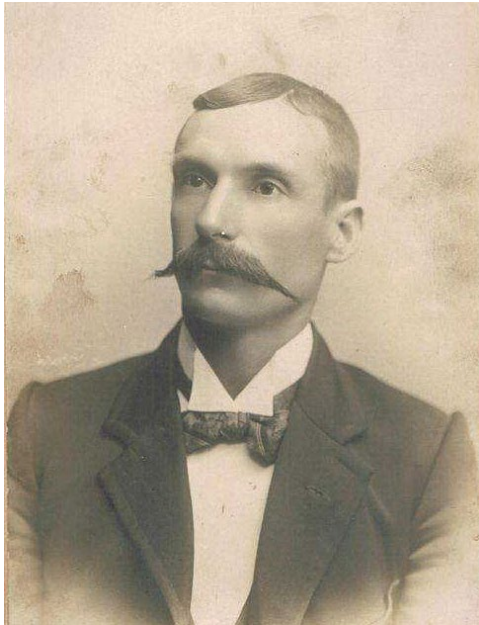


Victor Watts (1872-1902)



Victor Watts

Born in Burra, South Australia, on 7 December 1872 to William and Jane Watts, Victor worked as a miner on the Eastern Goldfields. On 22 May 1902, while working at the Perseverance Gold Mine in Boulder, tragedy struck at the 200-foot level of No. 1 stope.

A fellow miner later recalled: "At 10 o'clock we fired some shots, and after firing we started to bar down some ground. The deceased was at the top of the ladder, and I was at the bottom. I heard a crack, and sang out "Look out!" I ran away, to a place of safety. My candle went out, and on lighting it again I saw the fall of stone on top of Watts." (Coroner's Inquest, 1902, p.13)¹

Victor was laid to rest on Saturday 24th May at the Original Boulder Cemetery, attended by a large number of men from the Mines Rovers Club and miners and surface hands from the mine, friends and

acquaintances and family. The cortege was once of the largest funerals held in Boulder.

A talented footballer, Victor first came to prominence in 1894 playing for clubs in South Australia, arriving in Western Australia in that same year, he played for Fremantle, Coolgardie (Coolgardie Rovers Club) and Boulder City teams before moving to Mines Rovers, where he was appointed the captainship at the beginning of the season.

"He was also a member of the W.A. Athletic League, and was a fair sprinter over a short distance. His many manly qualities endeared him to all, his untimely death causing widespread sympathy and sorrow from athletes." (the Late Victor Watts, 1902, p.1)².

In August, 1902, a match was played between Mine Rovers and Warriors, where the proceeds from the gate were devoted to a fund for placing a headstone over "poor old Watts' grave. There was a very big muster, the object being a popular one." (Football. The Australian Game. Roundabout Notes, 1902, p5.)³.

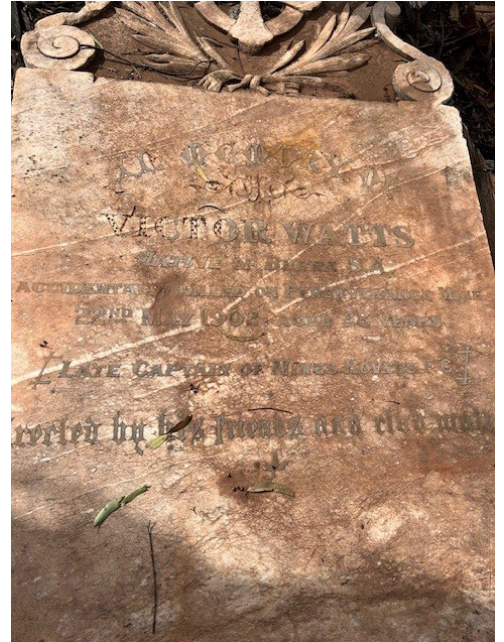


Image of the headstone prior to cleaning.

¹ Coroner's Inquest. (1902.06.03). *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, p.13

² The Late Victor Watts. (1902.05.31) *WA Sportsman*. P1

³ Football. The Australian Game. Roundabout Notes. (1902.08.03). *The Umpire* p.5

After research by Tess Thomson and Moya Sharp in 2006, the Kalgoorlie Miner reported that, “a grand marble headstone about 5 feet high inscribed to the memory of ‘Victor Watts, a Native of Burra’ and ‘erected by his mates from the Mines Rovers Football Club’ was found face down in the yard of 42 Moran Street, Boulder in September, 2006.



2025 – grave site of Victor Watts at the Old Boulder Cemetery.

It is not known why this headstone was never placed on Victor Watts’ grave. At the time of his death, 42 Moran Street was the home of Dr. Henry Irwin. The doctor had been at the Boulder Block from 1895, was involved in several committees, and was made a Life Member of the Mines Rovers Football Club in 1935.”⁴

In Nov 2025 the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society, with the thanks to Ken Ball, and various volunteer will reinstate the headstone on the grave.

His untimely death caused widespread sorrow among his fellow athletes and miners alike — a reminder of both the dangers of early mining life and the strong community that grew around it.

On Thursday, December 4th, at 8 AM, the Old Boulder Cemetery, the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society, will host a small event to commemorate the installation of a headstone. Everyone is invited to attend, and we especially encourage players of the Mine Rovers Football Club, both past and present, to wear their team colours. Morning tea will be provided after the event.

For more information please call 9093 3360.

⁴ Kalgoorlie Miner, Sept 7, 2006