



The monument to the Burke & Wills Expedition in the Bendigo Cemetery

THE PUBLIC FUNERAL OF BURKE AND WILLS

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The Havilah s.s., conveying Howitt and his party, with the remains of the unfortunate explorers Burke and Wills, arrived in Hobson's Bay early on the morning of the 28th ult. Immediately on the vessel being moored, the case containing the remains was conveyed on shore, and mounted shoulder high, covered with the Union Jack, by four members of Howitt's party. In this manner it was conveyed along the whole length of the jetty to the hearse, which was at the gates, and thence conveyed to the Hall of the Royal Society. The melancholy ceremony of confining the remains took place on the 30th, in the presence of about fifty gentlemen.

The lying-in-state commenced on the 6th instant. The raised catafalque was in the middle of the floor, surrounded by a carved railing, consisting of the dais and the bier, covered with black cloth, and trimmed with crimson velvet. On top of this, and side by side, lay the coffins, richly mounted, and above them again the metallic shells, made in the shape of the body, and containing the remains of the explorers. The whole was surmounted by a tasteful canopy supported by four fern trees, ornamented with silver gilding.

On the panel of the bier (*a movable frame on which a coffin or a corpse is placed*) over which Burke's coffin was placed was his coat of arms, or that of the family from which he is supposed to have sprung - namely, the Burkes of Galway. The coffin lids bore the inscriptions that Burke died at the age of 40 years, and Wills at 27. The lying in state attracted a large number of spectators daily. The funeral took place on the 21st. An hour before noon the greater number of the shops were closed, and few remained open after twelve o'clock.

His Excellency the Governor, Lady Barkly, and Lady Bowen paid a visit to the

lying in state at eleven o'clock. They remained about twenty minutes, and then took their departure. Between that and half-past twelve o'clock, the outside of the Royal Society's enclosure began to assume a somewhat busy appearance, in consequence of the various public bodies who were to join in the procession having arrived to take up position.

A gun, fired from the Volunteer battery, was the signal for the procession to start, which it did with as much order as could be expected, considering the crowded state of the Street. The marshal, assisted by the Police Force, kept the course clear, and the procession moved slowly on towards Nicholson Street, amidst the firing of the minute guns.

On reaching the Parliament Yard, the members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly joined it, and fell into their allotted places. The procession then being completed, proceeded down Bourke Street:- The Castlemaine Light Dragoons. The Band of the Castlemaine Rifle Volunteer Regiment, playing "The Dead March in Saul." The Castlemaine Volunteer Rifles, under the command of Captain Ryland. A firing party of police, consisting of forty men and officers. Clergymen on foot. A mourning coach, conveying the Very Rev the Dean of Melbourne. Undertaker, state lid, and mutes.

The funeral Car, with remains, drawn by six horses, each horse being led by an attendant. The pallbearers, four abreast, those for Burke being Sir William Stawell, Mr O'Shanassy, King the survivor, Captain Standish, Mr Kyte, Mr Ireland, and Sir Francis Murphy; and for Wills: Mr Thomas Wills, Dr Mueller, Captain Norman, the Hon G Verdon, Mr Howitt, the hon Richard Heales, and the Mayor of Melbourne. The chief mourners. Members of the Exploration Committee. Howitt and his party. The men of the Victoria steam sloop of war. A mourning coach drawn by four horses, and conveying Mrs Dougherty, Burke's nurse. The Corporation of Melbourne, The Governor's carriage, conveying his Excellency and his aide-de-camp. The Vice-Chancellor of the Melbourne University, and Mr Justice Chapman.

Sir James Palmer, President of the Legislative Council. Other members of Parliament, principally of the Legislative Assembly, on foot, and some in cabs. Officers of the Police, and of the Army and Navy, including those of the colonial sloop of war Victoria. A party of Melbourne Volunteer Cavalry. Members of Municipal Councils on foot. The M.U. Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Ancient and Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, the Ancient Order of Rechabites, and citizens in carriages and on foot.

It was half-past three o'clock when the first minute gun was fired from the battery near the Cemetery, that being the signal that the procession was approaching. It

was a quarter to four o'clock before it arrived at the gates, bringing with it, of course, the crowds of persons who accompanied it from the city. The military and artillery lined the entrance with arms reversed, and minute guns continued to be fired; the Castlemaine Light Dragoons, who headed the procession from town, wheeled out of the line, and the funeral car was drawn up at the entrance to the gates.

The next step was to remove the coffins from the funeral car and convey them to the grave. The site that was chosen for the last resting place of the remains of the explorers, is a triangular piece of ground on the south side of the cemetery, near Sir Charles Hotham's monument, and within the Church of England burying ground. The Dean of Melbourne read the burial service, and the party of police who had been drawn up for the purpose, fired three volleys over the grave.

The crowd which surrounded the Cemetery then dispersed, and the various bodies, military and civil, forming the procession, returned home to their several destinations. It is the intention of the Exploration Committee to erect a monument over the grave. In the evening there was a large meeting in St George's Hall, when addresses were presented to Mr Howitt and his party, to Captain Norman, of the Victoria, and to Mr Kyte, the liberal donor to the Exploration. Dr Macadam, amid some strong expressions of the feelings of the audience, endeavoured to exculpate the Exploration Committee. Judge Chapman could not even obtain a hearing.





Compiled by Pat & Ian Belmont
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