



## GSSA Cemetery Recording News

Vol 1 no. 3 September 2003



**Old Church Street Cemetery, Pretoria**  
Site of the “Oldest Cemetery Recording”. See article below.

### Welcome

My apologies for the delay in distribution of this edition. Is it possible that another 3 months has gone by so quickly. For some there has been a lot happening, while others might say different things. The Cemetery Recording Project has certainly seen a very busy period since the last newsletter. There has been much activity in the data processing field as well as progress towards getting set up for the new updated CD of Cemetery Data.

### Contributors and Volunteers

As always we rely very heavily on the help of volunteers in making this project a viable operation. We again wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all those who gave of their time to assist in gathering of Headstone information as well as typing up existing paper based information. The backlog of work still needed to be done is shrinking slowly.

I have just made contact with a lady in Colesberg who actually runs the Museum there. Her enthusiasm in the fields of history and cemeteries is quite amazing. She has agreed to let us have any cemetery information she has for inclusion in a future edition of the Cemetery CD.

### Cemetery CD

Good progress has been made on the road to production of the updated Cemetery CD. A new format will be employed that is sure to be very user friendly. Some problems have been discovered as a result of the new format and these are to be addressed in the next few months. Certain data is incomplete and some has to be corrected, but this will be handled as quickly as possible. To date 200 copies of CD1 have been sold.

**Watch out for a Special Edition of Cemetery Recording News when**

this CD is about to be released.

This CD will also contain a some newly processed data of Zimbabwe cemeteries. There will be 191 small cemeteries with approximately 700 names as well as 4 main cemeteries with a further 600 names. The town and province names have also been 'modernised'.

## Recording Experiences

### A Namibian Recording Experience

I have just had the privilege of visiting Windhoek in Namibia for personal reasons. I could however not let the opportunity go by without putting in some effort in the Cemetery Recording field and visited and recorded 2 small cemeteries in the heart of Windhoek.

The first was the original cemetery set up in 1892 when Windhoek was still very young. It is located on the East side of Robert Mogabe Avenue (originally named Leutwein Street). It contains 107 graves of soldiers, officials of the German Administration, early settlers and citizens. My recording of the cemetery however only yielded 77 items of headstone information. The others do not have any type of headstone whatsoever although the graves are visible. The cemetery was extended on the West side of the road in 1904/1905. This cemetery contains 989 graves of which 319 are those of children. This cemetery ceased to be used in 1927 when a new cemetery was opened in Gammams at the corner of Hochland Road and Hosea Kotako Avenue. The second cemetery I recorded was located immediately adjacent to the Old Windhoek Cemetery and is actually a Memorial to those soldiers who fell in the First and Second World Wars. This contains the names of 149 individuals. I also tried to obtain some information for Natalie da Silva during my visit to Windhoek. I would like to mention that I was very impressed with the assistance afforded me by an official of the Parks & Cemetery Department, Mr. Huysamen, when I contacted him in this regard. He appeared to have had the experience of many people asking for information on persons buried in the various Windhoek cemeteries. He even phoned me to find out if I had been able to get more information from Natalie. The other source I was impressed with was the National Archives. Here I made personal contact with the Senior Archivist, Mr Werner Hillebrecht. Both he and his staff were most efficient and helpful to all my queries. Nothing was too much trouble at all. I also paid a quick visit to the currently used Main cemetery. It is on the corner of Hochland Road and Hosea Kotako Avenue. This cemetery contains some 10,000 burials to date.

*Anyone winning the Lotto could sponsor a trip for those interested to go and do some worthwhile recording.*

If ever you decide to visit Windhoek for a holiday or can find the time to stop for a day while passing through, I would strongly recommend a visit to the Cemeteries. They are all well kept and clean and most of all safe to visit.

Errol Dollenberg

## Branch/Individual Contributions

### Our "Oldest Cemetery Recording" - 116 years!

Robert Gregory was an English immigrant who, starting in Natal, travelled widely around the various parts of what was to become South Africa. He was involved in the early days in Kimberley, the Reef and Pretoria. Luckily for us, he kept a very detailed diary of his travels.

On 25 April 1887, he visited Church Street Cemetery, and was appalled by the condition of the graves of British soldiers killed during the First Boer War, 1881; to quote; " (The cemetery) appears to have been neglected from the time of their interment, weeds and grass and wild bushes growing in every direction". This only 6 years after the event! He then went on to record the headstones.

In January 2003, Peter & Beverley visited the graves, and noted how beautifully the area is now kept, together with the rest of Church Street Cemetery.

Robert's work is incorporated into the Record for Church Street, the main recording of which was done some years ago by H J Pruis et al, and will be included in the new CD to be published early in 2004.

Courtesy: C Bayliss/ B S Moss.

## Branch News

Johannesburg Branch – Another fruitful day was spent on 9 August and added a further approximately 500 records to our recording project. We also discovered the gravestone of George Walker, an early pioneer of the gold discoveries on the Witwatersrand. We still have an area to complete as well as the Jewish section of the cemetery. The total is estimated to reach approximately 4,500 on completion.

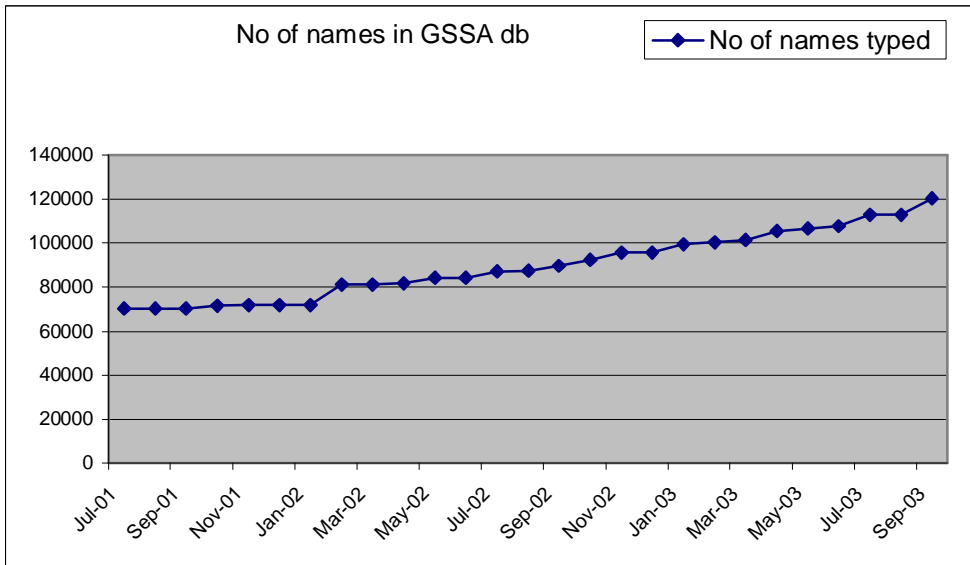
South East Wits Family History Society – SEWFHS has recorded the West Street, Kempton Park cemetery and it will be included in the new CD. They have also been to record the Riversdale, Meyerton Cemetery on 8 November 2003. This will be processed in due course.

## Q & A Department

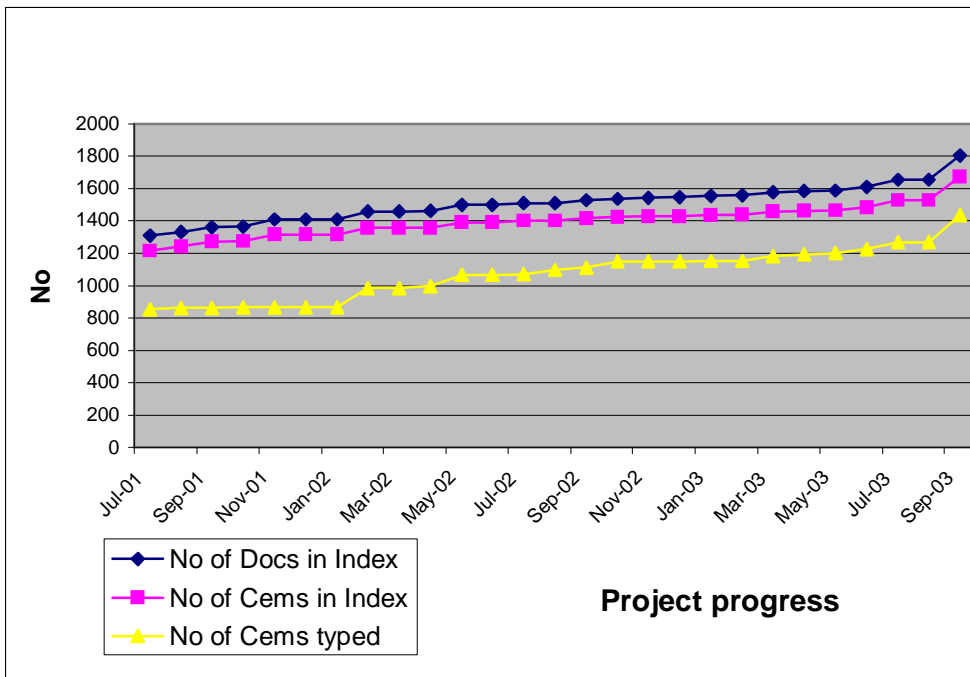
"How can I help with adding data to the project?" It was pleasing to receive an e-mail from a contributor offering to provide data for cemeteries that have been recorded and yet do not seem to reach the Project. Steps have been taken to procure this information. Thanks "Martin" for kind offer and assistance.

It was also rewarding to receive contact from individuals who have used our first CD and found what they were looking for. Also some corrections have been advised which will be applied to the new CD. We thank Larry Green for this input.

### Statistics



The graph has shown a steep incline in the last quarter and now stands at 120,301 names on the database. This will increase by the end of October when we close the current database for final processing. We could hopefully reach at least 128,000 by that point.



As with the volume of names this graph also reflects the marked increase in cemeteries now on the database. This represents 1672 cemeteries of which 1434 have been typed. The margin of 238 will also reduce slightly by the end of October.

### Editor's Note

I really would like to call on all those that receive this newsletter to take a look in the mirror and honestly say that they have nothing to offer for inclusion in future editions. Please let me have some stories or anecdotes regarding your own or branch experiences while out recording cemeteries. It will make reading so much more enjoyable for everyone else.

Have you visited the GSSA website recently. It can be found at [ggsa.info](http://ggsa.info). It contains information on branches and projects in progress as well as a list of the cemeteries that are on the database for the CD.

The entire team of the Cemetery Recording Project wish to take this opportunity of wishing all a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New year filled with happy "Recording" in 2004.

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