

The GEORGE BOND COLLECTION

I came from Brisbane to live in a Retirement Village on the Gold Coast in June 1985.

I was no stranger to the area since as early as 1926 I had spent frequent holidays there and more recently in the late 1940s had done monumental work in the Southport and neighbouring district cemeteries. So, soon after taking up residence, I visited the Southport Cemetery to locate headstones I'd erected, renovation work done and inscriptions done on headstones where there had been re-burials, nearly 40 years previously. We monumental masons are a vain lot, proud of our own work and critical of others.

I was so pleased to see how well my work had weathered the years and consequent to much self back patting I decided to take photos of some of my work. Thus began my cemetery photography.

But there was more! I was in my element in cemeteries, interested in the many various designs of headstone, the material used in their manufacture and the standard of workmanship involved. I could not spend as much time as I wished at the cemetery and, as there were many headstones there I wished to closely study, I started photographing as many as attracted my attention. Virtually every headstone warranted my attention and the number of photos in my Southport Cemetery files bears witness to my interest there.

I found these photos could be more closely studied if grouped according to the nature of the stone involved - freestone marble and granite. When filed, information regarding the pictured headstones would be annotated thereon.

Thus a collection of photos came into being, augmented by visits to neighbouring cemeteries either where I had done work or where I expected to see comparable work.

As weeks, months, then years passed, I realised I had created a monster - particularly as, when I found time, I travelled to cemeteries further afield, south to Murwillumbah, NSW, west to Boonah, Qld., up the coast to Brisbane there entering such vast necropolises as

Mt. Gravatt, South Brisbane, Nudgee, Bulimba and Hemmant, and west to Ipswich, Qld. Most of these cemeteries were ones in which I had done work. But there's more, yet again!

Back in the 1930s, when I'd served my apprenticeship and become a fully fledged tradesman, I was based at Bundaberg, Qld. Being a frequent visitor to that city, throughout the two main cemeteries were evidence of my workmanship waiting to be photographed. Neighbouring towns - Maryborough to the south, Mt. Perry west and Rockhampton to the north, those and intervening towns captured my attention.

Caboolture, Kilcoy, Esk and Toogoolawah where I had done work received my attention, plus cemeteries of the South Burnett were visited. As photos taken in these places were scrutinised and filed, I found I had run out of space to house them. There were as many as 80 lever arch files full of photos! Provision had to be made for their ultimate, nay immediate, disposal.

Another factor relating to the ultimate disposal was that at this time I had to remake my will. In the event of an untimely death, what was to become of these files? No-one else I knew was interested in them. I had no idea of their genealogical value, not until I spoke to that Doyen of Genealogy, Alison Rogers. She mentioned three potentially interested parties, one in Sydney, one in Canberra and one in Brisbane.

I contacted the first two. Yes indeed, they were interested and expressed a desire to come to my home and microfilm them. That did not solve my problem as I'd still be left with the files. In the course of conversations with these parties, they both pointed out two problems, that of transport of the files and that no space was available to house them. So in desperation I tried the third possibility, the Queensland Family History Society Inc. By now I was so desperate that I would have paid them to take them off my hands!

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Yes indeed, they were interested, and Rosemary Kopittke and Mary Geiger came from the Society to inspect 'the loot.' They confirmed they were interested, and transport and housing were no problem. Glory be! The understanding reached was that ultimately the files would become their possession. In the meantime I would continue filing the photos and annotating thereon relevant information.

Then suddenly the word ultimately became obsolete and 'immediately' became the key word. This was brought about through Cupid having been at work, involving marriage and reorganisation of space in our unit to make room for the bride-to-be's possessions, so the removal of the bulk of the files was effected. But that wasn't the end.

Coincidentally, at the time of disposal I heard from a relative in England who was doing the Bond family ancestral research, wanting to know details that I could provide. Living in Winchester and being an archaeologist, he travelled extensively. Having explained my interest, I put it to him that if at any time he happened to be passing a cemetery, with a camera, and with some time on his hands, could he please take a few photos for me.

He immediately obliged, visiting for me local cemeteries and beyond to Wales and Cornwall and then up to Scotland. These photos plus a batch I had taken for me in an American cemetery, started a re-build of the photo files.

Other pluses have come from several visits I've made to Canberra where two cemeteries there have filled two more files, as have the two cemeteries in Queanbeyan, NSW. Then at the Waverley Cemetery in Sydney, with its wall-to-wall headstones, I had a field day taking over 500 photos in the one day, thus filling another three files.

But I've saved the best till last! Jill Ritchie, bless her, and may her genealogical research prosper, has not only been a source of inspiration to me, but has voluntarily within a year been responsible for twenty-plus files gracing my shelves. Not only did she visit a number of smaller cemeteries in the Brisbane

district which were beyond my reach, but her camera did considerable clicking in such cemeteries as Nundah, Redcliffe, Lutwyche and Toowong. I will not live long enough to adequately file all her takings there, that is, annotate details on each photo.

When she journeyed overseas in 1997, her parting words to me were that she was taking two cameras - one for taking photos for herself, the other for photos for me!

I have revealed that all the photos in the George Bond Collection are not of my taking. Those from other people are being appropriately acknowledged, as will all others that come my way. Consequently, I appeal to any members who have cemetery photos they are willing to have included in the Collection, to please send them along to me, at the address below. I will be pleased to scrutinize them for personal interest and then have them filed with due acknowledgments being made to the source.

George Bond

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The Society has received a grant of \$1000 from the BCC (see p.112) to assist with archiving of this most important photographic collection. - Ed.

MOUNT THOMPSON MEMORIAL GARDENS (Brisbane Crematorium)

Do you have family or loved ones, or own a reservation, at Mount Thompson Gardens? These gardens are now in "Perpetual Everlasting Care" and it is essential that the Crematorium contact all owners as they have many "unclaimed" reservations in family estates. They wish to discuss with relatives the changes that have taken place and to share with them the many options and alternatives that Mount Thompson Memorial Gardens can now offer.

If you know of anyone whose family are buried or commemorated at these gardens, please ask them to contact Mount Thompson (and talk to Rosemary Perkov) on (07) 3219 2888 or write to 373 Nursery Road, Holland Park, Q, 4121 for more information.