considerable loss.



**POWELL Margaret Foster:** Died in 1892 at the age of 55. She is buried in Roman Catholic plot 1. She is believed to be the wife of one of the first Moorngag Cemetery trustees Thomas Powell, who is also in an unmarked grave.

Leader 10th December 1892:

On the 23th November, at Edge Hill Farm, Margaret Foster Powell, relict of the late T. S. Powell, Samaria, In her 57th year. R.I.P.

**POWELL Thomas Sykes:** Died in 1892 at the age of 62. He is buried in Church of England plot 24. Thomas was the husband of the above and one of the initial trustees of the Moorngag Cemetery Trust. Thomas was a School Committee member for Samaria School. No. 893. Thomas was also secretary of the Holland's Branch Railway League. There are a number of reports in newspapers in 1891 and 1892.

There was only one death notice located in the Benalla Standard (from the Walker collection):

The friends of the late Mr. Thomas Powell are respectfully invited to follow his remains to the place of internment, The Moorngag cemetery. The funeral will leave his late residence in Samaria at 2pm.

*The only other newspaper item located referred to the transfer of 658 acres to the executors of his estate, William. A . Drummond and Robert Mc Crum as reported in the Ovens and Murray Advertiser on 5th November 1892.*

**PRICE Barry:** Died in 1952 at the age of 3. He is buried in the Methodist plot 20.

Benalla Ensign 8<sup>th</sup> May 1952

The death occurred at the Children's Hospital on Friday last of Barry Price, the three year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Price, of Lima East place at the Moorngag cemetery on Tuesday, leaving the funeral parlours of E. A. Abbott. The burial service was conducted by Mr. L. Roberts, Methodist Missionary at Lima. The casket was borne by Messrs. R. Price and K. Holt. Supporting the pall were Messrs. G. Pearce, P. and A. Evans, G. Price, H. Price and A. Stafford.

**RENKIN Ian James:** Died in 1938 having lived for only 10 days. He is buried in Church of England plot 111. No other formal records found. Is the son of Robert Ray Renkin and Florence May (Horsburgh) who were married on 15th May 1937.

Benalla Ensign 30th September 1938.

Deep sympathy is felt for Mr and Mrs Robert Renkin of Barjarg, in the death of their 10 day old son Ian James, which occurred at the Bush Nursing Hospital last Sunday.

*Relatives have been located. Ian has two brothers Geoff and David, and two sisters Helen and Jan. Jan Ely contacted her siblings and gave permission to place a marker. They donated \$100.*

**RICE Thomas:** Died in 1896 at the age of 96. He is buried in Church of England plot 18. B/D/M Reg. 12276. Parents 'unknown'.

North Eastern Ensign 13th November 1896 (courtesy of the Walker collection):

There died on Sunday last at Swanpool, an old resident of the district, named Thos. Rice, who had been in the employ of Mr. Jno. McElroy, farmer, for the past 19 years. Deceased was 96 years old and was unmarried. He came to the colony 50 years ago. The internment took place on Monday at the Moorngag cemetery, the Rev. J. Tredinnick reading the burial service.

**STANLEY Walter Silver:** Died in 1961 at the age of 87. He is buried in Roman Catholic plot 24. B/D/M Reg. 1366. Father Edward Montrose Stanley, mother Margaret O'Farrell.

(courtesy of the Walker collection). A former resident in what was known as 'Stanley's Hut' built in Mitchell Road during the 1930's. Walter was born in Heathcote in 1873 and died in Parkville in 1961 at the age of 87. His wife Margaret Fleming died in 1942. They had three daughters and two sons.

**THOMAS Jane:** Died in 1937 at the age of 66. She is buried in Methodist plot 176.

North Eastern Ensign 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1937:

The death occurred suddenly at her home at Lima East on Wednesday last, of Mrs Jane Thomas wife of Mr James A Thomas, Methodist Home Missionary. The late Mrs Thomas had not enjoyed the best of health for some time past, but her end came very suddenly. She was born at Mt Edgerton in the Ballarat district 66 years ago, and was married there at the age of 23 years. With her husband and family, she came to live in the Lima East district about two years ago, and during her residence made many friends who will regret to learn of her death. She possessed a kind and generous disposition, and was a conscientious worker for the church. She is survived by her husband, one son; R. Coyle of East Malvern, and one daughter, Vera (Mrs. Macdougall, of- Minyip), for whom deep sympathy is felt in their loss. One son, Alfred, was killed while on active service. The remains were interred in the Moorngag cemetery on Wednesday last, the cortege leaving the Methodist Church at Lima East following a short service which was conducted by Rev. Wilkinson, who also read the burial service. A large number of floral tributes testified to the esteem in which deceased was held. Among these were wreaths from the members of the 'Methodist Ladies' Auxiliary and the members of the Austral Tent I.O.R. The coffin bearers were Messrs K. Williams, A. M. Stafford, E. E. Williams and H. G. Williams. The pall was borne by Messrs W. McKean, G. Horsburgh, G. Price, E. Lewis, A.G. Evans and J. Serpell. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr G. Diggle.

**THOMAS David:** Died in 1939 at the age of 73. He is buried in Methodist plot 177. B/D/M Reg. 2557. Father 'unknown, mother Lottie Thomas. *Correct full name is David Idris Blair Thomas.*

**WALKER Joseph:** Died in 1912 at the age of 24. He is buried in Church of England plot 77. Son of the below mentioned.

**WALKER Samuel:** Died in 1912 at the age of 50. He is buried in Church of England plot 77. Father of the above mentioned. Tragic murder suicide. *Both Samuel and Joseph were Canadian.*

Benalla Standard 23rd February 1912.

The last scene in the Moorngag tragedy was enacted on Wednesday morning last, when Mr. Walker, the deputy coroner, gave his verdict. Constable Casey on Monday and Tuesday made a thorough search in the hut occupied by the Walkers for papers, documents, or anything that would tend to throw any light on the incidents leading to the tragic sequel. Nothing, however, was found, and on Wednesday morning the deputy coroner recorded the following verdict: — 'That the said Sameul James Walker died at Moorngag; on or about 8th February from a gunshot wound in the chest inflicted by his son, Joseph Walker, while his father was asleep; and that the said Joseph Walker afterwards, on the same date, committed suicide by cutting his own throat and shooting himself in the head with a breech-loading shot gun.'

**WALLACE Henry John (Harry):** Died in 1963 at the age of 34. He is buried in Presbyterian plot 46. B/D/M Reg. 4149. Father Henry Joseph Wallace and mother as Mary (Woolley). From a handwritten family tree that came into the possession of Janet Hauptmann, Henry Wallace was born in 1879 and was 84 when he died. His birth date in the burial register appears to be incorrect. *Edna Murray believes that Harry was the last remaining member of the Wallace family. Descendants of the family have advised that they will mark this grave.*



**WEEKS Christopher:** Died in 1904 at the age of 70. This is queried as the below report states his age as 82. He is buried in the Methodist plot 74. B/D/M Reg. 430. Parents 'unknown'.

The North Eastern Ensign 22nd January 1904:

Mr. Christopher Weeks, one of the oldest residents of Benalla district, died on the 12th inst. at Toombullup, where he had of late been residing with his son. Deceased, whose age was 82, was a carrier in the earlier days and was widely known among a generation who have nearly all passed away. He was a stout-hearted Englishman, his birth place being Cornwall, wherefrom he emigrated to Australia in 1843, settling the same year in Victoria along with Mr. Wm. Little, father of the Hon. Willis Little, M.L.C. It was not, however, till 10 years later he took up his abode in Benalla, residing for some years previously at St. James. About 7 years ago he went to live with his son Mr Jas. Weeks at Toombullup, where, as already stated, he died. He was an honourable, hard-working man and was esteemed by all who knew him.

**WILES Stanley Kilroy:** Died in 1977 at the age of 76. He is buried in Church of England plot 143. He was born at Bena and the 1977 census places him at Benalla. B/D/M Reg. 13188. Father Thomas Wiles, mother Roseanna (Kilroy)

*Edna Murray knew Stan Wiles. He was a farm worker and she believes that he had no relatives in the region. Since this book was written, further evidence has come to hand see page opposite.*

**WYLD Jack:** Died in 1983 at the age of 83. He is buried in Church of England plot 166. B/D/M Reg. 21970. Father Walter Wyld, mother Amy (Green).

*Edna Murray believes that this person may be related to the Green's from Lurg. The Green families in Lurg and Benalla were contacted and no connection was found with either Green family.*



The Moorngag Cemetery Unmarked Graves project culminated in the placing of the markers by volunteers from the Tatong Heritage Group on 10th October 2017. The digitising of the Cemetery records was then completed in November 2017 by Wendy Maxwell from the Benalla Family Research Group. The grave plinths were specially produced by Vibrated Concrete Products of Benalla and the stainless steel plaques were laser engraved by Benalla Trophy Centre. Both of these suppliers provided products for the project at 'cost', and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.



Project plaque placed for Ian James Renkin who lived for only 10 days. Relatives donated \$100 for this marker.

All research work was completed 'pro bono' and volunteers installed the grave markers. The cost of the project was covered by donations from relatives and community organisations, including the Moorngag Cemetery Trust and the Tatong Heritage Group.

# Stanley Kilroy WILES

(based on the memories of Brian McElroy)

Stanley Kilroy WILES was born 1900 in Bunyip South, Victoria to Thomas WILES (1841 –1915) and Rose Ann KILROY (1867 – 1908). When he was 12 or 13 years old he ran away from home as his father was very hard on him. His father was in hospital for a while and Stan had to do the chores at home. When Stan's father was released from hospital his father wasn't happy with what Stan was told to do (his sister said her dad always picked on Stan for some unknown reason), so Stan packed his bags and left, never to return.

The first 9 or 10 years of his life is unknown. According to the 1922 Census he was working on a property at Mansfield called "Kilbride" on the Delatite River. He stayed there until 1925, and in 1926 he was working at Jack Merrigan's property at Swanpool as a labourer. He lived in a hut behind the Merrigan house.

A local identity at Swanpool said he was told Stan came across from Mansfield employed on a chaff cutter, as in those days chaff cutters moved around the district a lot. Stan never held a car license. He rode a bike around, and the locals often gave him a ride into Benalla for supplies. The 1936 Benalla Ensign had an article detailing how Stan was charged with riding a bicycle in Arundel Street without lights. He did not appear in court and was fined 10/- (\$1) in default of two days imprisonment.

All of Stan's friends thought he had no family until one day Bernie McElroy, who took over Merrigan's property, received a phone call from a lady who was Stan's sister. She had been looking for Stan for some time. Bernie told her she was quite welcome to come up on the train and stay the night, which she did. The next day Stan's sister took him back to Melbourne to meet some members of his family. Another story told by a Swanpool local was when her husband and herself, being pregnant, and with two kids and Stan on board were going into Benalla. The two kids were in the front seat with their dad, and because she was pregnant she sat in the back seat with Stan. The two little kids hung over the front seat staring at Stan all the way to Benalla. They wouldn't turn around and sit on the seat properly. When they got to Benalla old Stan gave the kids 2/- (20 cents) each. They were probably staring at him because he only had one top tooth and one at the bottom. It would have been embarrassing for the parents.

He liked a drink and would often ride his bike to the Tatong Pub for supplies or get a ride with one of the locals. Brian McElroy said when he was burning stumps on the property years later he would find wine bottles in the stumps, so obviously Stan had a sip when down in the paddock working.

Stan was well looked after at Merrigans. They cooked his meals, and when the McElroys took over the property they did the same.

Stan passed away 12 June 1977, and is buried in the Moorngag Cemetery. His sister and son were in attendance at the service and she was left with what money Stan had. When his hut was cleaned out, a death notice for his father was found in one of Stan's wallets. It mentioned all the children except Stan.

Recorded by Beverley 'Chick' Walker. Benalla Family Research Group. September 2022,

The following is a media release to announce the completion of the project, written by the Chair of the Tatong Heritage Group, Andrea Stevenson:

## **Tatong Heritage Group marks old graves of Moorngag**

Unidentified grave sites in the Moorngag Cemetery have had markers placed on them, some after well over a century of obscurity.

The Moorngag Cemetery, located between Tatong and Swanpool, saw its first burial in 1888. With the advent of the Anzac Centenary, Barry O'Connor sought un-marked graves of returned servicemen, for attention by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. He found three of these, but also realised that nearly sixty other graves sites were not marked. Consequently the Tatong Heritage Group, with the Moorngag Cemetery Trust, and the Benalla Family Research Group, embarked on a mission to place markers on these graves.

This involved firstly working out who was buried where, and matching the Cemetery records with other local accounts. Chick Walker and Wendy Maxwell, along with Barry O'Connor, put in many hours researching historical sources such as the old newspapers. Then research was needed to design the markers themselves. Eventually Barry settled on concrete plinths from Benalla Vibrated Concrete Products, recessed to take markers handsomely engraved by Benalla Trophy Centre. The resulting headstones are attractive and clear, and should stand the test of time. Funding included generous donations from some of the descendants of those interred without a grave marker.

In early October, Tatong Heritage Group members set to work fastening the markers to the plinths, then placing the plinths on the correct patches of ground. They ought never again be difficult to locate. Ted Exton, grave-digger of many decades, armed himself with the Moorngag Cemetery Register and identified each grave site. Installation of the markers was done with great care, keeping them aligned with the cemetery layout and pre-existing stones.

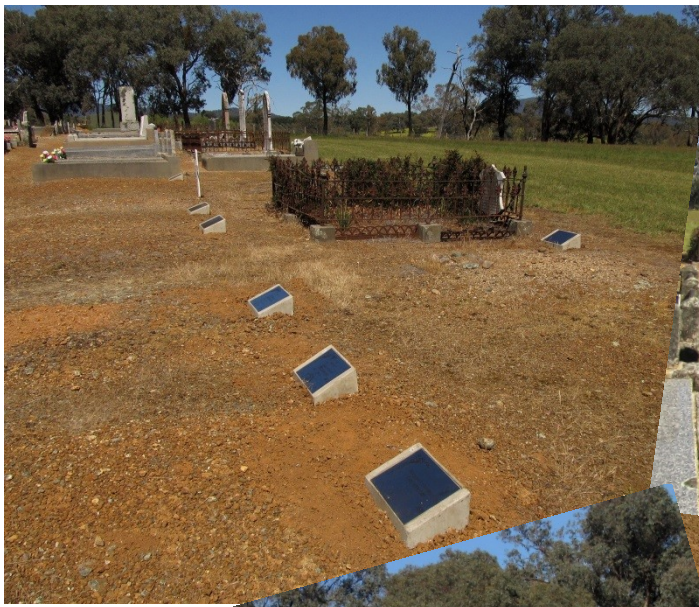
The most challenging placement was out in a grassed area, where the only sign that there had once been burials was a slight indentation in the ground. Being some distance from the marked burials, some measuring out was needed to ascertain where the graves were.

Many of the people named on the markers were known of, or remembered by, the locals. A difficult, but interesting case was Hanah Brown. Her burial was recorded, and it was established that there really was someone buried there, yet there was no other record of a Hanah Brown having existed at that time. According to the Moorngag Cemetery Register, she was born in 1813 and died in 1898. Maybe she just kept under the radar, but one explanation is that she was Indigenous. The name is typical of those endowed on the first Australians, a name thought more respectable than that given by her own culture, and it would explain why she was never recorded as a member of the population. If this is the case, her birth date must have been a guess, for she would have been in her early 20s when whites arrived in the Tatong district.

The Moorngag Cemetery records have been digitised by Wendy Maxwell for online access. The cemetery itself is a beautiful place, and a wander through it is a pleasure for those whose loved ones and forbears are buried there, and for those interested in what a cemetery has to tell. Moorngag can now tell the stories of all who are buried there.

By Andrea Stevenson.





The Volunteers L to R: Terry O'Brien, Chris Hakkennes, Barry O'Connor, Heather McCauley, Geoff Rintala, Bev Hakkennes, Les McLean, and Joe Hakkennes, all Tatong Heritage Group. Ted Exton Moorngag Cemetery Trust and Andrea Stevenson, Chair - Tatong Heritage Group.



## MOORNGAG CEMETERY

The land on which the Moorngag Cemetery stands, was originally inhabited by the Taungurung people, as part of a large tract of land in North East Victoria that they roamed over, following the seasonal food resources.

Following the exploration of the area in 1824 by Hume and Hovell, the land came under the control of the Crown and was then leased to squatters for a predetermined fee. The land remained under the control of the Crown until formal surveys were completed, commencing in the mid 1850's.

One of the very early squatters who did play a significant part in the development of the Broken River area was William McKellar. William took up Lima Station in May 1839. The station had a total area of 88,000 acres (35,612 ha.), including the land that this cemetery now occupies. There was internal infrastructure on the station, with seven out-stations, stock yards and a saw pit. William McKellar was a person who worked with the aboriginal people. He employed many of them as stockmen and shepherds. He was one of the very few squatters, who later purchased large portions of the original holding and remained in the district until his death in 1893 at the age of 95. He is buried along with other members of the family in the Benalla Cemetery.

From around 1836 to 1853, details of baptisms, burials and marriages were entered into church registers. On 1 July 1853 compulsory registration was introduced, and from that date forward, all details were required to be lodged with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. All churches in the colony were required to send their pre 1853 registers to the Registrar, however incomplete records show that this did not always happen. Many early burials took place at the location where the person may have died, in the local church grounds, or on land that the family occupied. There was no formal control over the burial site. Many of these sites were unmarked and were later deemed unsanitary. Steps were taken by the Government to formalise burial locations and regulations.

In 1854 an *Act for the Establishment and Management of Cemeteries in the Colony of Victoria* was passed. The government had the power to appoint and remove trustees, and to lend or pay money for the establishment and management of cemeteries. From 1854 many of the burials of Swanpool, Lima, Moorngag, Tatong and Samaria people, would have taken place in Benalla.

In 1855 a portion of Lima Station was surveyed by Government contract surveyor, Mr. J. G. W. Willmott into Samaria Parish. This survey followed the designated Government block sizes based on a square mile grid. Blocks were surveyed into allotments from 40 to 640 acres.

By 1859, responsibility for control of lands in the area entailed making recommendations to the Board of Land and Works concerning the granting of sites as reserves for public purposes such as schools, churches and cemeteries and for recreational purposes. All of these functions for Moorngag, were administered through the Benalla office.

An auction of surveyed land took place on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1860, with William McKellar exercising his 'pre-emptive right' as the current lease holder, purchasing 1,204 acres. He would later purchase more land as it became available. The balance of the land was then thrown open for further selection.

Continued over.....

## MOORNGAG CEMETERY

Auctions took place in August 1862 and May 1865 and much of the Samaria Parish was taken up in various allotment sizes by selectors. Many of these early selectors would later become the members of committees that saw the provision of schools and this cemetery. Churches appeared not to have been a priority, however many school buildings doubled as churches, until formal structures were constructed. At the time, formal churches were located in Benalla, and later at nearby Swanpool.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> May 1865 the Lands and Survey Office in Melbourne incorporated the Parish of Samaria into the Agricultural Area of Moorngag.

State School No. 893 was opened in a room of Thomas Redding's home in 1867, prior to the school being built. In 1869 the school was relocated to a permanent building in School House Lane, Samaria on Allotment 83. Primary School facilities were tendered for a 'portable building' at Moorngag in January 1879, and a hall was later built on a designated reserve at Moorngag in 1889.

On 9<sup>th</sup> November 1883 a meeting was held at the selection of Mr. C. J. Wallace, to commence work on a formal application for land to be set aside for a cemetery at Moorngag. This was a considerable undertaking by the community, as the cemetery would not only service Moorngag and Samaria, but would also cover the townships and surrounding areas of Tatong, Lima and Swanpool. The nearest designated cemeteries at the time were at Benalla and Mansfield.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1884 from the Government Gazette: Moorngag – Site for Cemetery. Five acres, County of Delatite, Parish of Moorngag, being part of allotment 48.

In July 1884 from the Government Gazette – Notification of appointment of trustee's for the Moorngag Cemetery Trust: Robert Wallace, George Dodd, George Exton, John MacDonald and Thomas Powell.

The cemetery is still operated by volunteer trustees to this day.

In addition to the members of the Cemetery Trust shown above, many others contributed significantly to the welfare of the community and names such as Bilham, Burns, Daws, Drummond, Evans, Flynn, Ginnivan, Gunn, Harrison, Heaney, Hewson, Knipple, Larkin, Duffy, McCauley, McIntosh, Redding and Clarke all feature prominently in the early history of the district. As you walk around the cemetery, you may find the resting place of many of these people.

*Barry O'Connor.*

*This history was written for the Moorngag Cemetery Trust.*

*13 January 2021.*