

Inverell Cemetery ...a walk through history

For a short overview of the cemetery, follow the numbers on the map using the information overlaid 

History

Inverell Cemetery was gazetted in 1863, although this site may have been used as a burial ground before this date.

Eight acres on the road from Inverell to Mrs. Campbell's Station was set aside in July of that year for a General Cemetery. Prior to this time, some burials took place above the riverbank close to the town, however no formal record of this cemetery is known to exist today.

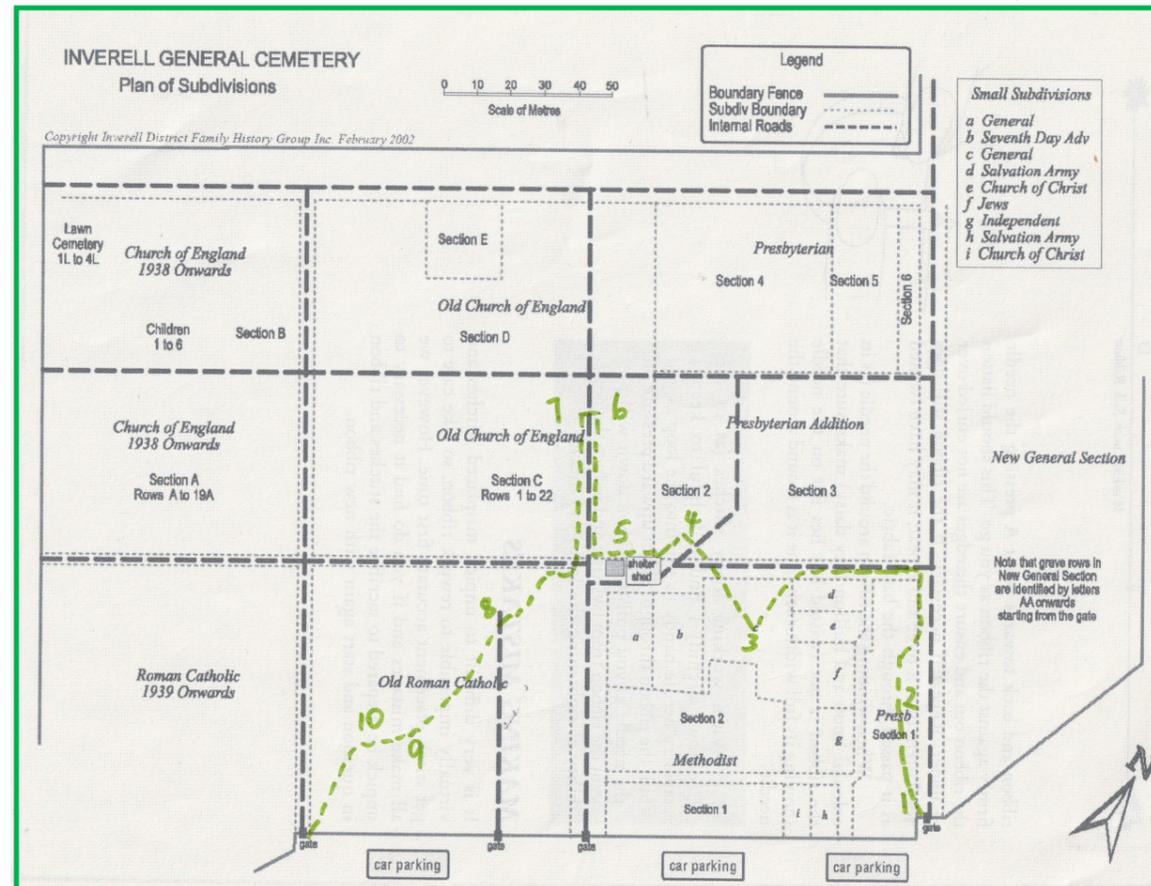
Although funds were allocated for fencing to keep stock out of the cemetery, it was years before this work was completed. This is possibly why those who could afford it had fences built around the graves of their loved ones.

The first known Trustees of the cemetery were appointed in 1883 and included representatives of the Churches, and for the General portion, Messrs JH Hindmarsh, GTT Butler, G. Woods, J Sinclair and WJ Gilmore.

Sadly in 1902 a grass fire destroyed all the wooden railings, crosses and most of the fencing. At this time the local community requested the Mayor to convene a meeting to devise means for the repair of the Inverell Cemetery, and maintaining same in proper order.

Some burial records, with plot and row numbers, were kept by the Churches, Undertakers or the Cemetery Trust, however many of these early records have not survived. In 1967, the responsibility for cemeteries was handed over to Local Councils. Shortly after this, the New General Lawn section was opened, then in the 1990s a columbarium wall added. The Memory garden was completed in 2007.

Although many headstones have deteriorated, every effort has been made to compile as accurate a record as possible of those who have been laid to rest in the Inverell Cemetery.



Cemeteries can reveal the religious, social, military, cultural and architectural history of a community, often providing information not found elsewhere.

Look for the different types of headstones, lettering, ornamentation and fences, each a carefully crafted piece of work with unique historical information created by stonemasons, carpenters and blacksmiths.

Some gravestones and fences are crafted locally, others brought from far away.

Irrespective of size, each marker is important in remembering our ancestors, their history, our history.

A FEW INTERESTING GRAVES

WHICH CAN BE OBSERVED DURING A SHORT WALK THROUGH THE CEMETERY

Starting from the Old Presbyterian section ...

1. MCGREGOR family plot.. Buried here in three adjoining plots are brothers John, Peter and Malcolm, their sister Margaret McIntyre, and a cousin, William Sinclair, in between. The McGregors were among the Scots from Argyll- shire who came to the Inverell district during the 1850s. They took up the district's first land selections on Byron Station in 1866.

Walk about 25 paces along the road to a group of four graves facing west where you will find

2. MILLIE ALICE BONEY nee Connors, a proud Aboriginal woman. Millie's many descend- ants still live in the district. Prior to burial, a service was held for Millie at Thorley & Thomas' Funeral Parlour in Evans Street. This headstone is typical of those constructed in the 1960s.

Walk along the road, turn left at the white seat. About 25 metres toward the shelter shed, on the left are several graves surrounding that of George DING for

3. CHINESE residents, many of whom came to the district in the 1850s. Ching Ming or Qingming, (grave sweeping day), is observed on 5 April, a public holiday in China. On this day families visit ancestors graves, weed, replace flowers, light in- cense and burn imitation money for the deceased to use in the afterlife. Food is left as an offering to the spirits of the deceased. This was the custom here until the 1970s.

Diagonally opposite across the road is the plot for

4. ROSS family. Colin Ross was the first store- keeper at Inverell, opening his business in 1853. Colin and his wife, Rosanna, were involved in the establishment of services for the town; the Post Office, Church, School, a flour mill, and the first bridge over the river. Their white marble headstone is typical of the Victorian era; the draped urn at the top signifying sorrow.

5. SHELTER SHED Inside this building is a plaque to remember Mrs. Turner, daughter of Peter Campbell of Inverell Station. Mrs. Turner, who died in 1926, left a large estate including a generous bequest of £1000 to improve the Cemetery. She is buried by the Campbell family plot in the row behind this building.

From the shelter shed, turn right, walk north about 20 metres along the roadway. On the right is a white marble headstone with wreath and fringed drape for



6. WILLIAM HENRY BOND born in London, England in 1840 and arrived in Australia 8 years later. William worked at *The Sydney Morning Herald* news- paper prior to coming to Inverell. He became editor and owned the *Inverell Times* c1880. This Victorian style headstone was made at Newcastle NSW.

Across the road, almost opposite is the headstone for

7. JOYCE BEATRICE BUTLER who was a happy little school girl at Inverell Grammar School when she became ill. At Joyce's funeral her playmates lined the path at the Anglican Church. A white marble angel watches over Joyce's grave; her parents are beside her.

Walk back to the shelter shed, turn right, walk 12 m along grass path. Turn left along path toward car park. The 2nd grave on the right is that of

8. JAMES FOLEY one of several with a glass front niche containing a religious statue. James died after a fall from a horse. A father of 7, he worked as a carrier and was known to be *straight as a rush* in his dealings.

Walk toward the car park. On the right is the large sandstone obelisk memorial for Roman Catholic Priests

9. FATHER FRANCIS McLAUGHLIN and FATHER JOHN DAVIS. Father McLaughlin was the first interment in this section of the cemetery. His burial was well attended and most of the town shops closed as a mark of respect. Father Davis was the first Roman Catholic Priest to be ordained in the New England district. Both men were born in Ireland and travelled a huge area of northern NSW by horseback to minister to their parishioners.

Walk directly west past the tall rusted metal marker towards the low set simple timber marker for

10. Bridget Reid nee Pendergast born at Windsor NSW in 1810. Her Irish born father came to Australia in 1800. Bridget married in 1831 and had 15 children. Bridget's husband died in 1872 at Wollombi and it is likely she came to Inverell to live with her daughter Sarah Smith, buried beside her. Bridget's unusual timber headstone, erected about 2007 by her great grandson, has been carefully created from treated pine.



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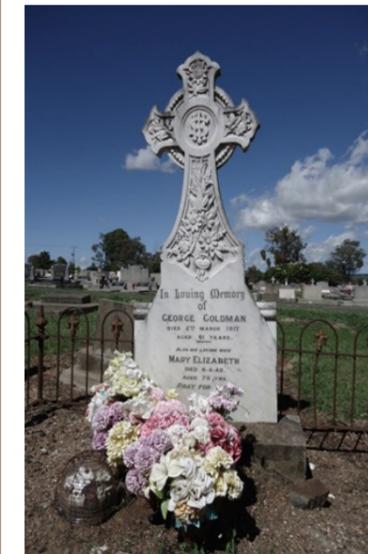
The Christian Cemetery is a memorial and a record. It is not a mere field in which the dead are stowed away unknown; it is a touching and beautiful history, written in family burial plots, in mounded graves, in sculptured and inscribed monuments.

It tells the story of the past ...of the individual lives of men, women and children. It is silent, but eloquent, it is common, but unique.

We find no such history elsewhere, there are no records in all the wide world in which we can discover so much that is suggestive, so much that is pathetic and impressive.

-Joseph Anderson (American Clergyman)

INVERELL CEMETERY SELF GUIDED WALKING TOUR



NOTE: As the cemetery ground is uneven, the wearing of sturdy walking shoes is recommended.

Every effort has been made to verify all information in this brochure. Any corrections would be gratefully received.