



SACRED  
to the MEMORY of.  
SAMUEL and EASTER BRADLEY  
who where Inhumanly Murder'd.  
by their own Servant  
on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1822.  
S.B. Aged 50 Years  
E.B. Aged 65 Years

# DEAD CENTRAL

**Accessible large print transcript**



# Chapter 1

## HIDDEN HISTORIES

*BUSY CONTEMPORARY TRAIN STATION,  
TRAINS PASS, RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENTS PLAY,  
PASSENGERS' FOOTSTEPS*

**NARRATOR:** The dead are invisible, but not absent. We move through our days, around city streets, across hallowed ground with no thought of what happened here before us. Who lived on this spot? How did they die? How many layers of loss lie beneath our busy footsteps? Lost songs, lost kinships. Nor do most of us think about our own lives as one more film of dust beneath the feet of an oblivious future. But I think about it. Cities are always reshaping themselves, being demolished and rebuilt to accommodate the living. But we can visit vanished Sydney by assembling remnants of the past. Maps, letters, paintings, photographs: each one of them evidence, and a doorway into its own story.

**RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENT:** Doors closing, please stand clear.

**NARRATOR:** Ready? All aboard.

*TRAIN SOUNDS ESCALATE*

# Chapter 2

# CONSECRATED GROUND

*IN AN 1820s TOWN, HAWKERS CHANT, BIRDS CALL*

**NARRATOR:** Consider the map. On Gadigal land, a town has been hacked out of rock and forest and named ‘Sydney’ — traced with dirt roads, its hillocks and dwellings, a hand whose fingers tentatively reach towards the sea. There’s Cockle Bay, which has nourished the inhabitants for many thousands of years. Past the Brickfields, built around the inlets for their clay, is a wilderness of delicately sketched sand hills. That sandy expanse is where we’re standing now, in the shadow of a future clock tower.

*THE VOICE OF A MAN LEADS PEOPLE IN A HYMN*

*THUD*

**GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL 1:** Government Orders, 22nd January 1820. His Excellency the Governor has lately caused a spacious burial ground to be prepared and enclosed with a wall, situated at a short distance beyond the Brickfields, which is henceforth only to be used as a place of interment, for the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Sydney.

*MAN SINGS 'THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD' AND PEOPLE  
SING AS THEY TRUDGE ALONG*

*HYMN SWELLS AND CONTINUES*

**REPORTER 1:** *Sydney Gazette*, 1820. Divine Service was performed at the Church of St Philip, York Street, and a very affecting and appropriate sermon was preached by the Reverend Marsden. The reverend gentleman proceeded to the burial ground, followed by the Reverend Mr Cowper, the schoolmasters and all the children of the three government schools in Sydney. The ceremony of consecration was performed by the principal chaplain.

*CROW CAWS*

*SPADE SLICES THE SOIL*

**MARSDEN:** By virtue of our authority in the Church of God we have now consecrated and set apart from all profane use, this ground, to be a resting place for the remains of those who have departed in the Lord. O God, by whose mercy the faithful departed ...

*MARSDEN'S VOICE FADES*

**REPORTER 1:** The new cemetery is a large and commodious one, situated on an open and airy ascent, and commanding a picturesque view of the city and harbour.

**MARSDEN:** The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

*MELANCHOLIC PIANO MUSIC PLAYS*

**NARRATOR:** But what about before? Step back just a year or two and this is all sand and swamp, windswept scrubby heath.

*SOFT BURBLING OF A RUNNING BROOK*

**NARRATOR:** A stream meanders through it, emptying into Tumbalong. The Gadigal gather on the sand hills to observe the strangers over in the harbour: their tall ships, their clustered tents. Watching as they break up rock, redirect waterways, fell entire stands of life-giving trees.

*BIRDS SING, SAWING AND CRASHING TREES*

**NARRATOR:** Tents become buildings of wood and brick — shops, houses, stables, cattle yards: a town.

*FAR OFF, HAMMERING, SAWING  
AND WHINNYING HORSES*

**NARRATOR:** Sydney grows fast — the boats leave, and return, full.

*HUBBUB, SOUNDS OF CONSTRUCTION*

**NARRATOR:** Those who won't be going home are buried near the harbour, then further away in the George Street burial ground — site of the future Town Hall.

*SPADE SLICES THE SOIL*

**NARRATOR:** As the colony spreads, burials are removed beyond the town limits — past the Brickfields, to the sand hills.

*CHURCH BELLS RING*

# Chapter 3

## RESTING PLACE

**GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL 1:** Government Orders, 29th January 1820. All vaults shall be of the same length and be placed uniformly in line with each other extending east and west, according to the order established in the mother country.

*SHEEP BLEAT IN THE DISTANCE*

**GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL 1:** Any animals which shall be hereafter found in the New Burial Ground will be impounded for trespass and the owners prosecuted.

**NARRATOR:** The new cemetery becomes the final resting place of most Sydneysiders: barmaids, bankers and bushrangers, countless infants, even a queen.

*MELANCHOLIC PIANO MUSIC PLAYS*

**CORA GOOSEBERRY (SPEAKS IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE):** ngayagang Cora, gamayngal-ngay ba gadhungal-ngay (I am Cora, I belong to Botany Bay and coastal Sydney) wiyanga-ngay madha nguradjan nhay (I am a senior woman and this is my country) ngura-dha nhay ngalaya dhalimarandhi-djan Bungaree (I lived here with my husband bungaree)

**NARRATOR:** Cora Gooseberry, a senior Aboriginal woman from coastal Sydney and Botany Bay. A well-known identity throughout the colony during the first half of the 19th century, Cora lived in Aboriginal camps around Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay with her relatives and husband Bungaree.

**MARY REIBEY:** Mary, widow of Mr Thomas Reibey. Born 1777, died 1855.

**NARRATOR:** And, by the way, hotel-keeper, businesswoman and trader. Transported for horse-stealing while dressed as a boy, aged 13, she died old and rich in Newtown. She's buried with her daughter.

**CELIA WILLS:** Celia, wife of Thomas Wills, who departed this life in September 1823, aged 20 years.

**SIMEON LORD:** Sacred to the memory of Simeon Lord, late of Band House, Botany, who departed this life January 29th 1840, aged 69 years.

**NARRATOR:** Transported for stealing muslin and calico at 20, in middle-age Lord employed 60 convicts making cloth for the government. Besides auctioneer, sealer and timber merchant, this emancipist became a magistrate.

**ISABELLA LAYCOCK:** Isabella Laycock, wife of Captain Thomas Laycock, who departed this life May 13th 1817, aged 30 years. Weep not my husband and children dear, I am not dead but sleeping here.

**NARRATOR:** And along this path, under a crooked banksia, lie the bones of an explorer and botanical collector for the colony.

**CUNNINGHAM:** Allan Cunningham, Esquire. Departed this life on the 27th June 1839, aged 48 years.

**NARRATOR:** Presbyterian, Catholic, Jewish, Quaker, Wesleyan, Episcopal, and general interments: actually seven distinct cemeteries. Each buried with their own.

*SAWING*

**NARRATOR:** But the mother country's 'order' is not to last long.

*IRON WHEELS, HORSESHOES ON COBBLESTONES*

**NARRATOR:** The city won't stop. The streets race outward, hit the wall of the cemetery, jump over it and continue on their mission southward.

*SOUNDSCAPE ESCALATES*

**NARRATOR:** The city won't stop, and neither will death.

*SOFT VIOLIN MUSIC PLAYS*

**REVEREND WALSH:** Christ Church Parsonage, 1849. My Lord, I admit myself of the circumstances of the burial ground being in my parish, to represent to your Lordship its present condition of unfitness as a place of interment for the Christian dead.

**HEALTH OFFICER:** As Health Officer, I received a letter from a person living near the Burial Grounds, who begged to point out to me:

**FEMALE VOICE:** ... the filthy and overcrowded state, where some 20 to 30 bodies are interred weekly, many not exceeding two feet below the land, so near the surface that you could just touch them with a walking stick or umbrella.

*SPADE SLICES THE SOIL*

**REVEREND WALSH:** It is now scarcely possible to dig a grave without disinterring the remains of dead bodies; and I have myself on several occasions seen the side of coffins projecting at various depths, to the great distress of all right-minded persons.

*FOOTSTEPS ECHOING*

**HEALTH OFFICER:** City Council Chambers, 1860. Gentlemen, the history of medicine shows that overcrowded graveyards within towns and cities have given rise to the most fatal consequences.

*EPIC MUSIC PLAYS*

**HEALTH OFFICER:** The gases which are evolved from the dead human body are capable of producing contagious and more pestilential diseases, even plague and cholera. I therefore now with due deference suggest that my report should be immediately brought under the notice of the government with a view of immediate closing of the burial ground in Devonshire Street.

*THE CLANG OF AN IRON GATE,  
TOLLING OF A CHURCH BELL*

## Chapter 4

# STATION FOR A CITY

*CLATTERING HORSE-DRAWN BUSES, TRAINS,  
SCREECHING WHEELS*

**NARRATOR:** Here we are, standing in a cemetery that reveals its sandy origins with every gusty westerly. Those hills are now stratified with mortal remains and choked with thistles.

*WIND BLOWS, CHATTER IN THE DISTANCE*

**NARRATOR:** It's 1889. Despite the gates closing 20 years ago, government exemptions have seen burials continue here — 3000 of them, in fact. But now, with the foetid stench arising from the vaults and drainage poisoning Darling Harbour, there's pressure to clear away the cemetery altogether.

*HUBBUB AND FOOTSTEPS*

**NARRATOR:** What was once a 'walking city' is crisscrossed by tram lines; the entire colony with railway tracks.

*TRAMS PASS, BELL DINGS, HAMMER ON METAL*

**NARRATOR:** With the growing demand for transport, more track is feverishly laid — but the trains are stopped dead by Devonshire Street and the 30,000 souls buried in the sand. They come to a halt at Redfern.

*CONSTRUCTION NOISE FADES,  
INTENSE PIANO MUSIC PLAYS*

**REPORTER 2:** The present station, so far from being ornamental, is seen to most advantage when it is pitch dark. It is the ugliest and least commodious structure on the line ...

*TRAINS PASS ON THE PLATFORM, WHISTLE BLOWS,  
BLASTS OF STEAM*

**REPORTER 3:** Get rid of the objectionable luggage trolley, which is always frightening nervous people and annoying irascible ones when it comes rumbling along the platform.

**REPORTER 2:** ... hot and cold blasts and the damp that afflict passengers at Redfern ...

**REPORTER 3:** ... utterly inadequate as the terminus ...

**NARRATOR:** Sydney desperately needs a major railway station — but where to build? Circular Quay? Darling Harbour? Wynyard Square? Dawes Point? Surely not Hyde Park?

*PROTESTORS CHANT,  
KEYS BEING PRESSED ON A TYPEWRITER*

**REPORTER 2:** *National Advocate*, 1890. A very large public meeting was held in Hyde Park today to protest against the desire of the Railway

Commissioners that a portion of Hyde Park be set apart for railway purposes.

**REPORTER 3:** *Daily Telegraph*, 1896. The proposal is still a subject of much discussion. To quote Sir Henry Parkes:

*PROTESTORS CONTINUE CHANTING*

**SIR HENRY PARKES:** To construct a new railway terminus on the spot would carry with it the immediate destruction of the present Supreme Court and St James' Church — it would be the cause of an intolerable disturbance to St Mary's Cathedral, and create permanent disfigurement of the most beautiful portion of the metropolis.

*BOOING, BANGING OF GAVEL FOR QUIET*

**SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE:** I call this Legislative Assembly Debate to order on this Thursday, the 7th of December 1899. Minister for Works, you have the floor.

**NARRATOR:** Edward O'Sullivan, a big bloke with a clipped moustache. In the wake of the recent Depression, as unions mobilise and strikes are afoot, he's looking for a project to employ hundreds.

**O'SULLIVAN:** Gentlemen, the late Mr Eddy, Chief Commissioner, proposed to resume the whole block on which stands the Benevolent Asylum, Christ Church Rectory, the Convent of the Good Samaritan, the Police Barracks and the Burial Ground.

*CROWD EXCLAIMS AND CHATTER*

**NARRATOR:** How will the public react to losing Sydney's oldest buildings? 'Proud foundations

destroyed', or a chance to erase evidence of our convict roots?

*CROWD REACTS AND EXCLAIMS*

**O'SULLIVAN:** This is a question that has been delayed too long. For the last 20 years, nothing practicable has yet been done to bring the railway into the city. It has devolved therefore upon this Government to take some decisive steps.

*RUMBLE OF APPROVAL, BANGING OF GAVEL*

**SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE:** The motion is carried: Devonshire Street Cemetery will be resumed for a new railway station.

*BANGING OF GAVEL, RAIN SPATTERS*

**NEWSBOY:** *Town and Country Journal*, 1901, sixpence!

*DOG BARKS IN THE DISTANCE, SHOVELLED SAND*

**REPORTER 2:** The whole block of land, of which the cemetery forms but a part, has to be cleared. And when it has been cleared, several of the most interesting features of 'old Sydney' will have disappeared, wreckage upon the waves of the great sea of Progress.

*HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGES, CHATTER*

**REPORTER 2:** Everyone ought to go and see this cemetery before it is too late — so do go, all of you, and show some reverence for the men who have helped to make us able to stand alone.

*RAIN SPATTERS*

**NARRATOR:** I went, I was there. We remembered them.

# Chapter 5

## POSTERITY

*MUFFLED SOUND OF WIND RUSHING THROUGH  
EMPTY TUNNELS, RUMBLE OF TRAINS,  
HEAVY METAL DOOR OPENS*

**TOUR GUIDE:** Come through, people. Don't be shy.

*FOOTSTEPS*

**TOUR GUIDE:** Just watch the platform edge.  
We've only got a few minutes down here.

**TOURIST 1:** Why's it called the Ghost Platform?

**TOUR GUIDE:** We're about 10 metres below the  
intersection of Chalmers and Devonshire streets.  
Beneath us are Platforms 24 and 25 to Bondi  
Junction. They built this in the '70s for a Northern  
Beaches line, never finished it. So we call it the  
Ghost Platform. That's one reason.

**TOURIST 2:** What's the other?

**TOUR GUIDE:** This is the site of an old cemetery.  
30,000 corpses, once buried all around us.  
Rail staff have heard children's voices down here.

*NERVOUS LAUGHTER*

**TOUR GUIDE:** True.  
Not me personally, but my co-workers have.

**TOURIST 3:** When did it close?

**TOUR GUIDE:** 1866. Only took the government 40 years to start on Central. Sydney had to wait till the turn of the century. Let's test your knowledge, history buffs: what else was going on in 1901?

**TOURIST 4:** Federation.

*WIND RUSHING*

**TOUR GUIDE:** Very good. First piece of legislation?

**TOURIST 1:** Was it the White Australia Policy?

**TOURIST 2:** Wait, what is the White Australia Policy?

**TOUR GUIDE:** Yep, we were off to a great start. Anyway, the planned demolition of the cemetery stirred up interest. It became a bit of a tourist attraction.

*TOURISTS EXPRESS SURPRISE*

**TOUR GUIDE:** Oh yeah, picnics among the tombs, sentimental poems in the *Herald*.

*TOURIST COUGHS*

**TOUR GUIDE:** And fortunately for us, one couple decided to document the place. A Mr and Mrs Foster — Arthur and Josephine, from Surry Hills. She took photographs, and he copied the tombstone inscriptions into a book. They spent the better part of two years on it.

*FOOTSTEPS*

**TOUR GUIDE:** Alright, let's move on now ...

**NARRATOR:** Oh, at least two years: all our spare time, every weekend. We'd clear away the undergrowth,

clean the headstones, ink the lettering to make it legible, and get to work.

*SWISH OF KNEE-HIGH GRASS, DRONE OF INSECTS*

**ARTHUR:** What've you found there, Josie?

**JOSEPHINE/NARRATOR:** Come and have a look.

*KEYS BEING PRESSED ON A TYPEWRITER*

**REPORTER 4:** *Australian Star*, February 1901. A thick, disorderly and in some places almost impenetrable scrub covers most of the ground and tombstones lie scattered in careless confusion all over the place.

**ARTHUR:** Good Lord, a First-Fleeter, wasn't he?

*KEYS BEING PRESSED ON A TYPEWRITER*

**REPORTER 4:** Where standing, they present grotesque attitudes like a party of drunken men crossing a field. The fences bear marks of having been well climbed, and over the whole scene is an indescribable air of careless contempt for a spot that should be hallowed.

**ARTHUR:** Are these the same Ruxtons your dad used to talk about?

**JOSEPHINE/NARRATOR:** Could be.

*KEYS BEING PRESSED ON A TYPEWRITER*

**REPORTER 7:** A lady photographer, with her attendant genius holding the umbrella to shield her from the bright and ardent sun of an easy and cool summer's day, was there.

**JOSEPHINE/NARRATOR:** Can you hold the tripod steady, Arthur?

**ARTHUR:** Doing my best.

*CAMERA CLICKS*

**JOSEPHINE/NARRATOR:** Got it.

**ARTHUR:** Over here, love. Watch your hands, there's thorns.

**JOSEPHINE/NARRATOR:** It's a brother and sister. Look how small they were. Harriet Mary Sheba, 1 year, 7 months and 15 days. And her brother, 3 years 5 months and 9 days.

**HARRIET SHEBA (CHILD) / JOSEPHINE:** Harriet Mary Sheba, who ceased to breathe on the 5th day of December, 1836.

**ARTHUR:** Is this one too far gone? It's nearly worn away.

**HUGH MACDONALD (SCOT) / ARTHUR:** In this grave are deposited the remains of Hugh MacDonald, leaving behind him a widow and family of young children to deplore his premature dissolution.

**JOSEPHINE/NARRATOR:** We're going to lose the light soon.

**ARTHUR:** No, would you credit it? Here's James Squire.

**JAMES SQUIRE (ELDERLY):** In sacred respect to the remains of Mr James Squire, late of Kissing Point, who departed this life May 16, 1822, at the age of 67 years. He arrived in this colony on the First Fleet. Under his care, the hop plant was first cultivated in this settlement and the first brewery erected.

**ELIZA TURNER (BITTER):** Eliza Turner, aged 40 years, after a painful and lingering illness which she bore with Christian fortitude.

**JOHN WEISS (GERMAN):** To the memory of Frederick Gustaff, Infant Son of John and Elizabeth Weiss. Who died on the 2nd of May 1855, aged 17 months and 7 days. Sweet innocency's form lies here / Lamented by his parents dear / Who hopes at last in endless joy / To meet again their lovely boy.

**MARY LONG (IRISH):** Sacred to the memory of Denis Long, Native of the City of Cork Ireland. Lord have mercy on his soul. I'm married to the grave / My wedding day is oer / My husband I adore / And my name is Mary Long.

*MELANCHOLIC VIOLIN MUSIC PLAYS*

**NARRATOR:** Many are here in Arthur's books. Carefully, lovingly, transcribed. Nation-builders, and stillborn babies. All equal in death.

**JOHN LEWIN:** Here rests the body of John Lewin, who departed this life 1819, aged 49 years. In him the community has been deprived of an honest man and this country of an eminent artist in his line of Natural History painting, in which he excelled. He is gone.

**ISAAC TITTERTON:** Isaac Titterton who departed this life on the 3rd of December 1852 aged 50 years. And his children, Charles Hadley, 11 years. Elizabeth Jane, 3 years and 10 months. William Henry, 17 months. Our child that moulders in the tomb was beautiful from birth.

*EPITAPHS OVERLAP*

**WILLIAM WARREN:** Mr William Warren, late of York Street, who in the meridian of his life, by a fatal fall from his horse was so mortally injured as to cause his death.

**CATHERINE HAMILTON:** Catherine Jane who departed this life in the 22nd year of her age having never recovered from the shock and affliction occasioned by the awful and sudden death of her husband who met his fate by the falling of his horse.

**MADAME MARIE MARGUERITT D'HOTMAN:** Madame Marie Margueritt D'Hotman who departed this life at Hobart Town on the 9th August 1831 aged 52 years. Her remains were conveyed from thence at her last request to be placed by the side of her beloved granddaughter.

**EDWARD JAMES GREY:** Edward James Grey. This promising and lamented youth fell victim at the age of 11 years to the envenomed bite of a snake.

**WILLIAM OLIVER:** William Oliver, killed by a bullock cart.

**THOMAS AMOS:** Sacred to the memory of Thomas Sterrup Amos Esquire, solicitor of this colony, who deceased on the 19th of November 1819, the victim of deeply wounded feelings.

*SOBBING*

**LETTER-WRITER 1:** To the Editor: Is the dust of men who, in their day, worked hard to build up this city to be scattered to the winds? Having an interest in that sleeping place of the dead, I write thus early to express the hope that due respect will be paid.

*SCRATCHING OF NIB ON PAPER*

**LETTER-WRITER 2:** Disturb them not! The hallowed  
dead / Nor come where they have calmly slept; /  
Full half a century hath sped / Since o'er their graves  
their loved ones wept.

*PIANO MUSIC PLAYS*

**NARRATOR:** We were looking backwards while  
looking forwards. Recording the past as it  
disappeared beneath our feet, so that you,  
the future, wouldn't forget.

*RUMBLING*

## Chapter 6

# EXHUMATION AND EXCAVATION

*A BUSTLING CITY WITH TRAMS, HORSES, A BELL DINGS*

**GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL:** The Department of Public Works will bear all reasonable expenses incurred in the re-interment of bodies in such cemetery as the said representatives of the deceased may desire.

**HECKLER 1:** What? Speak English!

**HECKLER 2:** They'll pay to move your gran's bones somewhere else.

**HECKLER 1:** Oh.

**GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL:** In the case of those bodies for which no applications will have been received at the expiration of this notice, exhumation will be carried out by the Government.

*CROWD DISPERSSES, KEYS BEING PRESSED  
ON TYPEWRITER*

**REPORTER 5:** *The Sydney Mail*, 1901. Rapid progress is being made with the work of removing bodies to the new cemetery at La Perouse so that a start may be made with the foundations of the big railway station.

*DING OF THE CARRIAGE RETURN AS ITS CLATTER  
IS SUPERSEDED BY ANOTHER TYPEWRITER*

**REPORTER 6:** *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1901. During the past fortnight, large numbers of people have been arriving daily to give directions as to the disposition of their buried relatives.

**REPORTER 5:** So many graves were found under paths and in unindicated places that it was found necessary to trench over the whole ground to a depth of several feet in order to get all the remains.

**REPORTER 6:** When a grave is opened at Devonshire Street, the tombstone and the coffin are similarly numbered. To facilitate the transference of the coffins, two-and-a-quarter miles of tramline has been constructed from the Botany terminus.

*IRATE SCRATCHING OF NIB ON PAPER*

**LETTER-WRITER 1:** To the Editor: Monetary miscalculations appear to be a weakness with the present State Government. Now we are told that the removal of bones will cost, not 10,000 pounds as originally estimated, but 50,000, if not more.

*SUSPENSEFUL MUSIC PLAYS*

**NARRATOR:** As headstones and scrub are dug up, the sand hills are once again revealed. The factories continue to belch away up on Albion Street; it's business as usual in the foundries and sweatshops. But here, on these 12 acres, some strange finds are being made by the workmen.

*KEYS BEING PRESSED ON TYPEWRITER*

**REPORTER 5:** *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 1901. In one grave were a beautiful pair of Chinese slippers with the bones of a woman's feet inside them. On Monday morning, when the men went back to work, they found small candles tied in bamboo burning over the open grave.

**REPORTER 6:** It was the family vaults which presented the most gruesome appearance. Some of these had quite collapsed, and through the holes thus caused, fragments of coffins and human bones could be seen.

*MUTED VERSION OF THE WHISPERED EPITAPHS  
OVERLAPPING*

**MARY REDMAN (WHISPERED):** Beneath this stone are deposited the remains of Sophia Redman. Died September 3rd 1828. Aged 3 years and 3 days.

**JOHN REDMAN (WHISPERED):** Also of John Redman who died November 26th 1837, aged 70 years.

**MARY REDMAN (WHISPERED):** Also of Mary Redman, relict of John Redman. Died February 23rd 1859 aged 68 years, leaving four sons and two daughters. Her whole life was devoted to the moral and material welfare of her children. God graciously permitted her to see them all educated and married.

**REPORTER 5:** In most cases, the mortal remains consisted of little else than a few bones, a handful of dust, and what looked like burnt rags. In some cases, however, the remains were fairly well preserved, particularly so in the case of one Stephenson, who was buried right up to the railings in Devonshire Street ...

*VOICES FADE AWAY*

**REPORTER 6:** The body was almost wholly preserved, clad in a dress suit, white bow, and gold studs in the shirtfront, the whole remaining after many years intact.

**REPORTER 5:** I cannot tell you all I felt as I walked over the cleared ground — it seemed like taking the veil off some sacred thing and I could only touch the stone lovingly and say some tender little prayer for the long, long dead who seemed so friendless, so utterly alone, yet right against the throbbing heart of the living city.

*THROBBING*

# Chapter 7

## BIRTH OF A STATION

*OPTIMISTIC TURN-OF-LAST-CENTURY MUSIC PLAYS,  
BANGING, SPADE SLICES THE SOIL, PEOPLE CHATTER*

**O’SULLIVAN:** The new Central Railway Station will be the handsomest in the world.

**REPORTER 6:** Mr O’Sullivan, according to the *Bulletin*, the plans show it has all the salient features of the Colosseum, St Paul’s, the Kremlin and a Yankee skyscraper.

*LAUGHTER IN THE DISTANCE*

**O’SULLIVAN:** The tower will be 250 feet high, with a clock visible from most parts of the city. All the streets approaching will be 100 feet wide, planted on each side with trees. Right in front will stand Belmore Park, which will be without fences, and virtually become the front garden, while at the same time being accessible to all classes of people.

*HAMMERING*

**REPORTER 6:** Made of sandstone from Pymont Quarry, marble from Orange, and a ticket office of Tasmanian blackwood.

**O’SULLIVAN:** And New South Wales tallowwood in the floors, cedar for joinery ...

**REPORTER 6:** Sounds expensive. In fact, 561,000 of taxpayers’ hard-earned pounds?

**O’SULLIVAN:** Of course, there are people who will take exception to this expenditure, but I predict that when they see the Central Railway Station completed, they will be its warmest admirers.

*HAMMERING, SPADE SLICES THE SOIL*

*BRASS BAND PLAYS, CHEERING AND APPLAUSE*

**O’SULLIVAN:** Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. I built, not for today or 20 years hence, but for all time, for a city to surpass even Paris in beauty and picturesqueness. It is cheering, after the flood of abuse poured on me, to see that at last opening day is at hand.

**GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL 2:** On this day the 4th of August 1906, I hereby declare Central Station open!

*CHEERING AND APPLAUSE,  
A TRAIN CHUGGING ALONG*

**NARRATOR:** As we march towards the glorious future, the past keeps slipping away, to be swallowed up by the dark.

*ABORIGINAL SINGING*

**NARRATOR:** Look at the map now: those fingers confidently striving towards the sea; forest and rivulets, once charted as empty space, razed in the name of nation-building. The Great War will delay the building of the clock tower, but in 15 years it will cast

its shadow over the young city. But before then ...

*ABORIGINAL SINGING CONTINUES*

*VOICES OF RECOGNISABLE GHOSTS*

*SUCH AS CORA GOOSEBERRY, HARRIET SHEBA, ETC*

**VOICE 1:** ... a bush capital will be founded.

**VOICE 2:** Australian explorers will venture south and slog through Antarctic ice.

**VOICE 3:** Half a million boys will be given guns and shipped to Europe, many never to return.

**VOICE 4:** The NSW Government will gain power to remove Aboriginal children from their families.

*ABORIGINAL SINGING FADES*

*TRAIN PASSES, WHEELS SCREECH, WHISTLE BLOWS*

**NARRATOR:** But for now, as the first train out of the terminus is signalled with a gold whistle and a silk flag, everything looks rosy. This little piece of yellow cardboard: a ticket from Sydney's brand-new Central Station. So many stories compressed into a paper stub.

*FOOTSTEPS*

**NARRATOR:** Peel back one layer and there are countless more below, stories lying dormant, wanting to be picked up and turned over and examined, waiting to be looked at in the light.

*ETHEREAL MUSIC PLAYS*



*Dead Central* is a free exhibition at the State Library of NSW until 17 November 2019.

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#### **EXHIBITION**

Exhibition designer: Paul Bewley

Graphic designer: Rosie Handley

Editor: Cathy Perkins

Senior conservator: Helen Casey

Conservator: Cath Bartley

Original material preparation: Collection Care

Assistant registrar: Lauren Dalla

Exhibitions assistant: Jo de Monchaux

Lighting designers: Ben Cistern & Ren Kenward

Production designer: Eve Waugh (Chapter 6 installation)

Cinematographer: Rotor Works Aerial Cinematography  
(Ghost platform)

Video editor: Elliott Magen (Chapter 5)

#### **AUDIO**

Writer: Hilary Bell

Sound post production: Sonar Sound

Sound designer: Julian Wessels & Luke Mynott

Sound producer: Lesley Chambers

Dharawal language & culture consultant: (Eastern Zone  
Gujaga Aboriginal Corporation) Raymond Ingrey

Transcription: Access Media

## **CAST**

Caroline Brazier, Rupert Degas, Brandon Burke,  
Annie Finsterer, Kelly Malkin, Petra Silva, Matthew Backer  
Additional voices: Steven Bell, Paul Bewley, Thomas Blake,  
John Day, John Duncan Golder, Hilary Catherine Golder,  
Robin Handley, Maya Le Her, Jonathan London,  
Daisy Millwork, Lars Rutz, Claudine Whealing

## **SONGS**

'Ceremony of Seed', composed & performed by Steve Francis, courtesy of Bangarra Dance Theatre, *Dark Emu* (2018)  
'Birth of Bennelong', composed & performed by Steve Francis, vocals and Language words Matthew Doyle, vocals Sydney Philharmonia Choir, courtesy of Bangarra Dance Theatre, *Bennelong* (2017)

## **AUDIO APP & PLATFORM**

Digital Channels team, Digital Library Systems and Services

## **MANY THANKS TO**

The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council  
City Historian Lisa Murray and the City of Sydney Archives  
Julie Welsh, Community Development Officer, City of Sydney  
Donna Newton, Royal Australian Historical Society  
State Records of New South Wales  
Bangarra Dance Theatre  
Sydney Trains  
Kevin Sarah  
Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP)  
Australian Railway Historical Society

