

Visit to Ballarat Old Cemetery September 2007.

On 25th September a number of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens History and Guiding groups.

By and large the graves we saw were in reasonable condition :-
George Longley
John Lingham
Thomas Rooney
David Ham
Moses Claxton
J. Russell Thomson
Edward Morey

The exception was, unfortunately, the important one of Thomas Stoddart. The main deficiency seems to be the surrounding ironwork but the state of the grave generally does not provide the recognition deserved by one of the City's great benefactors.

Should we do anything about this? Certainly discussion with the Cemetery Board and the City Council re. renovation could be appropriate.

? Attempt to find original design from original stonemason firm or descendants/present firm or old catalogue.

? Consider plaque indicating importance. (? others too) I am unsure whether this would be allowed by the Trust.

? Develop flyer.

John Garner

Thomas Stoddart's Grave.

Members will be interested to learn that an application for a funding grant has been made to the Ballarat Foundation by the Friends to restore the grave of Thomas Stoddart. His donation of the 12 Carrara marble statues to the Gardens has been a major attraction for over 100 years but unfortunately, having been a bachelor with no descendants to care for it, his grave at the Old Cemetery has deteriorated to a deplorable state, quite inappropriate for a man who contributed so much to the City. Following enquiries at the Cemetery and discussions with local stonemasons and foundries a plan for reconstruction of the site has been developed by Jenny Burrell and John Garner. If successful, as well as the restoration work on the grave itself, a plaque indicating his donation will be prepared and placed at the grave. It is proposed that, on completion, guided tours of the graves of, and memorials to, the benefactors of the gardens will be organised by the Guides group.

Supporting letters for the application have been received from the Mayor, City of Ballarat, the Ballarat and District Genealogical Society, the Ballarat General Cemeteries Trust, the Ballarat Historical Society and the Art Gallery. Their interest, encouragement and assistance is greatly appreciated.