

Bendigo Cemetery



Notes for George William KNIGHT Grave #6087 & Interment #25944 in section A1.
He died in August 1923 aged 92.

On 31 December 1853 in the parish church, at Stepney in London, he married Elizabeth Patience Middleton.

Elizabeth died in 1901 in Melbourne (death Reg# 9054) and is not buried in Bendigo. George is buried in the grave of his daughter Florence Emiline who died aged 3 in 1876.

Also the third person in this grave is the son of his DAUGHTER Dora MUNRO - Robert Keith MUNRO who died in 1973.

Dora is buried in the adjoining grave with her husband Robert (Bob) MUNRO. Little interesting point - George Knight's name is under that of his grandson son Robert, who died in 1973 while George died in 1923, suggesting his name was only added 50 years after his own death or that a new headstone was added after the death of Robert.

In 1877, while in the employ of Council as building surveyor and valuator, George Knight had a petition and complaint made against him. It was suggested he used his official position to enter into unfair competition against other nurserymen in Sandhurst.

Full details of these proceedings are shown [here](#).

George Knight offered a painting called "Spanish Maiden", as a loan for display, to the Bendigo Art Gallery.

A series of very ably written and amusing letters appeared in the Advertiser in 1889, by advocates for and against the acceptance of the picture. They can be read [here](#).

Images:
KNIGHT_A1_032.JPG
to
KNIGHT_A1_032B.JPG



George William KNIGHT (1832 - 1923)

The following people were buried in this grave #6087 Sect A1 as per cemetery records.

6087 KNIGHT Florence Emiline buried 23/03/1876 3 yrs
25944 KNIGHT George William died 3/08/1923 buried 4/08/1923 92 yrs
43989 MUNRO Robert Keith died 5/10/1973 buried 8/10/1973 74 yrs

George William Knight (1831-1923), architect, engineer and horticulturist, was born in 1831 in London, son of John Knight, builder and stone merchant, of Limehouse. George was educated at Professor Fitzgerald's school and trained as an architect and engineer. His love of horticulture was already evident at 18, when he built a conservatory adjoining his parents' dining room. Aged 21, he commenced work under Henry Martin, a marine and railway engineer. On 31 December 1853 in the parish church, Stepney, London, he married Elizabeth Patience Middleton (d.1901). They were to have eleven children.

Reaching Melbourne in the Sureswift in 1857, with Elizabeth and two children, possibly to join his brother John George, who was engaged in building Parliament House, George became an engineer on the Williamstown and Sandhurst (Bendigo) railways, being responsible for the bridge over Jacksons Creek at Sunbury. He applied for a crown grant of land at Riddells Creek, near Sunbury, where he established a vineyard. It was not profitable and by 1870 he was working as an architect at Sandhurst. After two years, and with a growing family, he became city building surveyor, a position he held for fourteen years. The work was arduous, as he was also city valuator, city inspector, inspector of nuisances, inspector of cattle for slaughter, inspector of abattoirs and health inspector.

In 1874 he attracted criticism from councillors for taking on additional building work, which he denied. When the demands of the position became too great, he was appointed city and building surveyor at a salary of £400. Knight was accused of neglecting his official duties in favour of his plant nurseries. Counter claims that councillors were undermining his authority by interfering in council contracts united the council against him. In 1886 he resigned in the face of imminent dismissal.

With his children, Knight developed four extensive nurseries in the Bendigo area, transforming barren, mining-affected land into horticultural showplaces. At his Rosenberg Nursery, Back Creek, he grew one of the world's largest rose trees, Cloth of Gold, 14 ft (4.2 m) high, 43 ft (13.1 m) in breadth and 64 ft (19.5 m) long. He had an enduring enthusiasm for palms (a row at his Epsom nursery became a local landmark) and grew more than 400 types of orchid, including New Guinea varieties.

Knight's most striking vine-breeding success was a large and delicious table grape, evolved from the Waltham Cross variety. Exhibited at the Centennial International Exhibition of 1888-89 and admired by vice-regal visitors, it became known as the Centennial grape. A fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society, England, Knight served as a judge in many horticultural shows.

Ever vigilant concerning public matters, he was publicly acknowledged in 1888 for forcing the Bendigo Gas Co. to reduce its prices to consumers. Knight was a founding member of the committee formed in 1891 for the advancement of the Bendigo district, and twenty years later was elected to the municipal council on the strength of his opposition to the reticulation of sewerage. He lost his seat in 1914.

In the 1921 State election he stood unsuccessfully for Bendigo East. In March 1922 the city's legal profession acknowledged his fifty-two years as a justice of the peace and magistrate, claimed to be the longest service on the bench in Victoria.

A picturesque figure in old age, with grey locks and venerable yet keen aspect, Knight retained the optimistic outlook of youth to the end. He died on 3 August 1923 at Bendigo, and was buried in the local cemetery with Anglican rites. Five daughters and one son survived him.

Source:

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/knight-george-william-13029>

*

George William Knight

The Herald (Melbourne, Vic. : 1861 - 1954) Sat 4 Aug 1923 Page 7

RAILWAY ENGINEER DIES AT BENDIGO

BENDIGO, Saturday.

The death occurred shortly before midnight of Mr G W Knight, 92 years of age. Mr Knight studied architecture and engineering under his father in England, and with his brother, Mr J G Knight, came to Victoria when a young man. His brother was architect for the Parliamentary buildings in Melbourne, and he was engineer of the Saltwater-Williamstown railway and also the Sunbury section of the Bendigo-Melbourne railway, the Jackson Creek viaduct being portion of the work carried out under his direction.

The late Mr Knight was greatly interested in viticulture and horticulture before coming to Australia, and on the completion of the railway he established a vineyard on the banks of Jackson Creek. Subsequently he became surveyor of the city of Bendigo, but relinquished that position to engage in horticultural pursuits. He was much interested in the manufacture of wines, and his products gained a big reputation.

The phylloxera outbreak many years ago upset all his plans, and since that time he has devoted all his attention to horticulture, conducting his nursery up to a few weeks ago. He was a justice of the peace for 53 years, being lately a magistrate for Victoria and also for New South Wales. The late Mr Basil Watson, who was killed by falling with an aeroplane into Port Phillip Bay, was a grandson of Mr Knight. When 80 years of age, Mr Knight entered the Bendigo City Council and sat for several years.

**

The Spanish Maiden hangs in the Bendigo Art Gallery



Select the image for details of the artist Jose Gutierrez de la Vega.

Notes from the Bendigo Art Gallery.

A donation of this painting by George Knight caused the Gallery a few problems from the 'high' society of this city.

From 1887 to 1890 the Gallery was housed in a large hall at the Sandhurst School of Mines on Pall Mall (now Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE), until building repairs and the mild outrage caused by the scandalous exhibition of a nude painting, The Spanish Maiden, caused the gallery committee to seek other accommodation.

Read these letters [here](#).



Compiled by Ollie Fenton & Ian Belmont
in May 2020
for the Bendigo Cemetery Obituaries & Notes