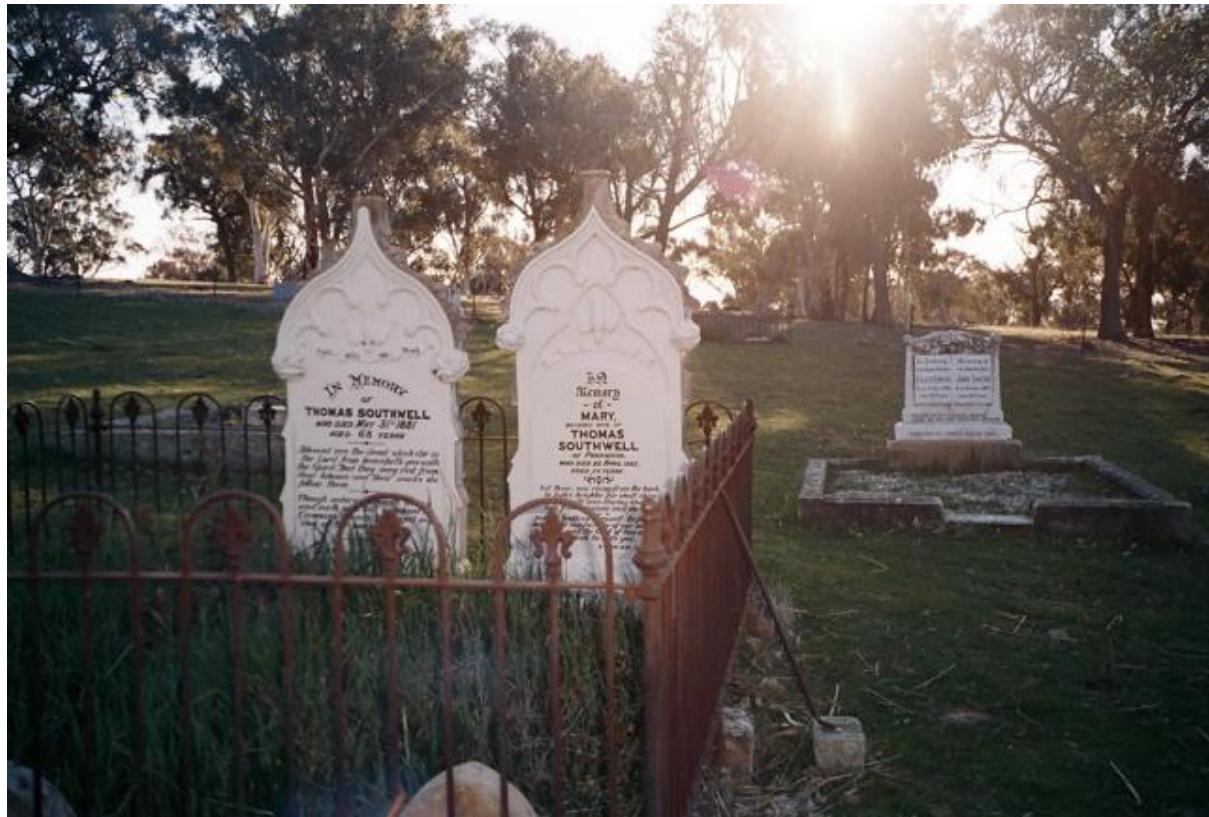


RURAL GRAVES IN THE ACT

A HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND INTERPRETATION

By Anne Claoué-Long
October 2006



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PROJECT METHODOLOGY

In documenting the rural graves and cemeteries in the study area it soon became apparent that they would best be interpreted as a whole group rather than individually, because it is the common patterns that help to explain early settlers' approaches to the burial of their dead. However it is appreciated that readers will want to know about individual grave sites in specific areas, so the second half of the report takes the form of an Inventory of sites.

The omission of precise site locations in the Inventory is deliberate. Many of the graves are located on private land and are therefore not accessible to the public. While there exists a historical record and knowledge of gravesites, in many cases there remains little, if anything, to actually see in the present landscape. Importantly, the problems of vandalism are all too evident at those sites whose locations have been publicised or which are highly visible. Consultation with relevant authorities in the ACT Government confirmed the view that interpretation tied to publicised location details is not to be encouraged because it would lead to conservation problems. For these reasons this report has taken the form of a historical and cultural assessment, which can be used and adapted for formal, controlled, guided visits to known sites. Specific location details, where known, have been lodged with the ACT National Trust and ACT Government Heritage Unit.

The ACT border post-dates most of the period under study. For example, for many years the major burial ground in the region was the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery. While this investigation has not ventured too far across the border, the wider region immediately surrounding the ACT contains many cemeteries and individual grave sites which evolved in a similar pattern to those in the present ACT, and whose history complement this report.

LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The subject matter has proved to be larger than originally anticipated, both by the National Trust and by the author and this report has collected a larger listing of ACT rural graves than any previous report. Because of this there has been limited scope for original research and this report concentrates on the core intention of the project: the regional interpretation. References are provided throughout so that interested readers can pursue more detailed research.

The lack of anything to see in the landscape for many of the burials makes formal heritage assessment and listing of these sites difficult. The most obvious sites, such as the Colverwell

Graves, Cuppacumbalong and Weetangera Methodist Cemeteries, have already been entered in heritage lists. Many other individual grave sites remain only vaguely mentioned within wider area listings, or are not officially recorded or publicly acknowledged at all.

Interpretation of the rural grave sites and cemeteries of the ACT highlights many themes in our history. The impact of white settlement on Aboriginal traditional life, the remote nature of the area in the years of early settlement, the difficulties of reliable transportation and lack of modern health care, all recur throughout. Many questions remain unanswered, especially details of the several Ginninderra area cemeteries. Three sets of remains were re-located to St John's churchyard from Yarralumla in 1849, begging the question of where this Yarralumla cemetery was located; as the property had a predominantly Roman Catholic population, was this an early Roman Catholic cemetery? The Acton cemetery may provide the answer but is lost under Lake Burley Griffin.

Most telling is the loss of memory concerning sites which were clearly of importance to, and highly valued by, the early settlers of the area. In many respects this study is made fifty years too late. Much of the knowledge of the early rural grave sites and cemeteries in the area has been lost in recent decades as older members of our community who remember these early sites went to their own graves.

It has been said that how a society deals with its dead is a reflection on how that society values life.¹ In that case the history of how the ACT's rural grave sites and cemeteries have fared, especially in recent times, does not reflect well on our society: at least three old cemetery sites have been compromised by recent road developments, and one has been submerged under Lake Burley Griffin. One result of this report may be greater recognition of rural grave sites and cemeteries by both the authorities and the wider public. Official acknowledgement or commemoration, and in some cases full heritage listing and protection, are surely merited.

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October 2006*

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to outline the attitudes to death of the early settlers of the ACT region expressed in the way they buried their dead, and to explain this subject through the rich heritage of pioneer rural grave sites and cemeteries scattered through the region.

The ACT contains many dispersed cemeteries and grave sites, which date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries prior to the passing of the Public Cemeteries Act of 1936. This Act formalised and regulated all burials which thereafter had to occur in official public cemeteries under the control of the authorities. Before this, in the early years of settlement, official notifications of deaths and burials were recorded by various means. Until 1856 burials where an Anglican Minister was in attendance were noted in annual returns sent to the Bishop's administration in Sydney. The church of St John the Baptist also retained its own church records of burials and these to the date of 1949 are lodged with the National Library of Australia. Queanbeyan was the local administrative centre of the region and from 1856 all local deaths had to be recorded in a register held at the Queanbeyan Court House. These records covered burials occurring in bush locations as well as those in consecrated grounds. While some of the early pioneer burial sites are well known and have received much study and recognition, some are more obscure and they have become a neglected part of our heritage. Some sites are known to have existed but their exact location is now lost. No previous study has been made of all of these burial sites together, to establish their collective historical and heritage value. This may in part be due to the attitudes of our time.

Current western societies have a paradox in their view of death and the disposal of human remains. On one hand, the fact of death is being constantly thrust upon us by the mass media, which overloads us with graphic details of the latest fatal disaster or celebrity funeral. On the other hand, society is shielded from the realities of death far more than in the past. Today rather than the family laying out the body for burial, an undertaker is employed to do this task. Life expectancy has increased and early death from trauma and disease has decreased thanks to immunisation, medical treatments, improved sanitation, nutritional knowledge and surgical techniques, not to mention advances in transport and communication which make all these benefits widely available. Today, people rarely die at home. The facts of death, grave sites and cemeteries are "hidden" away lest they offend or upset the living, while the deceased are said to have "passed away" or "been laid to rest" rather than simply died.

THE EXPERIENCE OF DEATH IN THE EARLY DAYS OF SETTLEMENT

This experience of being able to largely disassociate ourselves from the practical requirements resulting from a death is only a recent phenomenon. The experience of life and death was not like this for the pioneer settlers of what is now the Canberra district and the wider rural Australian Capital Territory.

Early death from diseases, now preventable from vaccinations and modern antibiotics, were a feature of the period of early settlement, as were high rates of maternal and infant deaths resulting from lack of ante- and post-natal care. Local epidemics resulted in numerous deaths amongst children, especially from scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough and typhoid. For example, in May 1849 two young sons of the Oldfield family died from diphtheria within three days of each other and were buried in the Naas Cemetery. In May 1866 the Bambridge family buried two children, Sarah aged ten and John aged six months, during a scarlatina epidemic. A cousin, Charles Helman aged seven months, also died from the disease and the

funeral service for the three children was conducted by the Reverend Pierce Galliard Smith at St John's Church on May 5th.² Accidents from horse riding, carting with heavy drays on rough dirt tracks and using firearms were common. Exposure to the changeable and harsh climate, especially in the mountainous areas of the region, also resulted in casualties.

Inside the home was no safer: accidental poisoning, scalds from boiling water on the hearth and burns from open fires were everyday risks resulting in fatalities. Ester Oldfield died in October 1890 when her clothes caught fire from the open fireplace. She is buried at Cuppacumbalong Cemetery. Flora Susanna Blundell burned to death from an accident while ironing clothes on 12th August 1892 at the family cottage now known as Blundell's. She was buried in the Presbyterian Portion of the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery.³ A similar fate took Eliza, the seventeen-year-old daughter of John McDonald, whose crinoline caught fire in July 1895. Eliza is buried at St John's churchyard. Infant children continued to die from burns well into the twentieth century.⁴

Sudden death was a constant reality and the need to deal with the practicalities of burying the dead was a pressing requirement from the earliest days of settlement. Of necessity, families had to deal with bereavements frequently, sometimes in quick succession in times of epidemics.

PRIMITIVE AND LIMITED MEDICAL PROVISION

Medical assistance available to the early settlers of the district was very limited and primitive. A series of local doctors (Dr William Foxton Hayley, practicing 1836-1868, Dr James Fitzgerald Murray, 1839-1856, Dr Andrew Morton, 1843-1881, and Dr George Lambert, 1868) operated from headquarters in Queanbeyan. The doctors had to be sent for, and travel to their patients in distant homesteads. The district's first hospital, the Queanbeyan Benevolent Institution, was set up in 1847 close to the Queanbeyan lockup. The first matron was the lockup keeper's wife. It was not until the 1890s that a trained nurse was appointed as the matron of the Queanbeyan Hospital.

The costs of professional medical attention were also high, even prohibitive, for all but the wealthier settlers. When Dr Hayley attended the birth of the first child of Thomas Locker, overseer at Lanyon, the account was for £4-4s-0d; twenty percent of Locker's annual salary of £20.⁵ Many had to rely on folk remedies and the care of unqualified but experienced women who acted as midwives.

A DANGEROUS RIVER LANDSCAPE

In the early days of settlement the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo Rivers were of a very different character to the way they appear today. They were then described as "a chain of ponds", that is, a series of deep holes between which water flowed over a rocky bottom. Some of these holes were very deep indeed and river banks were less steep than today, giving ease of access to this water. The rivers were also prone to flood with rapid rises of water and strong currents.

Both these characteristics of the historical landscape, combined with the facts that far fewer people knew how to swim in those days, and that river crossings were fords rather than bridges, led to many drownings. Many children drowned playing in water, especially in the hot months of the year, and attempts by adults to ford a swollen creek or river, either on horseback or with a dray load of goods, often resulted in tragedy. A common finding at early inquests was that the drownings of adult men had resulted from river crossings attempted

while in an inebriated state, often at night returning home after a night on the town. William Clarker died on 4th June 1842 when he fell from a dray while drunk; and George Walker died on 7th June 1842 after a carting accident when in a state of intoxication, as did James Rattray who died on 23rd August 1842.⁶

Proper bridge crossings to the rivers were only established late in the history of settlement. Tharwa Bridge was opened in 1895 and the Uriarra low level crossing in 1901. The Uriarra low level crossing was destroyed in the flood of 1922 and only repaired in 1936. A high-level bridge crossing was built over the Murrumbidgee at the Cotter in 1913, in conjunction with building of the Cotter Dam and Pumping Station.

BURYING THE DEAD IN THE EARLY DAYS OF SETTLEMENT

In the very earliest days of settlement there were no official cemeteries for the burial of the dead and settlers were immediately confronted with the practical and logistical problems of disposing of human remains. Deaths resulting from accidents often resulted in the simple expedient of the deceased being buried close by in any convenient spot. Prolonged formal mourning and elaborate burial rituals were impractical in the harsh conditions at the very edges of European settlement. The early population of the district consisted largely of single male workers with no accompanying immediate family to attend to these matters. It seems that, in many cases of bush burials (as distinct from church burials), little was carried out in terms of ceremony or commemoration, and even the expense of a formal coffin was dispensed with, although appropriate respect for the dead with proper disposal by burial seems to have adhered to.

Samuel Shumack, who has written about the early days of settlement in the area, tells the tale of Joseph Fletcher's death and burial in 1859, at Ginninderra. Fletcher – an ex-convict who had been assigned to Henry Hall of Charnwood and who subsequently set up a farm – drowned at Ginninderra Creek on Christmas Eve. After an inquest on Boxing Day he was buried near where his body was found and a particularly drunken wake was held in his memory.⁷ Farewelling a departed mate with a copious consumption of alcohol was a feature of many bush burials, taking the place of institutionalised religious observances and formal ritual.⁸ It makes a good tale in the telling, but in this case the truth seems to be that Fletcher (who was named John not Joseph) was buried on 29th December 1858 at St John's Churchyard by the Reverend Pierce Galliard Smith.⁹

Even towards end of the nineteenth century burial could be rough and ready. Tales of the early district tell of the death in 1890 of a pioneer settler, Francis Dunn, originally from the Limestone Plains, who was buried near Peppercorn past the Brindabella Mountains. He was buried in a make-shift coffin comprising two slabs of wood and the strips of a wooden packing case.¹⁰ His grave was an old mine shaft. In another case north of our area in 1876, a dead shepherd named McCarthy, who had no family in the district, was wrapped in two blankets and then covered by a slab of wood before being buried in a grave directly next to the hut he had lived in.¹¹

A LACK OF MINISTERS OF RELIGION AND OF CEMETERIES

Another problem facing early settlers was the availability of clergymen to officiate at a funeral. Although the first settlers arrived in the Limestone Plains in 1823, it was only in 1838 that the Reverend Edward Smith was appointed to Christ Church in the parish of Queanbeyan and able to provide Anglican rites and burial in the region, albeit not in a specifically consecrated Anglican cemetery. Before this time, devout Anglicans wishing to be buried in an Anglican cemetery were taken to the All Saints Chapel, Sutton Forest. Although this was a considerable distance to the northeast of Goulburn, the burial register of All Saints Chapel records the burials of four inhabitants of the Limestone Plains in 1835, 1837 and 1838. These were Patrick Nead, labourer aged forty, buried on 7th February 1835; Caroline Webb, aged five years buried on 19th September 1835; Joseph Abel, forty-one-year-old-ploughman killed by a fall from a dray, who was buried on 11th February 1837; and Mary Eggleton aged eighteen months, buried on 27th November 1838.¹² The closer public burial ground at The Oaks in Queanbeyan was finally opened in 1838, but this still provided no consecrated church cemetery in the nearby area.

Lonely lives, and deaths far from family and friends, were a recurring problem for outlying settlers. The journey to cemeteries established in the more closely-settled areas presented the problem of obtaining and transporting a coffin, while the time involved was clearly inappropriate in the hotter months of the year.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Reverend Edward Smith was appointed as the first Church of England minister to Queanbeyan in 1838 and his parish extended from Gundaroo to the Monaro and south coast. A small church, Christ Church, was built in Queanbeyan in 1843 and later replaced by a larger stone church in 1859. The Church of St John the Baptist, with its associated churchyard, was built on the Limestone Plains in 1845, the foundation stone being laid by the Reverend Smith. The Bishop of Australia, the Right Rev. William Grant Broughton, consecrated the church on 12th March 1845, and the Reverend George Gregory became the first incumbent of the separate parish of St John's in 1850. On 20th August 1851 when on a return journey to his home in Canberry after visiting parishioners in the mountain regions across the Murrumbidgee he could not be dissuaded from trying to cross the flooded Molonglo River. He was twenty-five years old and noted as a strong swimmer, but the cold water and strong current proved to be too much for him. He drowned and his body was only recovered three days later. He was buried on 29th August in the St John's churchyard in the Campbell family vault, now with the enlargement of the church, the church crypt.¹³ His successor was the Reverend Thomas Hattam Wilkinson who commenced his duties in September. In June 1855 the Reverend Pierce Galliard Smith took over the ministry and served the Anglican community of the district for fifty years.

Meanwhile the growth of the village of Ginninderra to the north of the Limestone Plains brought the need for another church. The slab church of St Paul's was opened at Ginninderra Creek in the Church Glebe paddock in 1861 and was allocated an attached cemetery. For the southern part of the region the wooden St Edmund's Church of England was opened and dedicated at Tharwa on 7th May 1909. Otherwise burials of Anglicans in the area occurred at the Queanbeyan Riverside cemetery, which was consecrated by the Bishop Broughton on 19th February 1850.

The Anglican Church attempted to regularise burials throughout the colonies in 1839 with the establishment of fees for graves, stones, enclosures and raised tombs. In 1846 a circular letter from the Bishop forbade burials on private land if a recognised burial ground existed within ten miles. It is perhaps this directive, which led to the abandonment of the district's first non-denominational cemetery at The Oaks.¹⁴

A PRESBYTERIAN COMMUNITY FAR FROM SCOTLAND

The many Presbyterians Robert Campbell brought out from Scotland, to work on his Duntroon property at the Limestone Plains, were served by a Presbyterian Minister, William Hamilton, appointed to Goulburn in 1837, followed by the Reverend William Ritchie at Yass in 1850. Richie died in 1854 and his duties were assumed by the Reverend Alexander Pennycuik who already had charge of the Braidwood and Araluen goldfields. Presbyterian services were held in private homesteads, such as Booroomba when it was owned by the McKeahnie family, and also at Queanbeyan Courthouse and the St John's schoolhouse. It was only in 1862 that the town of Queanbeyan acquired its first resident Presbyterian minister with its own Presbyterian church, St Stephen's, in 1874.¹⁵ St Ninian's Presbyterian Church, now in the modern Canberra suburb of Lyneham, was established in 1863, the wooden building being replaced by a stone church in 1873. An acre of the General Cemetery

reserve at Queanbeyan's Riverside Cemetery was granted to the Presbyterian Church in February 1844, although the first recorded burial, of James McIntosh of Duntroon, only occurred in January 1854.

A LARGE ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

While the Campbell station of Duntroon/Pialligo was predominantly Presbyterian, the Yarralumla station of Terrence Aubrey Murray was predominantly Roman Catholic in faith, the 1841 census identifying eighty-seven of the one hundred and eight residents there as Catholic.¹⁶ A Roman Catholic Mission already existed in Queanbeyan by August 1839, with the Reverend Father Hastings living on the Dodsworth property. In 1841 a Catholic priest, Michael McGrath, who was stationed at Goulburn, travelled once every six months as far as what is now the Namadgi area. In the 1840s and 1850s Father Michael Kavanagh was the priest at Queanbeyan and conducted services at the St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church, which was built in 1849. His successors were Dean Richard Walsh (1851-1856) and the Reverend James McAuliffe, appointed in 1869, who died by drowning in a creek near Bungendore on 6th September 1879.¹⁷ In 1872 St Francis' Roman Catholic Church was erected at Ginninderra, with a larger church for the expanding congregation built at Hall in 1910. In the southern part of the district, masses were held at private homes such as that of Michael Gallagher at Tuggeranong and Thomas Tong at Naas, and it was only on 20th June 1902 that the Sacred Heart Church (now renamed St Francis of Assisi) was built in Tuggeranong.¹⁸ Throughout the period under study there was no known Catholic cemetery in the area closer than Queanbeyan Riverside or Gundaroo.

A WESLEYAN MINISTRY

Thomas Southwell, who settled on the Ginninderra Creek in 1840, is credited with establishing Methodism in the area. Organised Methodist services were conducted from his Parkwood property with visiting and lay preachers, including himself, while in 1849 a Wesleyan minister, the Reverend William Lightbody, was stationed in Queanbeyan where a Methodist chapel was built in 1860. A slab chapel was also built at Parkwood in 1863, and the Wattle Park Methodist Church in 1881. A small wooden Methodist chapel was also built next to the Presbyterian St Ninian's Church in 1868/9 by members of the Queanbeyan Methodist community, but was then dismantled and moved to Weetangera in 1874, where it was formally dedicated by the Reverend Charles Jones, minister from Queanbeyan. This new church site at Weetangera was granted by the Government with an adjoining cemetery. Another Methodist cemetery at the Queanbeyan Riverside site had been granted in April 1850, but the first known burial was made only in 1863. In the mid-1880s a further Methodist cemetery was opened on the Tharwa Road outside the town of Queanbeyan.

STAND-INS TO CONDUCT THE FUNERAL SERVICE

The huge size of parishes, widely-spaced churches, and small numbers of ministers of religion, necessarily resulted in local landowners, neighbours, or the remaining head of the family organising and conducting funeral services. When Thomas Fishlock, an employee at Cuppacumbalong, died on the 8th January 1880, George De Salis sent for Reverend Pierce Galliard Smith but officiated at the funeral himself because the minister was unable to attend. For the Cuppacumbalong funeral of James Gray in 1892, Leopold Fane De Salis read the service.¹⁹

A PROPER CHURCH BURIAL AT ANY COST

However, some families in outlying properties clearly felt that no obstacle was too insurmountable to achieve burial in a properly consecrated cemetery. Sarah Webb died in

childbirth on the 8th November 1845, aged thirty-three years.²⁰ She was the wife of George Webb who held land at Tidbinbilla and they were the parents who had previously buried their daughter Caroline at Sutton Forest. Sarah was buried four days after her death, in a proper coffin, at St John's churchyard, with a funeral service conducted by the Rev. Edward Smith who was minister of Christ Church Queanbeyan and of St John's. Sarah's grave was marked with a sandstone memorial, the second to be erected at the churchyard. The original Record Book of St John's shows that in April 1847 a fee of £1 was received for enclosing Mrs Webb's grave, while in April 1851 a further fee of £2 for the headstone and railing was received from Mr Webb.²¹ This additional work at the grave site was perhaps precipitated by the burial of the Webb's eleven-year-old daughter, Betsy Celia next to her mother in 1849.²²

In another case, William Broadribb, a squatter who lived near Cooma, lost his two daughters to diphtheria in the winter of 1849. The eldest died first: he arranged for a coffin to be delivered to his home from the main settlement twenty-five miles away and travelled back to Cooma with the body to attend the funeral. Ten days later he had to organise the same process again for his youngest daughter, who was buried in the same grave.²³

Funeral fees for a coffin, payment to the minister, and a gravesite in a churchyard, were a considerable cost. In 1872 Ralph Edge was buried in the Glebe Cemetery at St Paul's Church at Ginninderra for the sum of just under £5, which must have included a headstone.²⁴ This represents an economical affair compared with the £25 spent by William Bunn of Braidwood on the funeral of his 12-year-old nephew Clarence, who died of typhoid fever on October 18th 1865. Not surprisingly, this account was not paid in full until 1868.²⁵

When John McDonald (senior), a prominent social figure and landowner of Uriarra station, died on 12th November 1908 aged seventy-nine, his funeral cortège and interment at St John's churchyard had the largest attendance seen up until that date, with so many mourners joining at points along the route that the *Queanbeyan Age* of 17th November 1908 reported the event thus:

“...the sad cortège left Urayarra at 9a.m., and for six hours slowly and solemnly wended its way churchwards. As it progressed, so it went from strength to strength in numbers. Every here and there along the road additional vehicles with their mourning occupants joined the procession, till on this side of Yarralumla, the cortège stretched fully half-a-mile behind the plumed hearse which bore the coffin almost hidden by floral wreaths of many designs with their attached cards expressive of condolence.”²⁶

PRIVATE BURIALS AT HOMESTEADS

In the face of such logistical difficulties and costs at the emotional time of bereavement, it is no wonder that some families chose burials in unofficial private sites closer to home. There was the added advantage that the gravesites were easily accessible for family visits. A typical example is the Phillips family who also lived at Uriarra, which was developing into a thriving small community with a post office, a store, a church and blacksmiths. Henry Phillips worked for the McDonalds as postmaster at Uriarra, tutor to the McDonald children of “Uriarra House” and book-keeper for the “Uriarra” property. When Henry Phillips died in 1913 his family chose a homestead plot at their property of Sherwood.

Another Uriarra bush burial was that of Robert Bedford who died on 15th October 1892 at the age of eighty years. He had been a teacher at the Uriarra schoolhouse before Phillips and had

remained in the area. The flooded Murrumbidgee River prevented the transportation of the body to St John's for burial but also marooned the then Rector of St John's, the Reverend Pierce Gilliard Smith, on the Uriarra side of the river. So he officiated at Bedford's local funeral. The body was buried adjacent to the Fairlight-Brookvale boundary and a peach tree reputedly marks the gravesite.²⁷

Some of these isolated burials in the bush became the nuclei of larger family or community cemeteries with particular affiliations, on private property. However, most are simple burials of departed loved ones close to the homestead where they lived, the burial plots remaining small for immediate family only. There are many references to burials, especially of stillborn babies and of infants, being made close to settler homesteads.

Burials of infants form by far the largest number of bush burials. In his book "Cotter Country", Bruce Moore, an author of local histories, lists individual outlying graves in the ACT.²⁸ Of the sixty-two individual burials which are listed, thirty-two are of infants under three months of age, many of them counting their short lives in days, or even hours. Of the other burials, ten are of children under the age of twelve. It is clear that most children, especially infants, were buried close to where families lived, rather than in distant cemeteries. This pattern is especially evident into the first quarter of the twentieth century. Where cemeteries were established in the rural neighbourhoods at Lanyon, Cuppacumbalong, Tharwa and St Paul's Ginninderra, Hall, and Weetangera, the number of adult burials outnumbered the numbers of infants and children in every case, the infants and young children still generally being buried close to home often in individual plots. The only exception is the Parkwood Cemetery on private land in NSW, just over the present ACT border, which contains eight burials, all of infants from different branches of the Southwell family. At Michelago between 1861 and 1907, equal numbers of children and adults were buried.²⁹

In the early years unbaptised infants and stillborns may have been excluded from burial in consecrated ground but from the first decade of the twentieth century stillborns are recorded amongst the burials at the St John's churchyard. While the bush burial of a child presented fewer logistical difficulties than that of an adult, there are clear indications in the historic record of parents wanting their dead children buried close to home because of reasons of attachment rather than economy or a lack of caring to conduct a church funeral.

HEADSTONES, CROSSES AND PLANTINGS

The cost of ordering, transporting and setting up a formal grave stone was prohibitive for many families. Commonly a wooden block cross, rough stone cairn, or a special planting of a bush, was used as a marker to the grave. Some graves were never marked. For the purposes of history it is unfortunate that it tends to be only the stone markers that have survived well, and many of the rural burial locations in the ACT have become lost. Markers in wood have been lost in bushfires or rotted away, and the commemorative plantings have died. The detailed mapping of the ACT region carried out in 1915, as part of the process of land transference in the creation of the Federal Capital Territory, only records two rural graves outside defined cemetery sites. These are the Colverwell Graves at Glenburn Homestead, Kowen, both of which have prominent headstones.³⁰

REGISTRATION OF DEATHS AND BURIALS

The Public Cemeteries Act of 1936 made it compulsory for all burials to be in recognised cemeteries. Our knowledge of the burials before this time and their precise locations will

never be complete. Early deaths and burials were recorded in the parish register of Christ Church, Queanbeyan, and then St John the Baptist's, including burials occurring in the outlying rural areas. However, not all deaths and burials were recorded because it was only made compulsory with the granting of self government to the Colony of New South Wales in 1856. Even then, the precise locations of outlying burials were not supplied. For these reasons, many of the locations of early burials are either imprecisely known or not known at all.

THE OAKS BURIAL GROUND

The first public burial ground for the growing village of Queanbeyan (population seventy-two in the 1841 census), and the wider Limestone Plains district, was established in 1838 when a burial was made in a paddock adjacent to the Elmsall Inn, the present "The Oaks" homestead, in the area which is now known as Oaks Estate. The location of both the Inn and the public cemetery together, at the junction of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers and close to the village and district centre of Queanbeyan, was evidently thought convenient for ease of access and the amenity for funeral wakes. The softer soil of the river flats also allowed for digging graves to an appropriate depth to ensure hygienic interring. Unfortunately this same thinking was to lead to the loss of grave sites in other riverside cemeteries in times of flood, notably in 1870 at Cuppacumbalong and 1925 at the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery.

James Demarr who was in the area in 1839 described the burial ground:

"an enclosed piece of ground adjoining our Inn, was the principal burying ground, in which, at this time, seven or eight corpses were buried. There was no public cemetery, such as we are accustomed to. Some person dies and his friends select a place in which to bury his remains. As others die the friends usually selected the same place, otherwise burial was not restricted to any place. ... Even at Queanbeyan a coffin was seldom made for the dead, and in the more remote parts scarcely ever."³¹

The Elmsall Inn reverted to being a private house in 1841 but the adjacent cemetery continued in use. There were forty-three known burials in this unofficial public burial ground from 1838 to 1846, when the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery was fully established. There seems to have been no segregation of the deceased: all religious denominations are represented and twenty-three of the burials are of convicts assigned to landholders in the district.³² Much later, and long after most burials had taken place in the official Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery, an unknown "Indian juggler" was buried on 8th April 1863 in what was then referred to as the "Queanbeyan Old Burial Ground". Perhaps the authorities thought the remains of this unfortunate nameless foreigner, with his alien religion, belonged better in the long neglected and unconsecrated ground at the Oaks rather than the new Riverside Cemetery.³³

It seems that no headstones existed in the Oaks Burial Ground and its exact location was eventually forgotten, only to be accidentally rediscovered in April 1991 when the excavation of a stormwater trench in the driveway of a house in Florence Street, Oaks Estate, uncovered human skeletal remains.³⁴ The seven sets of remains were reburied in Gungahlin Cemetery.

There is another group of graves believed to be located on the river flats in front of the Elmsall/Oaks homestead, in the bottom corner of the paddock on the river frontage of the

Oaks building, near to where a windmill later stood. At one time these may have been in a fenced enclosure, but here are no clear records of these burials, only second hand accounts. George Lesmond was the owner of the Oaks property from 1892 and the dairy farmer who used the windmill to pump water from the Molonglo River to irrigate paddocks of lucerne, so it was before his time.³⁵ The Oaks operated as an informal hospital in the 1860s and 1880s when a number of doctors resided at the property, starting with Dr William Foxton Hayley in the mid 1840s. Perhaps these unmarked burials near the Oaks were of patients for whom no cure could be found.

ABORIGINAL BURIALS

Aboriginal Burial Rites

Burial customs amongst the Aboriginal people who occupied the district seem to have varied between different groups and different means of burial were followed when deaths occurred in different areas. In the Limestone Plains area the practice was to scoop out a hole and place the body tied up in a hunched sitting position, with personal possessions such as spears, nulla-nulla and boomerang laid alongside. A noisy funeral ceremony of chanting and crying accompanied the ritual.³⁶ In this sitting position the deceased could look forever over their country.³⁷ In mountainous country further south and west, a refinement was to heap the graves with heavy stones to prevent dingoes from reaching the body. In some cases the body would be laid out on a sheet of bark and tied high in a tree. After a year or two, the clean bones would be collected and buried in the same manner as a corpse with accompanying corroboree. Yet another means of disposal, more common towards the Monaro, was to lay the body out in a cave. This seems to have been a particular honour reserved for elite members of a tribe.³⁸

Aboriginal Burial at The Oaks

In 1862 a large group of Aboriginals from Braidwood and Yass passed through the district and camped in Dr Hayley's paddock at The Oaks for several days. They were observed undertaking a noisy ceremony and seen digging a hole. Suspicions were raised in the white community, and after the group had moved on to Tumut police investigations unearthed a body of a dead Aboriginal wrapped up in a blanket. An investigation, reported in the *Goulburn Age* newspaper, recorded that the man, identified as Billy Chinnum also known as Billy the Ram, had been killed, perhaps as punishment for transgressing traditional laws. It is not stated if the corpse was reinterred in its grave³⁹.

The Traditional Aboriginal Burials of Kangaroo Tommy and Onyong

In the early years of white settlement there is the account of one member of the local Aboriginal group, Kangaroo Tommy, being buried bound up according to tradition, in a circular grave close to his camp site, by a co-member of the tribe called Bobby, while others looked on and conducted the mourning ceremony.⁴⁰ Tommy's burial is believed to have taken place near Ginninderra. When another tribe leader, Onyong, died, he was also buried in accordance with Aboriginal custom at a hill side site near Tharwa Village with his spears and nulla nulla.⁴¹

Other Traditional Aboriginal Burials

When an inter-tribal conflict between Aboriginal tribes from the Yass and Naas districts occurred at the junction of Left Hand Creek and the Naas River, the fight resulted in the deaths of several of the Naas tribe who were apparently wrapped in their fur rugs and then buried wedged into rocky crevices along the Clear Range, as was customary amongst this group.⁴²

With increasing occupation of the land for stock raising and farming by new settlers the local Aboriginal groups were dispersed and their traditional ways of life were dislocated. In addition, their numbers were reduced by disease, particularly by a measles epidemic in 1862. Aboriginals adopted some white settler's ways but also retained traditional skills, traditions and beliefs, including burial customs, which were obviously still important to the remaining population in the area.

Aboriginal Burial at Booroomba

In around 1864 an Aboriginal known as Jimmy (or Jemmy) the Rover, who had been one of the chiefs of the local Pialligo tribe, became ill while on the run from authorities after fatally wounding another Aboriginal. Separated from his kinsmen and sensing his imminent death, he approached sympathetic white settlers with instructions about where and how his body and his weapons were to be buried when he died. His instructions were carried out by the McKeahnie family of Booroomba in the absence of a local Aboriginal community to perform the funeral rites.⁴³

Aboriginal Burial Grounds at Ginninderra/Charnwood/Glenwood

An Aboriginal known as Jimmy Taylor died while employed splitting oak for William Davis near Ginninderra in around 1864, and was buried near the place of this death on a ridge above the high water mark, at Spring Creek on the Murrumbidgee River. The precise site of the burial is not known.⁴⁴ Nor is it known if he was buried according to traditional Aboriginal custom but it seems likely from the evidence of an “Old Identity” published in the Queanbeyan Age in 1931:

“At Ginninderra the natives had a burial ground and these dusky sons of the wilds looked on these plots with reverential awe. The last interments in this plot were in the mid-sixties – Kangaroo Tommy and Ginhie. There is another at Glenwood. Bobby and his two children Eddie and Millie, also Nanny were buried there some time in the seventies. Bobby for years was the wicket-keeper of the Ginninderra Cricket Club and was considered second to none in Australia.”⁴⁵

Another “old” commentator of the region’s history, Samuel Shumack, records that a measles epidemic caused the deaths of Bobby, Eddie, Milly and Nanny. Bobby, who appears to have been the same man who officiated at Kangaroo Tommy’s burial, was also known to have been friends with Jimmy Taylor. Evidently this particular group had close ties and continued to practice old customs, including their traditional means of burial.

Bruce Moore’s record of the early history of the region lists two Aboriginal burials, but at the location of Charnwood: Edmond Goaroh aged fifteen years who died on the 11th of September 1871 and Bobby aged forty years who died on the 21st of July 1873.⁴⁶ These are the same Bobby and his son Eddie identified in the newspaper letter quoted above. Bobby was known by two names: Bobby Hamilton and Bobby Deumonga. Lyall Gillespie, writing of Bobby Hamilton’s last days, reports that he died from tuberculosis and was taken to Queanbeyan Hospital by Augustus Gibbes.⁴⁷ His death registration at Queanbeyan records that he was buried at Glenwood. Aboriginals were not buried in the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery, because they did not belong to any of the denominations with identified consecrated portions in the complex. If Bobby died at Queanbeyan then the decision to bury him at Ginninderra/Glenwood, a considerable distance away, instead of at Queanbeyan, even outside the consecrated cemetery grounds, supports the probable existence of a burial ground at Ginninderra specifically chosen for Aboriginal interment.

The Aboriginal woman known as Nanny had been married to Onyong and then to a European settler Henry Duncan who worked at Duntroon. Nanny died of “congestion of the lungs” in September 1873 at Glenwood near Hall.⁴⁸ The exact locations of the Ginninderra/Charnwood/Glenwood Aboriginal burial sites are not known.

An Aboriginal Burial at Cotter Falls

Christy Goody, an Aboriginal from the Murray District aged about 50, died on 1st February 1896 after a fall from his horse when travelling through the Cotter area. The accident occurred near Cotter Falls where Henry Oldfield found the fatally injured man and took him into shelter at his uncle's hut. The noted local Aboriginal woman, Nelly Warber (widow of Bobby Hamilton/Deumonga) known locally as "Queen Nelly" is said to have come to the hut to care for man but left before his death. Thomas and Henry Oldfield made the coffin, dug the grave and arranged the burial.⁴⁹ It seems that he was buried according to white men's customs.

Other Aboriginal Burials In and Outside Cemeteries

Nelly herself died on 1st January 1897 at Queanbeyan Hospital.⁵⁰ The exact location of her grave is unknown but is recorded as being outside the consecrated ground of the Riverside Cemetery.⁵¹ Either she had no wish to be buried in the old Aboriginal burial ground, or by this date there was no one who could, or knew how to, conduct a burial according to ancient customs in the traditional location.

A further Aboriginal burial recorded outside the consecrated ground of the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery is that of the man called Jimmy Clements, also known as "Marvellous" or "King Billy" who had joined the parade of citizens who marched past the Duke and Duchess of Kent after the opening of the Provisional Parliament House on 9th May 1927.⁵² Jimmy Clements was born in Tumut and is recorded as having died at Queanbeyan aged eighty on 28th August 1927. He was buried near the gate of the Anglican Portion at the Riverside Cemeteries.⁵³ Another Aboriginal man also identified as "King Billy" (a term used by many "whitefellas" to denote an elderly black man) is recorded as buried inside the Anglican portion of the Queanbeyan Tharwa Road Cemetery that was opened in 1888.⁵⁴

Another Aboriginal man, identified only as "Jacky" with the occupation of groom, is recorded as buried in an unknown location in the Methodist Portion of the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery after he died on 5th September 1890.⁵⁵

The only other records found of burials of people identified specifically as Aboriginal are those of Nina (or Mary Ann) Lowe who died aged twenty-two in Queanbeyan Hospital on 12th September 1899, and of her brother William Lowe who also died in the Hospital aged twenty on 25th January 1900. They were the children of Richard Lowe and his wife Sarah, daughter of the Aboriginal woman called Nanny. The Lowe brother and sister were both buried at unknown locations in the Anglican portion of the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery.⁵⁶

PRIVATE CEMETERIES ON LARGER PASTORAL HOLDINGS

THE LANYON PRIVATE CEMETERY

Distance from cemeteries was an issue for early burials in the district. While the Queanbeyan cemetery may have been located conveniently for some, it was still a considerable distance from outlying properties. Long distance travel in the hot weather of the Australian summer was not an option.

Lanyon, for example, was situated 15 miles from Queanbeyan along dirt roads: a day's journey away. William Wright, brother of James Wright who had established the Lanyon property, died on the 3rd of January 1837 from injuries sustained in a shooting expedition on New Year's Day. He was buried near the Lanyon homestead and his grave was piled with rocks to deter the unwelcome attention of dingoes.⁵⁷ As late as 1845 a twelve year old girl who lived at Tharwa near Lanyon was attacked and killed by dingoes.⁵⁸ It was only after the introduction of strychnine poison in 1861 that the dingo "problem" was solved by baiting. However, the bags of poison stored in homesteads also resulted in some cases of accidental poisoning of children, and more bush burials.

The initial burial at Lanyon acted as a catalyst for the establishment of a private cemetery to serve both the landowner family and employees at the property. On 11th May 1861, James Brown, overseer of the Congwarra run was accidentally killed by a falling tree at the property. His funeral was held at Lanyon on 15th May with Andrew Cunningham, who had purchased Lanyon in 1848, conducting the service.⁵⁹ In 1870 a neighbouring farmer, John White of Spring Station, was buried at the Lanyon cemetery at the request of his family.⁶⁰ Andrew Cunningham in his turn was buried at the Lanyon cemetery when he died on 18th March 1887. Over the years the Lanyon burial site became a local community cemetery, albeit a private one. It includes thirty-five burials, eight of which were from the Cunningham family, the others being employees and their families, and some close neighbours.⁶¹

NAAS PRIVATE CEMETERY

Whereas the Lanyon cemetery is still a visible landmark at the property as a treed enclosure surrounded by white painted fence, another private cemetery nearby is no longer visible. The Naas private cemetery was developed in the early years of settlement around the grave of William Chippendale, who had settled in the area in 1837 and died at Naas, later the site of "Top Naas" homestead, on 7th July 1839. At least three other burials were made in the cemetery. While visible evidence of this cemetery has not survived, within living memory the unmarked site was respected by being excluded from acreage worked by agricultural machinery.⁶²

PIALLIGO/HONEYSUCKLE/DUNTROON PRIVATE CEMETERY

Another lost early private cemetery site was that established to serve the Presbyterian settlers further north at Pialligo. Robert Campbell, owner of the Duntroon estate, sponsored the immigration of many free immigrants to work on his land, many of them Scottish Presbyterians who formed their own community in the Pialligo area. For example the family of Gilbert and Mary McInnes lived at a house called Honeysuckle on the Molonglo River flats from 1842 to 1845. Gilbert McInnes was a Duntroon shepherd and the family spoke Gaelic as their first language.⁶³

The Honeysuckle or Pialligo Cemetery (also known as Duntroon Cemetery Paddock) is thought to be located near where the McInnes family had their home in the area

now bounded by Woolshed Creek, Molonglo River, Kallaroo Road and Pialligo Avenue. It includes the graves of David Macpherson who died in 1843, aged twelve, after drowning in the Molonglo River; and his mother; and possibly at least ten other burials, reputedly all Presbyterians. A headstone set up to the memory of David Macpherson was destroyed by stock over the years, while the fence enclosing the burial plot was destroyed by fire in 1870 and not renewed.⁶⁴ It is likely that the strong Presbyterian tradition of those settlers led them to prefer this private burial place to the multi-denomination burials in the unconsecrated public cemetery at the nearby Oaks. The Presbyterian portion of the Queanbeyan Riverside cemetery was officially allocated in 1844 but the first burial there only occurred in 1854.⁶⁵

CUPPACUMBALONG PRIVATE CEMETERY

The tradition of private cemeteries on properties persisted during the nineteenth century and the Cuppacumbalong property under the occupancy of the De Salis family saw the creation of a large and imposing feature on the banks of the Murrumbidgee. James Wright had moved from his original property at Lanyon to Cuppacumbalong, and then in turn sold the property to Leopold Fane De Salis. During Wright's time three early burials are recorded at the property on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. Thomas Preston, shepherd aged seventy, was buried on 14th April 1859. Donald Thompson, infant son of the Cuppacumbalong gardener William Thompson and his wife Agnes, was buried at seven days old on the 7th of October 1862. Theak, a Chinese shepherd aged seventy-five was buried on 19th August 1867. He had been one of the last of the Chinese shepherds employed by James Wright at the time of the gold rushes and appears to have been employed at Cuppacumbalong.

Unfortunately a flood in 1870 eroded the riverbank sweeping away the three graves.⁶⁶ In 1876, twenty-nine year old Rodolph De Salis, who was the second son of Leopold De Salis and had been managing his father's Queensland properties, returned home to Cuppacumbalong seriously ill. He died at the property on 7th June 1876 and a new cemetery was required. Given the disastrous history of the first cemetery's location, a new site free from flood danger was chosen on a stony ridge overlooking the river, just south of the homestead. The site is said to have been one of Rodolph's favourite places, where he used to sit to smoke his pipe. However this new site presented other difficulties since it was set on granite, almost impossible to dig to a sufficiently depth for decent burial. George De Salis, brother of the deceased, wrote an account of this challenge in his diary:

“... Johny Noone (and helper) ... commenced the grave at 11 o'clock and worked till dark. They despair of ever getting deep enough and another place is tried ... but the first site is preferred by us all and decided to have it there if possible. Dyball and Harris help and by 2 o'clock in the morning it is 4 feet deep; the last 3 feet was thro solid decomposed granite and the men had to work with a will to get it done ... every blow of the pick stuck fire.”⁶⁷

When Rodolph and George's mother Charlotte, Mrs Fane De Salis, died on 9th February 1878 at the age of fifty-nine the problems of the site prompted Leopold to organise the creation of a raised cemetery to accommodate further burials. The design of this unusual response consisted of a large oval dry-stone wall enclosing a raised terrace of soft fresh earth to permit digging future graves without difficulty. This work of carting rocks and soil was undertaken by Thomas Tong and took several months to complete. The site was planted with ornamental plants during the following spring.

In January 1879 George De Salis recorded the funeral of his newborn son, Arthur, in his diary:

“... Mr Smith tried to persuade us to have the burial in the Churchyard but neither of us liked the idea of leaving the little thing alone when it had a place beside other loved ones gone. ... Henry brought the coffin into the room off the drawing-room and Nina and I put the child in and arranged it properly. ... Mr Smith came from Lanyon after breakfast ... at about 9.30 o’clock the burial service was read. ... Willy, Henry, Arthur and Bradshaw carried the coffin and all at Cuppacumbalong followed. ... Nina put a cross of white roses and snow drops on the coffin and I put for Mary a bunch of white Jasiniums.”⁶⁸

The bereaved mother Mary De Salis was still recovering at the hospital in Queanbeyan. The Mr Smith referred to was the Reverend Pierce Galliard Smith of St John’s Anglican Church, Mary’s father and the grandfather of the dead child.

In 1880 a station hand, Thomas Fishlock, was buried at the cemetery. At some time towards the end of the century a circular dry-stone wall was built to enclose the De Salis family plot at the southwest end of the cemetery, with a stile giving access over the metre-high wall. Charlotte De Salis’ sister Sarah and her husband Herbert Jeffreys are also buried at this cemetery. Graves of workers and their families were located on the eastern side.⁶⁹ Cuppacumbalong employees buried at the cemetery are Joseph Oldfield, James Gray and Thomas Warner. Ester Oldfield who died from burns is also believed to be buried here with her grandfather.

When Leopold De Salis died on 20th November 1898 at the neighbouring property of Lambrigg, the home of his daughter Nina and her husband William Farrer, he was buried at Cuppacumbalong. The De Salis headstone, a polished granite obelisk was erected in 1899. Other grave sites of extended family and station employees were originally marked by cairns and later replaced by stones. There are nineteen recorded burials 1876-1903, marked by four headstones and an obelisk.

FARRER GRAVES AT LAMBRIGG

Leopold’s daughter Henrietta Nina De Salis married William Farrer in 1882. Initially the couple lived for several years at Cuppacumbalong to look after the aging Leopold Fane De Salis, but later in 1894, after the sale of Cuppacumbalong, they moved to a newly built a house at Lambrigg. Here William Farrer conducted the famous experiments in the cross breeding of strains of wheat to develop improved varieties resistant to the plant diseases of rust and smut. William Farrer died at Lambrigg on 16th April 1906 and was buried at the property. His wife Nina, who died on 20th February 1929, was buried beside him. In 1939, as part of a Commonwealth Government ceremony to commemorate the agricultural importance of Farrer’s experiments, a granite obelisk was erected beside the graves which were also covered with two granite slabs.

THE GIBBES FAMILY VAULT AT YARRALUMLA

The practice of private family cemeteries and burials on rural properties was not restricted to properties in inaccessible locations west of the Murrumbidgee River. When Colonel John Gibbes died in December 1873 he was buried in a newly-built family vault at his property of Yarralumla. When his widow Elizabeth Gibbes died on July 23rd 1874 at Yarralumla, it was evidently a sufficiently cold winter to allow her funeral to be delayed until

August 5th to allow family from Sydney to arrive. The Queanbeyan Age of August 8th reported that the service was conducted on the verandah of Yarralumla Homestead by the Reverend Pierce Galliard Smith of St John's, and that the coffin was then carried to the vault in the garden. A family story in the Gibbes family is that when the Colonel and his wife had left Sydney in 1859, to live out their old age with their son in what they perceived as the remote and under-serviced Limestone Plains, they travelled with two finely crafted coffins which acted as clothes chests until required for their intended use.⁷⁰

Before he sold the Yarralumla property in 1880 Augustus Gibbes had the remains of his parents removed from the vault and reinterred at St John's churchyard. Others buried in the Yarralumla vault include two infant daughters of previous owners of the property Terrence and Minnie Murray (née Gibbes): Ayleen Elizabeth who died at two weeks old in December 1847; and Constance Matilda who died aged three weeks in December 1851.⁷¹ Colonel Gibbes had the bodies of his grand daughters exhumed and reburied in the vault. Their uncle had the remains relocated for a second time to St John's.⁷² The site of the vault was about 100 metres south of the homestead in a position which is in the middle of the lawn now known as "the vista". Its location remained visible for many years and a Federal valuer surveying the property in 1913 listed it as an "underground storage vault".⁷³

SMALL PRIVATE FAMILY PLOTS

In addition to private cemeteries there are numerous smaller private family plots near outlying homesteads, among which recorded examples are those of the Phillips family at Sherwood near Uriarra, and the Colverwell graves at Kowen. In addition there are numerous individual burials of infants who died at birth or in early childhood. This category of burials outnumbers all others and is a grim testimony to the difficulties of surviving birth and the first few years of life in the first century of settlement of the region.

PUBLIC CHURCH CEMETERIES

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST'S ANGLICAN CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

In far away Britain, graveyards had been traditionally associated with churches and acted as a visible link between the living and the dead, underscoring religious faith in the afterlife. The Anglican Church provided two churchyard burial grounds for settlers of the Limestone Plains.

St John the Baptist's Church, when its foundation stone was laid in 1841, was in a rural pastoral setting in the Molonglo River valley rather than the city centre seen today. The church and churchyard acted as a focus for the spiritual life of the Anglican community in the central and southern parts of the region and the churchyard became the last resting place of many of the wealthy and influential early settlers who shaped the region as well as many of their employees.

ST PAUL'S GINNINDERRA CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

The Robertson Land Act of 1861 encouraged closer settlement of the area and many small landholdings were selected in the Ginninderra area leading to a growth of services, including the provision of an additional church and burial grounds. St Paul's Church of England was erected at The Glebe, Ginninderra in 1861 and opened by the Reverend Pierce Galliard Smith in May. The cemetery dates from at least 1872 and includes at least eighteen burials.

Regular churchgoers among the parish faithful were interred close to the wooden church building and others were buried further away down the slope.

Services at St Paul's were discontinued around 1900 after forty years of service and the timber building quickly deteriorated. By 1970 the cemetery had also deteriorated through poor fencing against stock grazing on the glebe pastures, and from vandalism. The development of the suburb of Evatt resulted in the desecration of the St Paul's Cemetery through the building of a road over one portion, despite the refusal of a bulldozer driver to drive over graves. The cemetery site is commemorated with an identifying plaque and remains today as "urban open space" surrounded by suburbs.

WEETANGEREA METHODIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY

Other religious denominations felt a need to establish their own cemeteries and churches which were managed according to their own beliefs and regulations. Methodism had been introduced into the region by Thomas Southwell in 1846 and Bible readings and sermons were conducted at his home of Parkwood, Ginninderra where a chapel and Sunday school were built in 1863. A small wooden slab church building was set up in what is now Lyneham in 1869 and in 1873 it was moved to Weetangera where an associated cemetery was also established. The appointment of Trustees was notified in the *NSW Government Gazette*. The first burial at the new Methodist cemetery was of Ernest Southwell. Forty-four burials are recorded at Weetangera and they reflect the close knit Southwell family relationships of the district. Southwell family members make up twenty-one of the burials and when Thomas Southwell died in 1881 he was buried in the centre of the cemetery. The church was subsequently dismantled and removed from the site. A stone cairn marks the spot where the church was located.

PUBLIC OR GENERAL CEMETERIES

RIVERSIDE CEMETERY, QUEANBEYAN

The first general cemetery of the region was established at the Riverside site at Queanbeyan. The first area to be gazetted in February 1844 was the Presbyterian portion. There were also portions for Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Methodists. Many of the early pioneer settlers of what is now the ACT were buried in the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery.

GINNINDERRA GENERAL CEMETERY/HALL CEMETERY

The Hall Cemetery at Wallaroo Road was established in 1883 as the district's first official cemetery outside Queanbeyan and is the oldest public general cemetery still in use in the ACT. It was planned with sections for Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodist and a non-sectarian portion. It contains the burials of many local Hall families, especially the Southwell and Kilby families.

BULGAR (OR BULGA) CREEK CEMETERY

The region's second general cemetery was planned in 1887 at Bulgar (or Bulga) Creek west of the present Weston area. It reflects the optimism of the early years of selection in the area which seemed to indicate that a closely settled landscape would develop, with many small holdings. However, the site was soon abandoned as plans for a village were scaled back and only one burial is recorded. This one burial of a baby girl, Catherine Bass Moore, may in fact be another example of an isolated infant burial near a homestead rather than a cemetery burial since at this time William and Catherine Moore lived at the Bulga Creek property of "Fairvale" near where the cemetery was planned. When Catherine Moore's father Alexander McKenzie died at "Fairvale" in 1898 he was buried at St John's churchyard.⁷⁴

THARWA CEMETERY

A third public cemetery was established at Tharwa in 1889 to serve the settlers of this southern area and it is indicative of the thriving rural community established there at the end of the nineteenth century. It is the second-oldest general, multi-denominational cemetery in the ACT, with divisions for Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Anglican and a general portion, although the burials are only in the Catholic or Presbyterian sections in the highest, flattest, driest, part of the site along the western boundary. The burials at this cemetery are of the local settler families of the area, notably three generations each of the Green family of Tidbinbilla and the White family of Tharwa. The first burial was of Mary Ann Green in 1911.

WODEN CEMETERY

Modern Canberra did not have a general cemetery until the Canberra Cemetery, now Woden Cemetery, opened in December 1935.⁷⁵ Until then, Canberrans without links to the church-owned graveyards were usually buried in Queanbeyan. With the opening of the Woden Cemetery and passing of the Public Cemeteries Act in 1936 it was no longer possible for someone to be buried in a place outside an official cemetery which had held particular significance for them, as had been possible for the first commandant of the Royal Military College at Duntroon or the first director of the Mt Stromlo Observatory.

CONCLUSIONS AND THEMES

Life in the earliest years of the pastoral settlement of the ACT region presented many challenges, not least of which were the sense of isolation and lack of amenities in an alien and unpredictable environment. In cases of sickness, accident and bereavement, medical and spiritual help from official sources was difficult to access, and people had to be self-reliant, look to immediate family for help, or hope for assistance from close neighbours. In this environment it was common for pioneer settlers to develop a stoical and resigned attitude to the inevitability of death.⁷⁶ While religious beliefs may well have been held, strongly in many cases, the harshness of the life meant that ritual, religious ceremony and elaborate mourning and commemoration were curtailed for all but the wealthy. This was especially true for bush burials where the funeral was conducted by a layman and the grave marked by a simple cairn of stones or a commemorative planting. It is clear however that grave sites and cemeteries were fenced to protect them from stock damage, that they were planted and tended by friends and relatives for as long as they were in the district, and that these sites were valued and cherished as places commemorating the dead.

The wide range of pioneer cemeteries and burial sites in the ACT reflects a stratified society and the burial customs of all levels of society – from rough bush burials in a blanket wrapping, feted by drunken convict mates, to ceremonial and religious burials amid mourning family and friends in finely crafted coffins at a private homestead vault. Mutual loyalties and obligations felt between landholders and employees at Lanyon and Cuppacumbalong are expressed by the use of the stations' cemeteries for all classes. The attachment of settlers to their selector blocks, and the problems of distance, resulted in outlying family burial plots such as that at Sherwood. Also common are bush burials due to the difficulties of isolation and distance, and the consequences of river floods preventing travel to cemetery locations.

There are an overwhelming number of burials of infants and small children, their simple graves sited close to their family homesteads.

Aboriginal burials from the period of early white settlement are represented by a traditional tribal chief's interment - Onyong buried to look out over his lands from a Tharwa Hill - and by a revered burial site in Ginninderra where large numbers of burials seem to have occurred during the period of European settlement. There are records of Aboriginal burials made by white settlers following instructions for traditional funeral customs, and of other Aboriginal burials conducted according to white traditions in the absence of fellow Aboriginal kinsmen.

The transition from individual grave sites, to small mixed-denomination public cemeteries and rural churchyards, to large multi-denominational cemeteries, can be identified as a progression as the burial of the dead became a more organised and documented practice in response to public health concerns and government control. The Weetangera Cemetery also reflects the more intensive settlement of the district after the Robertson Land Act of 1861 and is distinct from the development of larger estates such as Duntroon and Lanyon with their own burial places. It also reflects the close-knit, relatively isolated rural community and the predominance of one religious affiliation that established itself in the Ginninderra district in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Some cemeteries and burial grounds are known only incidentally from recollections of early settlement or hinted at in a succession of death and burial registrations without much detail about the actual locations or precisely who is buried. The Charnwood burials are one example, as is the Cemetery Paddock at Ginninderra, while there are others such as the Acton Cemetery where even less is known. The following Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites is an attempt to gather this dispersed information about early rural burials into a single accessible record.

INVENTORY OF PRE-1936 CEMETRIES AND BURIAL SITES IN THE ACT

Public Cemeteries (previously called General Cemeteries)

These are multi-denominational, but different religious areas may be designated within the cemetery. Each denomination is responsible for the consecration or dedication of its designated area.

The Oaks Burial Ground (1838-1846)

This was the first public burial ground for the district and was located in what was then Queanbeyan, but since 1912 has been incorporated into Oaks Estate in the ACT. There were forty-three known burials in this unofficial burial ground from 1838 to 1846 when the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery was established. Also, an unknown Indian juggler was buried in “Old Queanbeyan Burial Ground” on 8th April 1863. A listing of all known burials at the Oaks Burial Ground is available from the Internet at www.interment.net.

There remains no visible evidence of the Oaks Burial Ground, which is now a private residential development.

Hall Cemetery (1883-)

The Hall Cemetery at Wallaroo Road, Hall is the oldest public general cemetery still in use in the ACT. It was first dedicated in NSW Government Gazette no. 117, on 22nd March 1883 and transferred to the Canberra Public Cemeteries Trust on 2nd November 1988. Although it has designated denominational areas, they have never been adhered to and the Catholic section was never used as a separate area. In practice there are three main areas: the Southwell family, the Kilby family, and more recent burials. The cemetery provides for a small number of burials each year, mainly for the pioneering families of the Hall area and residents of Hall itself. It is a headstone cemetery in a rural setting, with the headstones presenting an unusually diverse range of style and design.

A raised native garden at the entrance was created to receive ashes, with memorial plaques set into the surrounding wall. In the centre of the cemetery is a small obelisk bearing a plaque commemorating the many years of trusteeship by the Kilby family.

The Hall Cemetery has open access.

Bulga or Bulgar Creek Cemetery (1887-1888)

This general cemetery was dedicated in NSW Government Gazette 25th March 1887. Six denominational portions, and one general portion, were surveyed, but the cemetery was never developed and the site is unmarked. Catherine Bass Moore, the one-month-old daughter of William and Catherine Moore, who died on the 17th August 1888, is the only recorded burial. The Moore family lived at “Fairvale” nearby the cemetery site.

The cemetery site is now within the private property of Fairvale.

Tharwa Cemetery (1889-)

The Tharwa Cemetery was dedicated in NSW Government Gazette dated 11th June 1889. It is the second-oldest surviving planned multi-denominational general cemetery in the ACT. There are nineteen marked burials with headstones dating from 1911 and a further eleven unmarked graves. Most of the burials are of members of the White, Green and Fisher families – George Green and Daniel White being pioneer settlers of the Tidbinbilla/Tharwa area. It is only open to new burials from amongst the pioneer families of the local area.⁷⁷

The cemetery is accessed through private property at “Castle Hill”, about 2 km northwest of Tharwa General Store and is not generally open to the public.

Church Graveyards

Although serving a particular denomination, some, like St John the Baptist’s at Reid, do have burials of people from other faiths. All were consecrated.

St John the Baptist, Reid (1844-)

St John’s is the oldest single-denomination graveyard still in use in the ACT. The Anglican Church of St John the Baptist and the adjoining churchyard were consecrated on 12th March 1845 although there had already been two burials: Barbara Potts on 3rd May 1844 and Thomas Jackson on 11th January 1845. During the period from 1845 to 1850 fifteen burials were conducted at St Johns while it remained part of the parish of Queanbeyan. On 18th October 1849 the remains of three settlers who had previously been interred at Yarralumla between 1840 and 1842 (where they had worked for Terence Aubrey Murray) were re-buried at St Johns.⁷⁸

Colonel John George Nathaniel Gibbes, father of Augustus Gibbes the subsequent owner of Yarralumla, who died in 1873, and his wife Elizabeth who died in 1874, were both buried in a vault at Yarralumla, and then re-interred at St Johns in 1880 when Frederick Campbell acquired the property.⁷⁹

Between 1844 and 1915, when the original burial register of the parish was filled, three hundred and thirteen burials had taken place at St Johns. Jean Salisbury has written a history of St John’s Churchyard including listings of burials – see Reference List for details.

Until 1920 Anglican clergy conducted all the burials at St Johns but many Presbyterians as well as Anglicans were buried there.⁸⁰ With the growth of the town of Canberra and lack of another nearby public cemetery, burials by clergy of other denominations were permitted until the opening of a public cemetery at Woden in 1936.⁸¹ The St John’s churchyard burial ground was closed in 1937 except for people who had purchased Exclusive Right of Burial Certificates before July 1937. Ashes may be interred in family graves without Exclusive Right Certificates. Provision has been made for the interment of ashes of parishioners by the erection of a Columbarium.

There are two lych gates, rare in Australia, which were traditionally used to provide a resting place for a coffin and shelter for mourners before entering the church.

The St John’s Graveyard, situated in the present day suburb of Reid, is open to public access and contains many gravestones.

St Paul's, the Glebe, Ginninderra (1872-1900)

The church and adjoining graveyard were consecrated 21st May 1868. There were eighteen recorded burials 1872-1900.

The cemetery is no longer visible, but the site is bounded by Copland Drive, Moynihan Street and Sharwood Crescent, Evatt and remains largely vacant land. A sign on the Copland Drive side designates the area and historic cemetery, and an ACT Government bronze plaque near the centre of the site identifies the location of St Paul's Church.

Weetangera Methodist Cemetery (1873-1952)

This small late-nineteenth, early-twentieth century rural cemetery has forty-four burials and eighteen monuments. The church associated with the graveyard fell into disrepair over the years and was demolished in 1955 and a stone cairn marks the site. The last burial made in the cemetery was made in 1964 and the following year a bushfire damaged some graves and fencing. Most of the burials at the cemetery are in the southwest corner, which has the highest elevation, and most occurred before the end of the nineteenth century. The cemetery is particularly important for its age and intact nature, and for the headstones, which have undergone little change since their construction and demonstrate the cultural tastes of their period. One interesting aspect of the monuments is evidence of paint covering, reflecting the nineteenth century custom of painting sandstone cemetery monuments.⁸²

The cemetery is located near the suburb of Hawker and has public access via a walking track past "Lands End" farm.

Small and Private Cemeteries

Typically these are on pastoral properties, and may include station employees as well as members of the landowning families. Records show that a number of burials took place on the different pastoral stations during the whole of the 19th century, often without an attending clergyman. Some burial grounds were consecrated after the first burial, and some have not been consecrated at all.

Duntroon, Mount Pleasant Graves

There are thought to be about six burials about 100 metres north of the Duntroon Dairy.⁸³ This is where the geology of the area has provided an area of softer soil on the hillside permitting the digging of graves. One of the burials is believed to be Brian Logue, first known Dairyman at the Duntroon Dairy in the 1830s.⁸⁴ However the interpretation of the historical record may be confused here because the seventh child of Brian and Margaret Logue, also named Brian, is noted as being buried near the dairy while an adult Brian Logue is registered as a burial in the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery in 1860.⁸⁵ The scenario of an infant burial at the Duntroon Dairy is more likely. The identity of others buried there is unknown and the graves are unmarked although they were originally fenced.

There is no visible sign of the Mount Pleasant graves.

The Acton, Molonglo Bridge Cemetery

The anonymous "Old Identity" writing to the *Queanbeyan Age* in the early 1930s mentions a burial ground at Acton "about fifty yards on Black Mountain side of the Commonwealth Bank" with at least in the 1870s "the outline of five graves plain to see along with a few posts remaining".⁸⁶ The old Canberry Homestead, later known as Acton House was at one time

used as a bank. Another later letter to the newspaper details a burial plot containing “dozens of people” not far from the Molonglo Bridge but having had its fence destroyed in the late 1860s.⁸⁷ It is possible that this Molonglo Bridge Cemetery is the same as the Acton Cemetery since the bridge over the river at Acton near Lennox Crossing was called Molonglo Bridge. The nearby Commonwealth Avenue Bridge has now replaced the Molonglo Bridge.

Today there is no trace of the Acton/Molonglo Bridge cemetery whose location is most probably under the water of Lake Burley Griffin.

Lanyon Station Cemetery (1837-1978)

There are thirty-six known burials 1837-1978, and probably several others, but only three headstones. The cemetery is located on the “Lanyon” property and was consecrated on 25th October 1889. A list of those buried in the cemetery is detailed in Bruce Moore’s book “The Lanyon Saga”.

The Lanyon Cemetery is closed for general public visits but occasionally open for guided tours in association with Lanyon Homestead open days. It is clearly visible in the pastoral landscape from the road to Tharwa as a white fenced area overshadowed by large pine trees.

Naas Cemetery and Naas Graves (1839-1900?)

Thomas Chippendale was granted the Naas run in 1837. An unofficial general cemetery developed early on at the property around the grave of his father William Chippendale who died at Naas on 7th July 1839 at the age of sixty-five. He was buried three days later on a knoll close to the site of the huts at Naas, later the site of “Top Naas” homestead, (also called “Upper Naas”) with the Reverend Edward Smith officiating. At that time there was no recognised cemetery in the district. The area of the Chippendale burial became known as the Naas Cemetery as further burials occurred in the vicinity.⁸⁸

Other recorded burials at Naas at the present day property of “White Gates” are of Matilda Wright on 6th December 1861, a shepherdess accidentally drowned at the age of twelve and Joseph Acton on 27th July 1864 who was a shepherd for the McKeahnie family, aged sixty.⁸⁹

Also said to be nearby is the grave of Ann Warner, aged fifty-six and wife of Thomas Warner, a selector in the Naas area, who was buried on 19th January 1878. On this occasion Father McCauliffe from Queanbeyan travelled to Naas to officiate at the burial. Joseph and Edward Oldfield, brothers aged three years and fifteen months, respectively, died in a diphtheria epidemic and were both buried at Naas on the 10th May 1849. A couple recorded as “Old Wasem and his wife” are also reportedly buried there.⁹⁰

The grave of Edward Read, son of George and Florence Read, who died on the 2nd September 1900 aged only twenty-four hours is located behind where a water tank now stands on the hill above “Willowvale” homestead, Naas. The grave is fenced and marked with a bush rose and a white hawthorn. George and Florence Read lived at “Willow Vale” and are both buried at St John’s churchyard, Reid.⁹¹

These burials at Naas are unmarked, on private property, and not open for public inspection.

Honeysuckle Reserve (1843-1870)

The site may also be referred to as Pialligo Cemetery or Duntroon Cemetery Paddock and is said to contain the remains of David Macpherson who died in 1843, his mother, and possibly at least another ten burials, reputedly all Presbyterians.⁹²

A headstone was erected to the memory of the Macphersons but was later destroyed by cattle, and the fence surrounding the graves was lost in a bushfire in 1870 and never renewed. Samuel Shumack locates the Macpherson graves in the Honeysuckle Reserve.⁹³ The *Canberra Feature Map* of 1915 situates a Reserve Paddock, adjacent to Big Honeysuckle Paddock, in the area now bounded by Woolshed Creek, Molonglo River, Kallaroo Road and Pialligo Avenue.

As late as 1916, the Macpherson grave was tended and the pieces of the headstone tied up with wire by Edward O'Rourke, of "The Willows", Majura Road. In 1971, Edward's son Pat O'Rourke identified the site of the Macpherson grave for Bert Sheedy, of the Canberra and District Historical Society, as being on the Queanbeyan side of the culvert that runs from Pialligo Avenue (then Fairbairn Avenue) to the river.⁹⁴

Today a pull-off with an orientation map on the Pialligo side of the road overlooks this site, but there is no indication that there has been a cemetery there.

Cuppacumbalong Cemetery (1876-1903)

There are sixteen recorded burials 1876-1903, four headstones and an obelisk in this imposing walled cemetery on the banks of the Murrumbidgee. Another three burials are recorded 1859-1867. These were washed away in the flood of 1870, and Leopold Fane De Salis decided to build a new cemetery above flood level. The cemetery is on a granite ridge overlooking the original site, but digging the first grave was so difficult that in 1878 a raised graveyard was built to serve family, employees and neighbours. This was undertaken by Thomas Tong and took fourteen months to complete. The design is unusual, consisting primarily of a large oval terrace within a dry-stone retaining wall. The terrace was filled with fresh earth to permit digging future graves without difficulty. At one end of the oval is a circular dry-stone wall enclosing the De Salis family plot, with a stile giving access over the metre-high wall.

The site is accessible by footpath from the car park at Tharwa Bridge.

Charnwood Cemetery

Samuel Shumack, recorder of old Canberra tales, states there was an early cemetery at Charnwood, the property of Henry Hall, where one of the assigned un-named female convict servants of the property was buried after being discovered murdered. He states that about a dozen early pioneers, including four children, were buried there.⁹⁵ An "Old Identity" writing to the Queanbeyan Age in the early 1930s stated that there was a cemetery at Charnwood where some of the Hall family were buried and that the cemetery was

"two panel square and there two children of the name of Wells were laid to rest. A bush fire in 1883 destroyed the fence."

Bruce Moore, another who has recorded the early history of the region, lists a child, Charlotte Hartin of fifteen months as having died on the 11th December 1867 and buried at Charnwood,

and two Aboriginal burials: Edmond Goaroh aged fifteen years, who died on the 11th of September 1871 and Bobby aged forty years who died on the 21st of July 1873.⁹⁶ It is not clear if the Aboriginal burials located at Charnwood were there or at Glenwood or Ginninderra, also mentioned in conjunction with Aboriginal burials in the historic record. The location description of “Charnwood” may have been used loosely to describe a wider area.

The location of the Charnwood Cemetery is no longer known, neither are the records clear about whether all these burials were together in a cemetery or in scattered plots near the Charnwood property.

Ginninderra Cemetery Paddock

The area of land now adjacent to the large roundabout intersection of the Barton Highway and William Slim Drive features on old maps with the title Ginninderra Cemetery Paddock. It is not known how many burials were made there but stories tell of the burial of an unnamed woman drowned in the Murrumbidgee River and also of a Mrs McIvor, a young girl who ran away from Ireland to marry her true love against the wishes of her family. Unfortunately tragedy struck for the newly married runaways when the wife died in childbirth sometime in the early 1840s.⁹⁷ A writer to the Queanbeyan Age in 1932 states there were “about a dozen graves” in the Cemetery Paddock, specifically naming Mrs McIvor and also a “young Seeley”.⁹⁸ Bruce Moore, in his history of the area “Cotter Country”, lists the burials of five children, three under a month old, in a location titled as “Ginninderra”, with four of the burials dated between 1865 to 1868, but gives no details of location.⁹⁹ These may also be in the Ginninderra Cemetery Paddock. At least one of the grave sites at the Ginninderra Cemetery Paddock was fenced at one time, but the fence was destroyed by fire and there is now no evidence of these burials.

It is not known if the Aboriginal burials listed in the historic record were located in the Ginninderra Cemetery Paddock or in another location in the general Ginninderra area, encompassing Charnwood and Glenwood.

The cemetery is believed to lie under the present road.

Tuggeranong Burial Ground

There exist historic records of burials at a private burial ground at Tuggeranong. An unnamed baby born to Thomas and Sophia Tong who died at twelve hours old on 2nd October 1876 was buried at Dog Trap Flat (the name of the area north of Rose Cottage). Members of the Tong family occupied Rose Cottage for a few years.¹⁰⁰ Thomas Forman aged forty-five years was buried Tuggeranong on 11th July 1886, and an un-named day-old baby from the Nelson family was buried on 4th February 1895 at Tuggeranong. Another day-old baby of the Gallagher family was buried at the Tuggeranong private cemetery on 19th December 1902.¹⁰¹ This infant’s father was Patrick Gallagher whose uncle Michael Gallagher established Erindale homestead at Tuggeranong in the 1880s.¹⁰²

The old Tuggeranong cemetery was buried in the 1980s under earthworks made to construct the Isabella Drive roadway where it intersects with the Monaro Highway.¹⁰³

Individual or Family Graves

This list is limited to known grave locations or sites where something is known about the circumstances of death and burial. A large number of early deaths were recorded by authorities but the actual burial sites were neither recorded nor marked permanently in the landscape. In several cases the memory of locations, once so familiar that they were never recorded, were lost when people moved from the area or died themselves. These individual bush graves may have been sited by deliberate choice or by force of circumstance and probably very few were ever consecrated. References to sources of information have been given where possible. Bruce Moore in his book "Cotter Country" lists more individual graves than are itemised here but without specific location details.¹⁰⁴ The graves described here have been listed in rough geographic groupings of north and south Canberra.

Individual/Family Graves in North Canberra

Colverwell Graves at Glenburn (1837-1876?)

Two graves with stone headstones and footstones mark the burials of Elizabeth and Margaret Colverwell who drowned in Glen Burn Creek in December 1837 aged six and five years. Their father Luke Colverwell erected the gravestones and the burials are believed to be the oldest marked graves in the ACT. Additional burials believed to be at the same place are of their sister Eliza who died in 1875 and their parents Luke (died 1876) and Mary Colverwell. These are the oldest known marked graves in the ACT. The site was restored in 2006.

The site is open to visits by foot. There is a locked gate.

Crinigan Graves

Gravesites of nine of the ten infants born to John and Maria Crinigan are thought to be located in the vicinity of Crinigan's Stone Hut in Amaroo. The graves are unmarked and their exact locations are not known.¹⁰⁵

General Bridges' Grave (1915)

The grave of Major-General Sir William Throsby Bridges contains the only named World War One serviceman to have been brought back to Australia for burial. The tomb of an unknown soldier established at the Australian War Memorial in 1993 represents the tens of thousands of others who died. General Bridges was mortally wounded on 15th May 1915 at Gallipoli and died aboard the hospital ship "Gascon" on May 18th. His body was brought back to Canberra for burial. He had been the first commandant of the Royal Military College at Duntroon and after a funeral service held at St John's church on 3rd September 1915 he was buried on Mount Pleasant overlooking the College. His widow, Edith Lilian was buried at St John's churchyard after her death in October 1926.¹⁰⁶ General Bridges' memorial gravestone was designed by Walter Burley Griffin in 1916 under strict direction from Lady Bridges to keep the design as simple as possible, and was unveiled in 1920.¹⁰⁷

General Bridges' grave is situated at Mt Pleasant, with public access through the Royal Military College, Duntroon. It is available for public inspection.

Glenloch Grave, Sheedy infant (1865)

A baby born to Michael and Margaret Sheedy on 10th September 1865 is recorded to have only lived for one minute and to have been buried at the Yarralumla property on the northern side of the Molonglo River near where the Glenloch interchange and Cork Oak Plantations

are now located. No minister was present for the burial and the witnesses are recorded as Mary Flint and Ellen Wallis.¹⁰⁸ The actual gravesite has not been located.

Green Hills Station Cemetery (1881)

This is a private cemetery which was established at the Greenhills selection of the Moore family. Richard Moore built a stone house there in 1876 and it became the most substantial home in the Cotter area. Richard and Agnes Moore lost a baby called Thomas at birth on 6th November 1881 and buried him on the property.¹⁰⁹ Previously when an older child Alice Emily had died in 1878 at five months old she had been buried in her mother's (Naylor) family vault at the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery.¹¹⁰ The Commonwealth survey for the resumption of Greenhills station identified four graves located by the District Surveyor, but records of the locations and names of the deceased have yet to be located. Green Hills (Greenhills) Cemetery was considered in 1925-1926 as the location for Canberra's first public cemetery, but was rejected as unsuitable.¹¹¹

This site is located on the property now known as Greenhills Conference Centre at Cotter River but the exact location of the graves is neither visible or known and it is not open for public inspection.

Gungahlin (Red Hill, renamed Gungaderra) Burial Plot

There is a small unmarked burial plot in the garden area at Red Hill station now renamed Gungaderra in Gungahlin. According to stories passed down in family recollections it contains the graves of three babies, one of which was presumed to be a child from John and Jemima Winter, selectors who built the first Red Hill slab homestead in 1861 and had nine children between 1862 and 1882, losing one in infancy.¹¹² However records show that their daughter Isabella who died in 1868 aged eighteen months is buried in the Presbyterian section of the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery.¹¹³ The site is private property.

Majura Valley Graves (1876-1911)

The historic record indicates that there were several burials of infants made at properties along the Majura Valley: An infant named Honora, child of Henry and Ann Sander or Lander (the written record is unclear, as it is with Ann's maiden name of Bourke or O'Rourke) died on 6th May 1876 at seven weeks. The Gifford family buried two infants, Rebecca at five days old on the 9th December 1878 and Elma Gifford who died at one month on 19th December 1880. Other Majura burials were of an un-named baby of the Royal family who died at birth on the 29th December 1884 and Ernest Southwell who died at one hour on 13th December 1911. There is also reference to a mother and son, Honorah and Cornelius O'Rourke who died in 1887 and were buried in Lower Majura.¹¹⁴

Majura Darmody Grave (1861)

Family tradition in the Darmody family locates an infant's grave in the Majura valley. John and Mary Darmody emigrated to Australia from Ireland in 1853 and John and his two elder sons, then in their early teens, worked as shepherds on the Campbell property of Duntroon. As was customary on the estate the family were allocated a small cottage with a cultivation patch at Limekilns in the Majura Valley. Maps of the area show a block of land known as the lime kiln block on the eastern side of the Majura road. The grave of a younger daughter, Margaret Darmody who died from fever on 6th March 1861 at the age of five years, is recorded by strong family tradition to be located in the Volunteer Paddock close to the western side of Majura Road. This site is on private land at a property known as "The Pines". The historic record, however, details her as being buried in an unmarked grave at the

Riverside Cemetery at Queanbeyan.¹¹⁵ It is not known which is the correct version of events, the oral tradition or the written record.

The eldest Darmody son, Thomas settled on selected land in the lower Majura Valley, marrying Sarah Ryan in August 1869. The family moved location to Wells Flat, north east of Majura. In November their infant son William Joseph drowned in a dam or waterhole and was subsequently buried at Queanbeyan.

Majura Valley Lime Kiln Grave

The grave of an unknown child is believed to be on the old Lime Kiln block, next to the ruins of a house. The grave is outlined at the end and one side by rocks.¹¹⁶

The site is near the Police Training Centre and is not open for public visits.

Sherwood Homestead Graves (1878-1922)

The property of “Sherwood” was originally owned by Henry Phillips, born in Surrey, England, 1824, and Eliza Phillips (nee Dove) born Nottinghamshire, England, 1838. The couple emigrated to Australia and were married on 30th April 1863 at St John’s Church. In January 1863 Henry Phillips purchased land on Uriarra Creek upstream from John McDonald’s Uriarra House. They built a house there and named the property “Sherwood”, in memory of Eliza’s Nottingham origins. Henry Phillips enlarging his property with four adjoining portions of land in order to provide for their growing family of five children, one of whom, also called Henry, died in infancy in 1878, and is buried on Roper’s Hill 150 metres southwest of the homestead site. The burial ground was later consecrated and when Henry Phillips (senior) died on 28th January 1913 aged 89, and was likewise buried on Roper’s Hill, it was described in the records as the Church of England Cemetery, Uriarra. George Webb and WC McDonald were witnesses to the burial. Eliza Phillips remained at Sherwood until her death at the age of 84 on 14th December 1922 and was buried next to her husband and child by the Reverend FG Ward, Rector of St John’s Canberra who held office 1913-1929.¹¹⁷ When Henry and Eliza’s son George Henry Phillips had been killed in a shooting accident on the Sherwood property on 2nd August 1902 he had been taken to the St John’s churchyard for burial.¹¹⁸

A bushfire in March 1939 claimed the Phillips’ slab cottage and nothing remains of it today.

The unmarked grave site is located under a large oak tree on Roper’s Hill overlooking the site where the homestead once stood which is marked today with exotic deciduous trees, the remains of an orchard and flowering bulbs. Descendants of the family erected a plaque in 2000. The grave plot was once fenced but all traces of the fence have gone in the wake of the 2003 bushfires. Sherwood is accessible by a one-hour walk from the nearest public road with permission from Forestry staff.

Vestwood Graves (1880s)

The Vestwood property named after one of its occupiers Richard Vest is located in Kowen. Before Vest’s time the property was occupied by Thomas and Ann Harman who married in 1879. Thomas Harman is recorded as owning 80 acres of Dirty Swamp. Family tradition locates at least two children’s graves, possibly Harman infants, among quince trees forty-five metres west of the rubble remains of the house, also known as McNerney’s Hut. There are no visible remains of the graves.

Individual/Family Graves in South Canberra and Namadgi

Barrett's Homesite Graves

Barrett's homesite is now rubble and marked by some quince trees about 2km downstream from the "Mt Clear" homestead site near the southeast boundary of Namadgi National Park. There are several babies' graves.¹¹⁹

Boboyan Homestead Graves, Sarah Brayshaw and infant (1865)

A small distance from the homestead there are two graves. One near the creek is the grave of six-year-old Sarah Brayshaw who died on the 11th June 1865 from diphtheria and was buried on 13th June. She was the daughter of William and Flora Brayshaw who built the first homestead at this locality. The second is the grave of an un-named child from the Woodfield family who drowned in the creek near the homestead. The policeman from Michelago attended the burial ceremony as witness.¹²⁰

Another burial, that of Joseph Leonard Watts, who died on 23rd March 1894, is recorded in the Queanbeyan Burial Register as being at Boboyan but the location of this grave is not known.

Booroomba, Jimmy the Rover (1864)

With the dispersal of Aboriginal groups and the reduction of their numbers through disease, particularly a measles epidemic in 1862, their burial customs fell into decline but were evidently still important. In around 1864 when an Aboriginal known as Jimmy the Rover (who had been chief of the Pialligo group, but had become an outlaw separated from the rest of his people) was ill and sensed his death he approached sympathetic white settlers with instructions about where he and his weapons were to be buried when he died. His instructions were carried out by the McKeahnie family of Booroomba.¹²¹

The actual site of the burial is not known.

Brayshaw's Hut Grave

There is evidence of a gravesite near David Brayshaw's hut in the gully below the house and near the fenceline, but neither the date nor the person buried is known.¹²²

Brooklyn, Congwarra, Green infant (1893)

An un-named day-old baby from the Green family was buried at "Brooklyn", Congwarra.¹²³

Cotter Rangers House, Christy Goody (1896)

An Aboriginal stockman, 1896. An Aboriginal stockman was injured near Blackfellows Creek and nursed in Tom Oldfield's hut on the Cotter Flats. The grave is said to be about forty yards up the river from the Cotter Ranger's House on the eastern side of the Yaouk track. At one time the grave was fenced and the saddle from the horse hung up on a nearby tree.¹²⁴

Crawford Grave (1915)

The grave of the stillborn son of Daniel and Dalla Crawford (nee Westerman) who died on the 13th June 1915. The baby was probably born at "Lons Vale" the home of Dalla's parents (the Westermans) on Grassy Creek and the child was not baptised. The grave originally had a picket fence around it but this is now gone.¹²⁵

The gravesite is 100-200 metres east of the house site at Lonesome Pine, Sheep Station Creek, Boboyan, but is no longer visible. Digging to try to eradicate a large rabbit warren altered the landscape. Early in 2006 members of the Crawford family arranged for a plaque to be attached to a rock at the approximate location of the grave site.

Duffield Graves (1929-1956)

The grave of Walter Geoffrey Duffield, founder of the Commonwealth Solar Observatory at Mount Stromlo, and its pioneer director 1924-1927, is located on the western slope of Mt Stromlo, overlooking the Murrumbidgee valley. At the top of the grave is a white cross with the inscription *per ardua ad astra* (through toil to the stars) and Duffield's monogram made from his initials WGD. The grave was consecrated on 5 August 1929, and the site was gazetted as a private burial ground in 1934 and also contains the ashes of his wife Doris.¹²⁶

The gravesite was badly damaged in the firestorm of 18 January 2003. The fence and cross were burned and many of the lead letters on the gravestones melted. The site was fully restored during 2003 for public inspection.

Farrer Graves (1906-1929)

The graves of William Farrer and his wife Nina (née De Salis) are on a hilltop where Farrer liked to sit 500 metres northwest of the homestead overlooking the property. There is also a granite column that was erected in 1939 by the Commonwealth of Australia to commemorate Farrer's contribution to the wheat industry.

The graves are on privately leased property, "Lambrigg" station near Tharwa, and not available for public inspection.

Green (Maloney's Creek) Grave (1897)

The grave of Pearly Jane Green aged twenty-three months who died on 26th December 1897 after eating the gunpowder out of cartridges is situated at the north side of Maloney's Creek, Paddy's River. The family attempted to gain medical help from a nurse at Booroomba but were prevented because the river was flooded. The flooded river also prevented burial in the Green family plot at Tharwa. The grave was rediscovered and consecrated in 1993, and subsequently fenced with a cross but no headstone.

The historic records also state that Pearly is buried in the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery, but this is unlikely given that the Green family buried their dead at Tharwa Cemetery and it is probably a mistake made when the death was recorded. It is not known how the 2003 bushfires have affected the gravesite.

Gudgenby Grave, Harriett McIntosh (1891)

The grave of Harriett McIntosh, wife of Robert McIntosh and housekeeper to Charles Greenfield who owned Gudgenby. She died on 20th July 1891 and was buried at the property.¹²⁷ Her grave is believed to be located behind the Gudgenby Homestead.¹²⁸

Hatcliff Grave, William Hatcliff (1897)

The grave of two-month-old William George Hatcliff who died on 29th July 1897 and was buried at his parents property known as Gibraltar, now the Birrigai Outdoor School, Tidbinbilla Road, Tharwa.¹²⁹ The location of the grave was temporarily lost when the rosemary bush marking it died, but was relocated by William's younger brother Ernie in 1981. The gravesite was restored on 8th August 1981 and is maintained by the staff of the

Birrigai School. It is part of a history trail including the Hatcliff homestead, Aboriginal caves and sites of former schools. Access is by permission from the manager of the school.

Herbert Grave, William Herbert (1857)

William Herbert was one of the earliest settlers in the Naas Valley breeding cattle and horses on the Naas-Orroral run. He was already operating in the area in 1834. He died in Naas on 25th October 1857 at the age of 80 and his family intended to transport his remains to the Queanbeyan cemetery for burial, but the height of the Gudgenby River in flood prevented them. The family waited for several days but the flood did not abate so on 27th October they buried the body on the river bank close by the homestead. His son Michael Herbert, and Charles McKeahnie with his son Alexander McKeahnie from Gudgenby were present at the interment and signed the certificate of burial.¹³⁰ When William's wife Ann died in February 1860 she was buried in the Roman Catholic portion of the Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery, indicating that the Catholic pioneers of the region preferred a full religious funeral and burial in consecrated ground if at all possible.

The grave was unmarked, and was partially uncovered by a bulldozer in 1950 during repairs to flood-damaged bridge approaches. Approval was sought for reburial in Tharwa, but not followed through. In 1953 the Department of Interior agreed to construct a memorial cairn if local people provided the plaque and stones. The plaque was provided in 1957 and the cairn, built of stone from a ruined homestead in the Naas area, finally constructed around 1966.

The grave is accessible for public inspection.

Jack Rustin's Hut/ Tauris, Middle Creek, Sylvia Sutcliffe (1921)

The grave of Sylvia Sutcliffe who died from pneumonia on the 1st May 1921 at the age of two months is located at this site. Her parents George Henry and Sylvia Sutcliffe made a living on the Gudgenby property as rabbit trappers, selling hides and rabbit carcasses. The owner of Gudgenby, Marmaduke Watson-Lee performed the burial service for the family.¹³¹

McMahon's Crossing Graves, McMahon infants (1897)

At McMahon's Crossing on the Gudgenby River are the unmarked graves of stillborn twins born to Andrew McMahon and his wife Catherine, née Flint in 1897. The graves were located near the site of the homestead, which was called Sunshine, and were originally surrounded by square rocks and planted with shamrock seeds according to old Irish custom. The homestead and outbuildings were resumed and bulldozed when the building of Gudgenby Dam was first proposed. The 2003 bush fires destroyed fencelines which have been replaced in a new arrangement for leased grazing land and there remains no evidence of the graves.¹³²

Miowera Grave (1860s)

There is a grave in the area of this property near Paddy's River thought to date from the 1860s. It is believed to be the grave of a girl whose body could not to be transported across the flooded river.¹³³

Mrs Mathieson's Grave (1830s)

The grave of one of the early settlers of the region, a Mrs Mathieson, is located near the Brayshaw Brothers' Hut, on the eastern side of Naas Creek and close to Old Naas Road. Mr Mathieson worked on James Booth's Demandring run and returned one day to discover his wife dead outside their hut, the victim of a murder. Her body was

buried on the bank of the creek close to the hut.¹³⁴ Nobody was ever charged with the murder.

In 1996 the grave was marked with a rock and a steel picket. Access is with permission from Namadgi rangers.

Oldfield's Hut Grave

Details are unknown. The site is at the front of the Oldfield family cottage near Naas, and is marked with a cross. The house was also called Murray's Creek Hut.

Orroral Grave, Jane Ann Hall (1874)

On 11th October 1874 a young servant girl called Jane Ann Hall, aged seventeen, who had been employed at Orroral was killed when the horse she was riding dashed her against a tree. She was buried at Orroral after an inquest. Her grave is believed to be close to the shearing shed and there are fallen shaped stones in the vicinity that may at one time have marked the grave.¹³⁵

Westerman Graves, Elizabeth Shiels and infant brother (1886-1922)

The grave of forty-seven-year-old Elizabeth Mary Shiels (née Westerman) who died from tuberculosis on 26th July 1922 at her parent's house after a long illness. The weather in 1922 was particularly wet and the Murrumbidgee River was in flood cutting the family off from three sides and preventing them from transporting the body to a cemetery in either Cooma or Adaminaby. The coffin was made from pine boards, which lined Jim Westerman's bedroom ceiling at his hut Lons Vale. At the same location there is also the grave of an infant brother born to Thomas and Mary Westerman who had died in 1886.¹³⁶

The burial site is about 100 to 200 metres south west of Westerman's Hut, Boboyan Road, Namadgi National Park at a place known as Grassy Creek and is marked by a white hawthorn tree with ground covering of variegated periwinkle and iris. The gravesite was fenced in 1991 and a bronze plaque placed at the head of the grave by some of her relatives.

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