



THE CEMETERY GUARDIAN

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The online newsletter of the Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery

CEMETERIES: AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR HERITAGE

Cemeteries are an important part of Australia's heritage. The burial places of our ancestors provide a history of the nation's growth and a valuable insight into its development. Cemeteries may be the only place where a person's life in Australia is recorded.

Many cemeteries are examples of formal nineteenth century garden design, with landscape elements seldom seen outside public gardens. Unusual examples of art and craft found in the design of many monuments portray symbolic nineteenth century views of death, often quite different from current customs. Nevertheless the landscape of an old cemetery is of continuing importance to the present community, as a place of comfort to the bereaved and as a therapeutic environment which may help them recover from their loss.

It is not only nineteenth century cemeteries and monuments that are significant. Nearly all cemeteries, including 'younger' or 'active' cemeteries, are valuable social documents of history and document changes in taste, custom and design.



'King' family grave, South Brisbane Cemetery



The Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery (FOSBC) was formed in September 2006 as a not-for-profit independent community organisation and our vision is for the long-term preservation of this important part of Brisbane's history. The FOSBC invite community members to become involved. We are aiming to improve the appearance of the cemetery by cleaning and organising restoration work. The Friends are also documenting the history of the cemetery. **WHY NOT JOIN US!**

Left: FOSBC 'Stories in Stone' tour, South Brisbane Cemetery, 2009

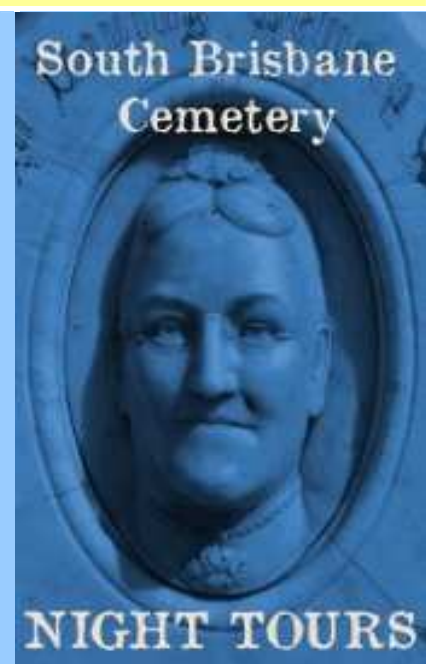
ALL-NEW CEMETERY NIGHT TOURS – COMING IN 2010!

The Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery, in conjunction with the Boggo Road Gaol Historical Society, are currently applying to the Brisbane City Council to allow us conduct **night tours** in the South Brisbane Cemetery.

Why tour with the Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery?

- ✚ These not-for-profit events will support our ongoing work
- ✚ Your guides will be the foremost cemetery historians, *not* actors
- ✚ We will interact with tour groups and field your questions
- ✚ Our tours will be respectful of the heritage values of the cemetery
- ✚ Our tours will be very affordable

We are currently seeking expressions of interest from people who want to take a tour. If this is you, please email or phone us and we will add you to our list. As soon as we receive approval to proceed from BCC we will be in touch with you.



FOSBC vs SATAN!

Over recent years the FOSBC has have noticed evidence of ritual occults taking place in the South Brisbane and Balmoral cemeteries, including the mutilation of animals and the vandalism and inversion of headstone crosses.

While this kind of damage is nothing new, the FOSBC felt that more needed to be done to deter the kind of people who commit these offences from trespassing in cemeteries. While better security and a curfew are obviously required, we were also concerned about a decline in respect for our cemeteries and in 2009 we voiced our concerns to the Brisbane City Council.

We felt that the marketing and promotions of one cemetery tour company was inappropriate as they featured vampires, ghouls, and Satanic material. While we are not overly religious types and can understand the 'light entertainment' value of these themes, it seemed to us that this kind of advertising only strengthened the association of our cemeteries with the occult and was doing nothing to deter the kind of people who mutilate animals and vandalise graves from attending cemeteries.

The FOSBC had success in prompting a review of cemetery night tours, and part of the outcome was new restrictions on tour content, marketing and dress codes. BCC were clearly in agreement that these aspects of tour operations needed to be appropriate and more respectful.

After we had contacted the BCC with our concerns, Brisbane received an unfortunate reminder of the kind of damage such people can do when a large number of graves were vandalised at Toowong Cemetery in August 2009. When the case came to trial in 2010, it was alleged that some of the vandalism was intended to be 'Satanic'. It took the bizarre dismissal of the case (when it could not be proven that the alleged vandals did NOT have permission to break the graves) to get authorities to take the whole issue more seriously and move towards legislative changes.

In the meantime, the FOSBC will continue to monitor any inappropriate use and marketing of Brisbane cemeteries that we feel undermines the kind of true respect these places deserve.



Vandalised headstones at Toowong, 2009

BUSTED!

In May 2009 the Channel 9 'Getaway' show featured a 'Ghost Hunt' in South Brisbane Cemetery. This was conducted by 'Queensland Paranormal Investigators' and 'Ghost Tours' and involved the use of 'scientific' equipment to locate any signs of paranormal activity. This was tastefully accompanied by the use of smoke machines and 'Ghostbusters' music, and the sight of the equipment being waved over the grave of a returned soldier.

The FOSBC investigated. Did these groups have permission from the BCC to conduct 'Ghosts Hunts' in the cemetery? No. Moreover, we found multiple web pages where the QPI openly discussed their nocturnal trespassing in various Brisbane cemeteries.

The BCC made their thoughts on these activities quite clear and all 'ghost hunts' were banned in Brisbane cemeteries.

GET 'INSIDE HISTORY'!

'Inside History' is a not-for-profit publishing project of the Boggo Road Gaol Historical Society. Their great range of local history titles includes several booklets about South Brisbane Cemetery. Visit their website at www.boggoroadgaol.com.au to find out more!

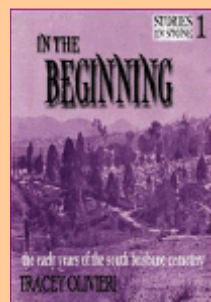


Rock of Ages: South Brisbane Cemetery Symbolism

(Tracey Olivieri & Christopher Dawson, 2008)

Discover the surprising array of gravestone symbolism awaits the visitor to this history-laden cemetery.

RRP \$8.00 - 76 pages, fully illustrated



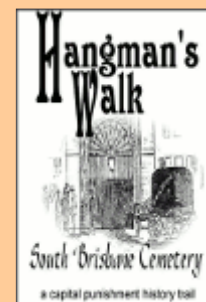
In the Beginning:

The early years of South Brisbane Cemetery

(Tracey Olivieri, 2008)

A fascinating look at the creation and changing shape of the original cemetery, and the lives of some of those buried within.

RRP \$6.00 - 48 pages, illustrations & biblio.



Hangman's Walk: South Brisbane Cemetery

(Christopher Dawson, 2007)

A graveside tour that highlights the connection between the cemetery, Boggo Road Gaol, and hanging.

RRP \$3.00 - 22 pages, with illustrations