



Reading Riverside: History and Heritage in Canberra's Oldest Public Cemetery

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours), College of Arts and Social Sciences, at the Australian National University

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Abstract

The processes of death and mortuary practices in colonial Australia are often mythologised to fit the romantic notion of the early Aussie battler. However, practices of mourning, eulogising and memorialising the dead in Anglo-Australian society has always been complex and colourful, reflecting the mixing of common English traditions with vernacular Australian practices. Due to the tyranny of distance, these practices, while rich and complex, often varied from place to place, reflecting local fashions and community practices. As a result, cemeteries provide a remarkable archive of social and cultural history for local communities. This thesis uses Queanbeyan's Riverside Cemetery as a case study, illustrating the social and cultural development of the Canberra region between the mid 19th-20th centuries. Analysis of the cemetery illustrates political, racial and ideological changes over a period of 150 years. The thesis also demonstrates the ambiguity of heritage value and investigates the many influences on the heritage conservation process, as well as the inherent difficulties in this process. The balance between the importance of conserving a community's past, and the requirements of planning for a modern and growing community, is shown to be a difficult one for a small Council, one that cannot be achieved without deep community involvement.

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where it is otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents my own original work. All versions of the submitted thesis (regardless of submission type) are identical.

This thesis did not require human ethics research approval.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Timothy Adams', is written over a faint, light blue rectangular stamp.

Timothy Adams

To Sammy

For being the Hufflepuff to my Slytherin.

And to Rosalind

For inspiring me, always.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, my deepest thanks and gratitude go to my supervisor Professor Nicholas Brown. Nick has provided me with invaluable guidance, patience and amazing support over an unprecedented and personally difficult year, all with patience, quiet humour and grace. At times he's understood and accepted my strange thought processes and anxiety better than I have, and for that I'm deeply grateful. Thank you for providing me not just with a supervisor, but a true mentor.

Next, my thanks must go to the amazing Brigid Whitbread from Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Library, without whose patience, enthusiasm, and skill as a local history librarian, this thesis would not have been possible. Similarly, my thanks go to local historian extraordinaire Gillian Kelly whose expertise and infectious excitement helped me make sense of the physical layout of Riverside Cemetery and numerous other puzzles, and Linda Roberts from ACT Heritage for her guidance and knack for finding amazing sources.

Thanks are due to two other local historians; Brendan O'Keefe and Nichole Overall for providing me with powerful and important insights.

I'm grateful to Messrs Shane Kelly and Philip Shelley, past and current Chief Executive Officers of Canberra Cemeteries, and their staff, for providing me with access to their archived documents and to their collective corporate knowledge in the early stages of my research.

This research would not have been possible without the support of my immediate managers at the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Maureen Evans, Liane Pettit and Leonie Nowland. Thank you for seeing the long-term value in what I was doing, for good-naturedly listening to my excited chatter and for providing me with the flexibility to study during business hours when necessary.

Thanks go to Doug Jackson and Dr Toby Boyson, for helping a numpty like me with ways in which I could record the location of specific graves. Without them, re-finding specific graves in a haystack several acres in size would have been so much harder each time I visited.

I'm very grateful to Sophie Boyson for her overall love and support, as well as her assistance in identifying the plants displayed in grave artwork.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I was not always able to visit Riverside when needed. I thank Michael McDonald-Smith for not hesitating to take photos to specification when a stranger put up his hand and asked.

As I conducted this research part time over two calendar years and experienced much of my classwork under COVID-19 restrictions, I sadly missed out on much of the close camaraderie that past cohorts have experienced. Nonetheless, I'm grateful to a few members of my cohort, especially Claire Okumura, Paul Ogborne and Christina Turner, who provided enthusiastic feedback and moral support when I inevitably struggled.

I'm very grateful to anyone who encouraged or supported me through this process, however I'm especially grateful to my brother Tony and my friend Amy for checking in regularly, asking questions, providing ideas and suggestions and just listening when I needed it.

Of course, I must thank my family for their support and understanding – my children Liam and Beanie for their graveyard humour and patience, and my partner Sammy, whose love, support and belief throughout the last two years has been invaluable in helping me finish. Anyone who has completed a thesis project of any size will know how much it can take over your waking thoughts; when your focus is death, interment and grieving, the patience and acceptance of your loved ones is even more special, especially when it comes to dinner table conversations.

Finally, I offer my gratitude to the residents of Riverside cemetery. With your stories, your unfulfilled hopes and dreams, and the everlasting grief of your families put on show for all to see, you captured my heart and imagination. You are remembered.

Indigenous Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunnawal people, upon whose lands Riverside Cemetery is located. I acknowledge their elders, past and present, as well as their continuing ties to the land.

I also mourn the indigenous people of the area, especially those whom suffered the appalling indignity of being refused burial in a cemetery located on their own lands.

May they rest in peace.

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Note on Terms

Throughout my research, it has been clear that terminology relating to religion, death and memorials can vary according to time and origin. For the sake of consistency, I have used the following terms throughout this thesis, unless in a direct quote.

Term Used	Replacing
Anglican	Church of England, Episcopalian
Methodist	Wesleyan
Grave marker	Headstone, tombstone, monument, gravestone
Cemetery Register	Burials Register

It is also important to note that an up-to-date copy of the cemetery register for Riverside Cemetery does not exist in hard copy. Numerous lists of graves purporting to be accurate cemetery registers are available online, yet often contain conflicting information. Therefore, all references to the Cemetery Register in this thesis refer to the electronic list emailed to me by Brigid Whitehead of the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council on Monday 21 December, 2020.

The municipal body governing Queanbeyan has had various names throughout its existence. For consistency, I have referred to it with its current title: Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (“the Council”), unless using a direct quote.

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Introduction

With houses looking on, on every side, save where a reeking little tunnel of a court gives access to the iron gate — with every villainy of life in action close on death, and every poisonous element of death in action close on life — here they lower our dear brother down a foot or two, here sow him in corruption, to be raised in corruption: an avenging ghost at many a sick-bedside, a shameful testimony to future ages how civilization and barbarism walked this boastful island together.

- Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*

Cemeteries are repositories of social and cultural history, reflecting evolving practices in religious observations, methods of commemoration and memorialisation, and the sites of intersection between ethnicity, religion, and community values. Through analysing the ways in which the deceased were interred and commemorated over time, we can begin to identify how people of different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities and religions interacted with and demonstrated their beliefs and traditions, as well as how these beliefs varied between generations. It is also possible to identify contrasts in the ways religious denominations have influenced the mortuary process and been observed by the bereaved. As a result of these processes, cemeteries take the form of historical archives. Through them, we not only have a direct link to the lives of specific individuals, but it is also possible to identify trends in immigration, changes in socio-economic status, changes in industry and ways in which minority groups were accepted by the community. This thesis will explore the value of cemeteries as a distinct form of historical

archive in the context of these social and cultural interpretations, using Riverside Cemetery in Queanbeyan NSW as a case study.

This site is important in the context of several layers of history – the colonial, regional, local and (to some extent) national. The latter dimension relates to Canberra’s social history, as Riverside was the first attempt at a public general cemetery in the Canberra area and was the only general cemetery in the region until Canberra Cemetery opened in Woden in 1935. Prior to the opening of Riverside Cemetery, the dead were interred in privately owned cemeteries (such as at Oaks Estate), family cemeteries, or wherever convenient and available. Indeed, there are at least 50 known individual graves outside registered cemeteries within the ACT dating prior to 1850.¹ Riverside is home to the graves of many Canberra pioneers, such as the region’s first Police-Magistrate, early pastoral magnates, and those key to the movement to have Canberra named Australia’s capital. It’s also the final resting place of thousands of ordinary people; convicts, farm workers, midwives, soldiers and immigrants, people without whom the area would not have flourished. Through exploring some of their stories, this thesis will

¹ Anne Claoue-Long, *Rural Graves in the ACT: A Historical Context and Interpretation*, National Trust of Australia (ACT) (Canberra, 2006), <https://hiddencanberra.webs.com/History%20of%20Canberra/RuralGravesreport.pdf>.

attempt to explore Canberra and Queanbeyan's early social history, demonstrating that Riverside provides an insight to the region's rich, vibrant, and diverse past. It will also explore how more recent concepts of heritage value obscure aspects of that past and narrow the terms in which it is value and conserved.

Riverside Cemetery

Riverside Cemetery was established in 1848 to replace the privately-run cemetery located at Oaks Estate.² In keeping with the modern idea of interring burials away from places of residence, land was granted for separate denominational cemeteries on the only relatively flat ground located as far as possible from Queanbeyan's village centre, while remaining within the established boundaries of the town.

Initially, land was granted for separate one-acre cemeteries for each of the four main Christian denominations as shown in Table 1.³ Like many cemeteries from this time, Riverside would reflect the sectarian

² Claoue-Long, *Rural Graves in the ACT: A Historical Context and Interpretation*, 5.

³ Brendan O'Keefe, *Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery - Excerpt From Draft Conservation Management Plan*, Queanbeyan-Palarang Council (Queanbeyan, NSW, 2000), 3-5.

patterns of colonial settlement and community consolidation, if with distinct local dynamics.

Table 1: Dates of initial cemetery land grants

Denomination	Date Surveyed	Date Granted	First Known Burial
Presbyterian	December 1843	February 1844	January 1854
Anglican	October 1845	January 1846	May 1847
Roman Catholic	October 1845	January 1846	June 1846
Methodist	September 1849	April 1850	October 1863

Figure 1 illustrates the arrangement of the original four portions in relation to the Queanbeyan River and planned streets.⁴

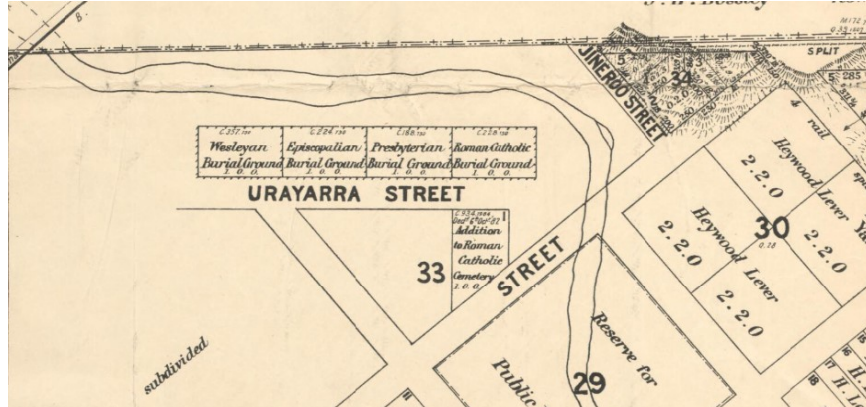


Figure 1: Section of 1887 Surveyor General map of Queanbeyan township, showing
Riverside Cemetery

In 1883, additional land was granted for extensions to the Catholic portion due to increased demand for graves and to flood damage to earlier graves.⁵ Here is another feature of the cemetery: while its siting was, from the start, unfortunate with regard to the threat and reality of flooding, it nonetheless expanded in size. Furthermore, in 1951, the Council lobbied the NSW Government for further land additions to the site and was successful in obtaining extensions to the Anglican and Presbyterian sections, as well as a small portion that joined the two

⁴ George Lewis, "Plan of the Town of Queanbeyan, Parish of Queanbeyan, County of Murray, Land District of Queanbeyan NSW," (Sydney: Surveyor General's Office, 1887).

⁵ O'Keefe, *Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery - Excerpt From Draft Conservation Management Plan*, 8-12.

previously separate Catholic sections. The demographics of an expanding regional centre were evident in these allocations, as was the fact that demand for graves in the Methodist portion was relatively low; in 1957, the portion only contained 17 markers.⁶

Demography is important here, but so are calculations of identity as marked out in commemoration. No additional land was ever requested for the Methodist portion, but, in 1957 the Methodist Minister, concerned about lack of care provided to the Methodist graves, unsuccessfully proposed to have all markers removed and the area levelled with a grader to reduce costs to the Church.⁷ This lack of graves within the Methodist portion may be attributed to the relocation of the chapel from Queanbeyan to Weetangera in 1874. Along with the churchyard cemetery in this new location and the Methodist portion in the Tharwa Road Cemetery opened in the 1880s, members of the Methodist faith at least were spoiled for choice in relation to burial sites.⁸ But, for other denominations, Riverside remained their place, however insecure it could sometimes seem.

⁶ Rev I.C. Miles, "Note on File re: Methodist Portion of Queanbeyan Cemetery," (Uniting Church Old Cemetery Trust Correspondence Files, July 1957).

⁷ Rev I.C. Miles, "Letter, Miles to Department of Lands," (Uniting Church Old Cemetery Trust, 10 July 1957).

⁸ Claoue-Long, *Rural Graves in the ACT: A Historical Context and Interpretation*, 12.

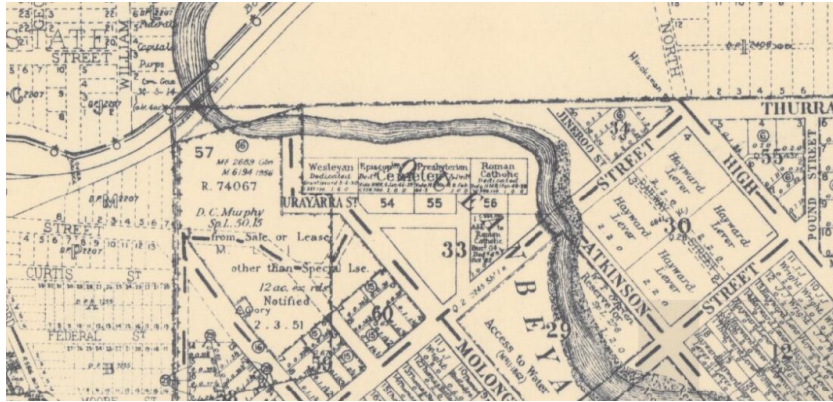


Figure 2: Section of 1956 Department of Lands map, showing final configuration of Riverside Cemetery and surrounding streets

Figure 2 shows the newly added portions of land, as well as the truncated Uryarra Street that connected to the site and newly created service road (note that Uryarra Street no longer exists).⁹ Each portion was fenced and gated individually and managed by separate boards of trustees. In Figure 3, taken between the opening of the Queanbeyan Railway Bridge in 1887 and the flood of 1925, these separately fenced portions are clearly visible.¹⁰

⁹ NSW Department of Lands, "Map of the Town of Queanbeyan and Adjacent Lands: Parish of Queanbeyan, County of Murray, Land District of Queanbeyan, Eastern Division, NSW & Australian Capital Territory," (Sydney: Department of Lands, 1956).

¹⁰ Charles Kerry, *Railway Bridge and Cemetery, Queanbeyan*, 1890. A photograph of Riverside Cemetery and Queanbeyan Railway Bridge, looking West.



Figure 3: Early photograph of Riverside Cemetery and Queanbeyan Railway Bridge, in which fences separating cemetery portions can be seen

Initially, Riverside Cemetery mirrored the Australian culture of practicality. Each of the four original surveyed portions were identical in size and sited adjacent to one another, with a purpose-made road running alongside to facilitate access. Each portion had gated access to the road. Each section was laid out in right angles to the road, facilitating access to the neatly laid out graves. However, time and loosely defined cemetery governance resulted in an effective devolution of neatness. From the 1890s to the mid-twentieth century, a three-way tussle existed between each religion's trustees, the NSW Department of Lands, and the Council over responsibility for the condition of the cemetery and where responsibility lay for overall design in public arenas.

Articles in the local press, letters to the editor, as well as local ordinances and state legislation, recorded this unseemly wrangle.¹¹

While enmeshed in local issues and personalities, these discussions reflected a broader trend in NSW, as local church authorities were increasingly unable to afford appropriate maintenance of cemeteries, while the public tended to hold local authorities responsible for their condition. As a result, finally, the *Local Government (Control of Cemeteries) Amendment Act 1966* was enacted, transferring control of cemeteries from church organisations to local councils. Thus, on 1 October 1967, the Council took over control of Riverside Cemetery and it became a single public cemetery.¹²

Along with the layers of historical influence already noted, grave markers in Riverside Cemetery display vast differences in style and design. Through these, one can identify the influences of organised religion, ties to one's cultural origins, even differences in social standing.

¹¹ O'Keefe, *Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery - Excerpt From Draft Conservation Management Plan*, 8-10.

¹² R. L. Cross, E. J. Lea-Scarlett, and P. B. Sheedy, *Queanbeyan Pioneer Cemeteries Volume 1: Register of the Oaks Burial Ground and Headstone Sections at Riverside and Tharwa Road* / [E.J. Lea-Scarlett, R.L. Cross, P.B. Sheedy], vol. 1 (Queanbeyan]: Queanbeyan : Queanbeyan City Council in conjunction with the Queanbeyan & District Historical Museum Society, 1982-, 1982), 2.

Floods, fire and degradation

In hindsight, the location of Riverside Cemetery by Queanbeyan's early town planners was extremely ill-conceived.¹³ Placed on flat land, high on a picturesque riverbank overlooking a sweeping bend in the Queanbeyan River, the location would have seemed ideal at the time. Given that the Monaro was in the grip of a drought between 1837-1841, the level of the Queanbeyan River was relatively low, giving surveyors assurance that the cemetery location was safe and secure.¹⁴ However, since establishment, the Cemetery has been subject to at least four major floods and several grassfires. The consequences of these natural phenomena include damaged fences, destruction of grave markers and, in 1974, the loss of graves.¹⁵ A permanent memorial has now been constructed within the cemetery to record the names of the graves known to have been lost to floods (see Figure 4). This memorial, however, is only an approximate record of what was lost, and what was never fully recorded.

¹³ Riverside Cemetery - Entry in NSW Heritage Inventory, (Sydney: NSW Government, 2007).

¹⁴ Claire Fenby and Joelle Gergis, "Rainfall Variations in South-Eastern Australia Part 1: Consolidating Evidence From Pre-Instrumental Documentary Sources, 1788–1860," *International Journal of Climatology* 33 (2013): 2964.

¹⁵ "50 Queanbeyan Graves Lost In Flood," *Canberra Times* (Canberra) 5 September 1974; "Q'Beyan Damage Assessed," *Canberra Times* (Canberra) 2 September 1974; R. L. Cross, E. J. Lea-Scarlett, and P. B. Sheedy, "Queanbeyan Pioneer Cemeteries Volume 3: Roman Catholic Portion," (Queanbeyan City Council, 1985), 276.



Figure 4: Memorial erected by Queanbeyan City Council, listing the graves known to have been lost in the 1974 flood. (Photo credit: author)

Damage and loss of graves through natural causes has had a major effect on memorialisation within Riverside Cemetery. The loss of grave markers and destruction of graves prevents families from being able to mourn their loved ones at their gravesite. In turn, this can lead to a tangible loss of identity with the past; graves provide a distinct link to

one's heritage and loss of this connection can be devastating.¹⁶

Furthermore, the loss of grave markings can cause logistical issues in managing a cemetery; it is difficult to dig new graves when old records are scarce and there are no markers to show where specific graves are. This dilemma was experienced by Council workers in the years following the 1974 flood and was one reason the council considered closing the cemetery in 1976.¹⁷

As a result of these floods and fires, over half of the graves within Riverside are lost or unmarked; not only is this a loss to individual families, but it represents an irretrievable loss of information and direct links to the region's past, as well as undermining the prospect of assembling a complete and effective historical record. These absences also enhance aspects of the cemetery's significance, as a place for remembrance prone to forgetting, a place of loss with its own losses. As a researcher utilising the physical attributes of the cemetery, these challenges have forced me to consider alternative methods of research to fill the gaps, including working through media archives and using memorials to the lost graves to fill knowledge gaps. These factors also

¹⁶ Doris Francis, Leonie Kellaher, and Georgina Neophytou, "Sustaining Cemeteries: the User Perspective," *Mortality* 5, no. 1 (2000): 37-38.

¹⁷ "Riverside Cemetery Decision Expected," *Canberra Times* (Canberra) 21 February 1976; "Riverside Cemetery Ban Proposed," *Canberra Times* (Canberra) 20 September 1974.

contribute an ambivalent, unsettled dimension to the history and heritage of Riverside, quite specific to the site.

Growth of Public Cemeteries in Australia

The idea of the public cemetery was born in England in the early nineteenth century.¹⁸ By then city churchyards were often horrifically overcrowded, resulting in public health risks. Soil levels in churchyards were raised to compensate for the fact that the ground was so dense with remains that it was impossible to dig graves without disturbing earlier interments. Raising ground levels frequently resulted in burials being above the floor level within the neighbouring church, sometimes resulting in remains and fluids washing into churches during inclement weather.¹⁹ A reformation movement grew in the 1830-1840s, leading to the establishment of standards of burials that are generally still in place today, such as decentralised places of burial away from cities, townships and waterways, minimum burial depths, and oversight of cemetery

¹⁸ James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Devon: David & Charles, 1972), 55; Julie Rugg, *Churchyard and Cemetery: Tradition and Modernity in Rural North Yorkshire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 35.

¹⁹ Catharine Arnold, *Necropolis: London and Its Dead* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 96.

management by public authorities.²⁰ Given that most Australian cemeteries were planned or at least evolved as an integral part of the development of settlements informed by British experience, rather than evolving organically, they tend to reflect the requirements and standards of the community they were designed to serve.²¹ Whilst contemporary cemeteries are generally designed not only as a place of commemoration and reflection, but also as a community space, cemeteries of the nineteenth and early twentieth century were purely designed as structured burial grounds, with little thought given to community use.²² Designs were akin to town plans, with straight lines, practical access and maximised use of space being dominant. Generally, public access was through a single main gate, with burial portions radiating from, or parallel to an entrance road. Through this, the cemetery imposed its own order on the visitor and researcher alike, with trips through the graves taking a neat, almost preordained approach, rather than a meandering

²⁰ Rugg, *Churchyard and Cemetery: Tradition and Modernity in Rural North Yorkshire*, 35-38; *Landscapes of Remembrance: Register of Parks and Gardens*, 2nd, (London: Historic England, December 2017), 2-3.

²¹ Stephen Muller, "Colonial Experiences of Death, Burial and Memorialisation in West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide: Applying a Phenomenological Approach to Cultural Landscapes in Historical Archaeology," *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 33 (2015): 18-19.

²² David Charles Sloane, *Is The Cemetery Dead?* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 153, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226539584.001.0001>, Kindle.

one. Despite the oft-decayed state of these cemeteries today, these neat lines still facilitate, even encourage, a structured approach.

Historiography

In preparing this thesis, I had to address early on whether it would be best to adopt a social, cultural or artefact history approach. No form of record relating to Riverside is entirely complete; early burial records are unreliable or scattered, many physical artefacts are decayed or missing, and local historical societies have a fragmentary understanding of the records they hold. Thus, whilst each historiographical approach has its place, to adopt a single line of enquiry would severely test available records, obscure the complex and fractured layering of the site and its evolution as well as hampering my ability to holistically analyse Riverside Cemetery as a form of historical archive. When analysing single graves, broader cemeteries landscapes and the communities they reflect, it is necessary to adopt a synthesised historiographical approach to ensure one fully captures all relevant aspects, including:

- Who created the cemetery?
- Why was the cemetery created?
- How was it managed?
- Who was buried?
- How were they buried and why?

- Who was not buried?
- How did methods of commemoration change over time?
- How does this commemoration reflect upon the community?

Each of these questions has guided my research. While none of them has been, or can be, answered fully, together they inform this history.

Graeme Griffin and Des Tobin (of Tobin Brothers' Funerals) authored the seminal popular history of Australian mortuary practices, *In The Midst Of Life: The Australian Response to Death* (1997). Written by a Theologian and a Funeral Director, this book combines a popular history approach to the history of Australia cemeteries with an analysis of the evolution of religious practices in Australia. Academic literature on Australian mortuary practices is sparse, with the majority coming from just three scholars. Professor Pat Jalland wrote several influential works on grief and mortuary traditions in Victorian England and contemporary Australia. Her major works include *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914-1970* (2010), *Changing Ways of Death in twentieth-century Australia: war, medicine and the funeral business* (2006), *Australian Ways of Death: A Social and Cultural History 1840-1918* (2002), and *Death in the Victorian Family* (1996). Jalland's work focusses on social and cultural traditions, as well as the way grief has manifested over two centuries. This work was invaluable in providing insights to the

differing manifestations of grief within Riverside and the traditions that shaped successive funeral and burial processes.

University of New England historian Lionel Gilbert produced two books that examined the development of grave art in Australia and the way these practices and aesthetics developed from British origins: *A Grave Look at History: Glimpses of a Vanishing Art Form* (1980) and *The Last Word: Two Centuries of Australian Epitaphs* (2005).

City of Sydney Historian Dr Lisa Murray is currently very active in the field of Australian mortuary history. Murray's book on early cemeteries in New South Wales (2016's *Sydney Cemeteries: A Field Guide*) provides a detailed guide and assessment, and is complemented by numerous journal articles and research papers on the development of Australian burial practices, including *Death and Dying in Nineteenth Century Sydney* (2013) and 'Modern Innovations?' *Ideal vs. reality in colonial cemeteries of nineteenth-century New South Wales* (2003). Murray's work moves beyond the realm of exploring the transposition of English traditions into an Australian environment, and instead focuses on burial practices – how graves and cemeteries were laid out, and how communities interacted with these sites. Although her written works predominantly focus on NSW cemeteries, Murray's work is relevant to all Australian jurisdictions, and provides an insight into the process of grieving in colonial Australia.

Murray is thus notable for being uniquely Australian in her approach, while paying appropriate homage to British traditions.

With a relative dearth of academic literature in Australia, one must look to European and American sources to further explore earlier mortuary traditions, as well as identify the origins of, and influences on, colonial Australian traditions. Catharine Arnold's *Necropolis: London and It's Dead* (2006) is a detailed and impeccably researched history of cemeteries and burials in London from prehistory to the twentieth century; it is important to note though, that Arnold's work is a cemetery history, and rarely explores traditions around grief or cultural memory. Other authors such as David Sloane and Julie Rugg explore issues including the development of cultural memory and the co-existence of cemeteries with contemporary communities and their changing role in society. Their work has guided me in relation to understanding the dynamic between communities and heritage sites, as well as the manner in which communities' perspectives of cemeteries have changed over time.

Paradoxically, there have been several important works focusing on Riverside Cemetery and the development of other cemeteries within Canberra. Anne Claoue-Long has compiled several summaries and analyses of Canberra's cemeteries. Furthermore, in the 1980's, Erroll Lea-Scarlett conducted an in-depth analysis of the burials in Riverside and

documented all known graves, as well as linking each to graves of family members. While an interesting and valuable resource, Lea-Scarlett's works do not constitute a true history of the cemetery.

My research builds upon Lea-Scarlett's summaries of Riverside but attempts to view the cemetery through a true local history lens. By exploring the stories of Riverside's residents, I have made a strong link between the cemetery and the region's social and cultural evolution. Furthermore, I have used Jalland's and Murray's theories as the foundation of better understanding the way grief and bereavement manifested within the region. Finally, this thesis places the protection and conservation of Riverside within a town planning context, and explores the important links between history, community, and government policy.

Methodology

This thesis will demonstrate that Riverside Cemetery has acted as a time capsule of changing social and cultural views within the Monaro region over a period of 160 years. It will show that, while broader British and Australian trends in mortuary practices were evident in Queanbeyan, the local community also developed its own ways of managing social interactions, as well as the integration of differing cultures and beliefs. My research into Riverside demonstrates that service to the Queanbeyan

community was highly valued in the ways the dead were remembered that religious observance was important, and family connections became a cornerstone of the community's development. Each of these aspects are demonstrated clearly through analysis of graves and the cemetery layout.

In Chapter 1, I offer an account of who was interred at Riverside Cemetery. In doing so, I will explain links between different nationalities and religions, and demonstrate how waves of immigration and the growth of sub-communities built around immigrants from Great Britain and Europe is reflected in the number, style and arrangement of grave markers. I will also show, using the stories of specific individuals interred within and around Riverside, ways in which ethnic and religious minorities were accepted within (or relegated by) the community. I will also demonstrate how the broader social conscience of the community can be illustrated in the manner in which specific burials were managed. Issues such as domestic violence, marriage between religions, even levels of military service are shown to affect the attitudes of the colonial community to the deceased.

Chapter 2 will demonstrate how the local community mourned their dead and established religious traditions combined with the character of the local community to result in a range of emotive and expressive grave markers. I will explain how the Victorian fascination

with spirituality and the 'Cult of the Dead' manifested at Riverside, then contrast these beliefs with the impact of the Great War on religious observances and mortuary beliefs. Following from this summary, I will show how burials in Riverside followed a broader design trend in the mid-twentieth century, as incomes increased and European immigrants introduced new design ideas and rituals of mourning and remembrance. In each phase what is revealed is more than the crafting of stone; it is also concepts of identity.

In Chapter 3, I will place Riverside in the contexts of the changing relationship between cemeteries and the communities, detailing how what were once places simply for burial and grief are now evolving into shared community spaces, and the influence this transformation has on planning and heritage values attributed to these places. I will discuss the issues involved in balancing the need for conservation with a desire for an attractive and interactive green space, heightened at Riverside by the fragility of the site and the specific dynamics of the Queanbeyan community. Finally, I will show how this evolution is being led by a recognition that individual graves form discrete historical records, and cemeteries thus form a distinct type of historical archive. Viewing cemeteries through this lens is imperative in determining their long-term value and ensuring their preservation.

Due to gaps in archival records, I have often had to use the graves and memorials themselves as historical document, resulting in a more interpretative, but less than seamless record. With nearly 5,000 graves in Riverside, approximately half of which are now unmarked, grave analysis was done systematically but selectively. To identify changes in mortuary practices over time, graves from the following periods were identified and analysed:

- 1) 1860-1880 saw a rise in immigration and the growth of Queanbeyan from a rough frontier settlement into a thriving cosmopolitan town, built around primary industries such as farming and mining. It also witnessed the height of the spiritualism movement in Great Britain, America and Australia.
- 2) 1919-1929: immediately following the Great War, the region experienced the impact of an economic Depression and the enduring impact of the loss of many local workers to the war. This period also saw a marked change in funerary practices, as people reeled from unprecedented loss of life and adapted their approach to grieving accordingly.
- 3) 1950-1960: this period was marked by a boom in post-war immigration thanks to Government policies designed to facilitate national infrastructure projects, with elements accentuated by Queanbeyan's proximity to the national capital

and major works in the Snowy Mountains. Funerary practices and grave designs during this period evolved from the stoicism of the period following the Great War, into post-modernism and Art Deco.

The cemetery register was interrogated to identify 90 marked graves within each portion. Of these graves, where possible thirty were identified within each of the selected periods – thirty was considered a practical number given the scope of this thesis. This sample size would also allow for analysis of trends without an exclusion bias. The criteria for selection were simple – I selected graves that (where possible), represented a mix of ages, genders and families. Graves were also selected to ensure a broad range of dates-of-death within each period. Finally, where multiple graves were selected within a time period with the same surname, replacements were selected to avoid any potential bias arising from family traditions, such as duplications in grave design, or inclusion in family plots or dual graves. Once the list was finalised, each grave was located, photographed and plotted on a map. The exception to this process was the Methodist portion; only fourteen marked graves could be identified within the three time periods. Where possible, these selected sites were used to inform discussion around trends within the thesis. A list of graves identified and examined through this approach is listed in Appendix A.

Some graves were selected to demonstrate more specific issues, rather than broader trends. These specific sites highlight ways in which the cemetery illustrates social, cultural, or political issues occurring within the Queanbeyan community. Selecting individual graves in this manner allowed a greater focus on individuals and either their place within the community, or how they were accepted by the community. When these are examined within the thesis, a complete transcription of the epitaph is shown. Photographs of most burials referred to in this manner are shown in Appendix B; due to COVID-19 restrictions, I was unable to photograph all graves mentioned.

Gaps in Archival Records

My research on this topic encountered several obstacles, mainly in relation to gaps in the historical record. In its early stages, Riverside comprised four separate cemeteries, each run by a different church organisation with its own rules and records. Church record keeping in a small rural town in the mid-nineteenth century was not entirely robust, resulting in gaps in burial records and misspelling of names. This is acknowledged on a *Canberra Tracks* information panel inside the cemetery which notes that the number of known burials is only approximate. The Council holds some records but have limited capacity to interrogate them completely. Similarly, Queanbeyan Historical

Society may hold relevant records but advised that, under the COVID-19-related restrictions applying for much of the research period for this thesis, they did not have sufficient volunteers to search them or to supervise access. Early Anglican and Roman Catholic records are held by respective diocese archives in Goulburn; requests to access these did not elicit a response. Repeated requests to the Council for information on heritage planning and policy also did not elicit a response.

In Chapter 2, I examine the interment of local indigenous people within Riverside. Efforts were made to obtain an Indigenous perspective through the Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, but again no response was forthcoming. As such, what little formal record exists in relation to Indigenous burials must be read against the grain, noting that interpretation must, by necessity, include a good deal of supposition.

It is acknowledged that further investigation of burial records, Church records and relevant Indigenous history may have borne a stronger result. However, within the scope of this thesis, and given prevailing restrictions, further investigation was not feasible or appropriate.

Archives

In order to analyse the social and cultural history within the cemetery, as well as investigate issues relating to policy and planning, I used a broad

range of primary sources, including burial records, council surveys and policies, newspaper media, and heritage plans. To access such a variety of sources, I utilised the following archives:

- ACT Archives
- ACT Heritage
- Canberra Cemeteries
- Heritage NSW
- Mitchell Library (State Library of NSW)
- National Archives of Australia
- National Library of Australia (physical and virtual records)
- Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council Library
- Trove

Contemporary historians are often blessed with the ease and range of access offered by the digital age, and I have made the most of these opportunities. I have also been often aware of the ways in which enhanced access to such materials can only accentuate an awareness of the incomplete, partial and restricted nature of other archives.

Final thoughts

My interest in Riverside Cemetery stems from my love of my adopted city and an attempt to resolve popular misconceptions about it. I have lived in and around Canberra since 2007 and have grown to love its vibrancy

and unique lifestyle centred around diversity, outdoor living, and the Arts. However, I've met many people in this time who denounce the city as "soulless", "boring", and "just a political city." To dispel this perception, especially amongst my family, I began to investigate Canberra and Queanbeyan's local history to show that there was far more to the region than just a seat of government.

My research is more than just a simple social/cultural history of the Canberra/Queanbeyan community, or of the history of mortuary practices in the region. I have highlighted the development of early communities within the Monaro region and some ways they bucked broader Australian and European trends. I have also illustrated the region's beginnings as a precocious multicultural community in an era dominated by the Anglican Church and strict immigration policies. Finally, this thesis demonstrates the numerous ambiguities inherent in heritage cemeteries, the societies reflected therein, and the policies and practices used to conserve them.

Chapter 1 – Cemeteries as social records

*'Name the different kinds of people,' said Miss Lupescu. 'Now.'
Bod thought for a moment. 'The living,' he said. 'Er. The dead.' He stopped.
Then, '... Cats?' he offered, uncertainly."*

- Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*

While early cemeteries were originally constructed to facilitate the safe and sanitary interment of deceased community members, over time they have become records of dynamic social structures and interactions within Australian communities.¹ As 'landscapes of remembrance' they both reflect and consolidate the active construction of communities. This aspect is perhaps more explicit in contemporary cemeteries, designed and developed as a reflection of the community which they serve.² Equally, the purposes cemeteries serve in one historical period is

¹ Lionel Gilbert, *A Grave Look at History: Glimpses of a Vanishing Form of Folk Art* (Sydney: John Ferguson, 1980), 14; Graeme M. Griffin and Des Tobin, *In the Midst of Life: The Australian Response to Death* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997), 92.

² Phillip Bachelor, "Practical Bereavement," *Health Sociology Review* 16, no. 5 (2007): 406-07; Thomas Harvey, "Sacred Spaces, Common Places: The Cemetery in the Contemporary American City," *Geographical Review* 96, no. 2 (April 2006): 295, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30034027>.

not always readily transferred to the next. Sydney City Historian, Dr Lisa Murray, posits that:

*The overgrown, neglected condition of many cemetery landscapes by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries challenges the strengths of remembrance and commemoration celebrated in the cemetery ideal and suggests that cemeteries were not always the respected and sacred places as portrayed in cemetery historiography and popular memory.*³

Similarly, Canadian historian Meredith Watkins argues that the common concept of cemeteries as places of shared memory and history does not always hold true, as commemorative practices can be exclusive as well as inclusive, and reflect often closed or opaque historical codes and meanings.⁴

These points illustrate the concept that, while extent cemeteries were established with the intention of formally memorialising a community's dead, the care and devotion with which these people are

³ Lisa Murray, "'Modern Innovations?' Ideal vs. Reality in Colonial Cemeteries of Nineteenth-Century New South Wales," *Mortality* 8, no. 2 (2003): 130.

⁴ Meredith G. Watkins, "The Cemetery and Cultural Memory: Montreal, 1860-1900," *Urban History Review* 31, no. 1 (Fall 2002), <https://search-proquest-com.virtual.anu.edu.au/scholarly-journals/cemetery-cultural-memory-montreal-1860-1900/docview/216533797/se-2?accountid=8330>.

interred often fades along with living memory.⁵ While once the dead were commemorated with the greatest of care and respect, the idea that these people will be similarly commemorated by future generations is often misguided. Issues such as relocation of families, lack of funding, and bureaucratic processes all affect the way cemeteries, even individual graves, are maintained and incorporated into the broader community.⁶

The truth is that the manner in which cemeteries were designed, and the requirements around who could be buried within them, indeed even the rules around how people were commemorated, ensured that the community in distinct periods could effectively choose which parts of its story would be commemorated and which would be ignored or muted.⁷ Riverside Cemetery reflects a century and a half of social change within Queanbeyan and the early Canberra community. Analysis of grave markers and the relative location of graves within the cemetery illustrates

⁵ Sarah Janson, "'By the Sad and Mournful Sea': Mortuary Memorialisation in the Quarantine Context" (Bachelor of Arts (Hons) University of Sydney, 2015), 2; Helena Nordh, Katinka H. Evensen, and Margrete Skar, "A Peaceful Place In the City: A Qualitative Study of Restorative Components of the City," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 167 (2017): 109, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2017.06.004>.

⁶ Sofija Petrovic, "Overcrowded Cemeteries Find New Life as Parks, However You're Not Picnicking Alone," (25 March 2021). <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-25/converting-sydney-cemeteries-into-memorial-parks/100028532>.

⁷ Dr Susan Buckham, "Commemoration as an Expression of Personal Relationships and Group identities: A Case study of York Cemetery," *Mortality* 8, no. 2 (2003): 161, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1357627031000087406>; Julie Rugg, "Defining the Place of Burial: What Makes a Cemetery a Cemetery?," *Mortality* 5, no. 3 (2000): 262-63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/713686011>.

many aspects of social structure and transformation, including changes in dominant industries within the region, immigration patterns and attitudes toward racial minorities.⁸ The design of the cemetery illustrates that, in many ways, a social hierarchy was maintained among the dead as with the living. Comparison of Riverside's largest, or most conspicuous, ornate graves with the smaller, more stoic grave markers – or indeed, the 2083 known unmarked graves – illustrates strong socio-economic divisions and inequities in the region, particularly in the nineteenth century. Moreover, Riverside's graves often illustrate deeply personal stories that reflect the social subtleties of the time.

This chapter will draw out some of the more conspicuous, and the more elusive, of these stories, reflecting a community in those active processes of construction and elision.

Graves and military service

Among the most conspicuous narratives at Riverside are those relating to the fashioning codes of esteem and status in a late nineteenth century Australian community. While grave decorations can provide an indication of the deceased's religious beliefs and ethnic background

⁸ John B. Jackson, "From Monument to Place," *Landscape* 17 (1967): 4-6.

through the inclusion of symbols, sculpture, or language, it was also common in larger Victorian and Edwardian-era cemeteries for graves to include symbols relating to political and industrial movements, including professional affiliations and masonic organisations.⁹ Riverside Cemetery, however, is notable for a sense that egalitarianism was a feature of the early community, that a person's wealth and qualifications was less important than the part they played within the community.

Anthropologist Susan Lawrence suggests that it is participation in community activities, rather than one's wealth or position, that is a sign of community membership.¹⁰ Social historian Shurlee Swain suggests that early colonial governments fostered community spirit through encouraging closer communities through investment of self into the community; these practices were often most marked in smaller, localised communities where a greater level of egalitarianism was evident.¹¹

A clear example of this ordering is provided by the grave of Alured Tasker Faunce, Queanbeyan's first Police Magistrate, which features a

⁹ Gilbert, *A Grave Look at History: Glimpses of a Vanishing Form of Folk Art*, 32.

¹⁰ Susan Lawrence, "Gender and Community Structure on Australian Colonial Goldfields," in *Social Approaches to an Industrial Past: The Archaeology and Anthropology of Mining*, ed. Eugenia W. Herbert, A. Bernard Knapp, and Vincent C. Piggot (London: Routledge, 1998), 41-42.

¹¹ Shurlee Swain, "Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia," *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations* 7 (December 1996): 430, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02354163>.

grand and beautiful sandstone grave marker. In this commemoration, the contrast between career and the symbolic status of a figure in the community – of selective historicism – is evident. Faunce was descended from a proud line of British Army officers from the King's 4th Regiment dating to the French and Indian War.¹² Despite this lineage, Faunce was known within the growing Queanbeyan community more for his membership of, and contribution to the community, than his military heritage. And in this respect too, the community raised Faunce above what had, in its own way, been a complex career. He retired from the Army in 1836 to fill the role of Police Magistrate at Brisbane Waters (on the Central Coast of NSW), a position in which he evidently caused a great deal of controversy due to a perceived autocratic nature and a protracted defamation suit against the *Sydney Gazette*.¹³ Censured by the Supreme Court for ordering the detention (in irons) of three prominent local citizens in a case centring on the theft of a cow, Faunce then sold his commission to cover the costs of compensation to those accused.¹⁴ Appointed Police Magistrate of the newly-gazetted town of Queanbeyan

¹² Marcus De Laune Faunce, "Faunce, Alured Tasker (1808-1856)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography* 1 (1966). <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/faunce-alured-tasker-2036>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Dr M. de L. Faunce, "Captain Alured Tasker Faunce of Queanbeyan 1837-1856 and Rev. Canon Alured Dodsworth Faunce of Queanbeyan and Yass 1840-1910; An address delivered to the Society on 30th November 1961" (Canberra and District Historical Society, 30 November 1961).

in 1838, it was not Faunce's previously-noted autocratic nature that drew attention, but his fair-mindedness and respect for those who passed through his courthouse.¹⁵



Figure 5: Portrait of Captain Alured Tasker Faunce (Artist unknown)

Faunce's standing within the community is evident from a signed testimonial presented to him in 1840, less than two years after his arrival.

Dear Sir,

¹⁵ de L. Faunce, "Short Captain Alured Tasker Faunce of Queanbeyan 1837-1856 and Rev. Canon Alured Dodsworth Faunce of Queanbeyan and Yass 1840-1910; An address delivered to the Society on 30th November 1961."; "Queanbeyan," *Goulburn Herald and County of Argyle Advertiser* (Goulburn) 3 May 1856, District Intelligence.

We the undersigned, inhabitants of Queanbeyan, Molonglo, Gundaroo, and Monaro, are desirous of respectfully expressing the high opinion which we have always entertained of your Public Character since your residence amongst us.

*Your urbane and gentlemanly conduct on the Bench as Police Magistrate and the attention which you have so readily and willingly given to all applications connected with your judicial duties, both at the Police Office, and your private residence, has been at all times such as to afford general satisfaction...*¹⁶

Faunce's standing was accentuated by the contributions of his family, with his daughter Charlotte opening the Queanbeyan Bridge in 1858.¹⁷ Thus, it was perhaps fitting that Faunce passed away unexpectedly whilst playing cricket for the Queanbeyan Club, a team renowned for its egalitarian nature under his stewardship.¹⁸ Furthermore, following his death, residents of Queanbeyan constructed a stone memorial on the corner of Rutledge Street and Church Lane, "as a mark

¹⁶ N.S. Powell J.P. and Archibald Macleod, "Letter from 18 Queanbeyan Residents," in *Captain Alured Tasker Faunce of Queanbeyan 1837-1856 and Rev. Canon Alured Dodsworth Faunce of Queanbeyan and Yass 1840-1910; An address delivered to the Society on 30th November 1961* (Queanbeyan: 5 August 1840).

¹⁷ "A Scrap of Local History: The Queanbeyan Bridge," *Queanbeyan Age* (Queanbeyan) 4 September 1908, 2; "Opening of the Queanbeyan Bridge," *Goulburn Herald and County of Argyle Advertiser* (Goulburn) 21 August 1858.

¹⁸ Thomas Faunce, "Alured Tasker Faunce, William Davis and Early Cricket in the Queanbeyan-Canberra Region," *Canberra Historical Journal* (March 2015): 1; "Queanbeyan."

of the respect and esteem in which he was held in the community amongst whom he so long resided.”¹⁹

Despite his complete immersion into the community, Faunce’s epitaph focussed on his military service, omitting any reference to his community or legal service:

SACRED

To The

Memory of

ALURED TASKER FAUNCE

Late Captain in the 4th

Kings own regiment who

Died suddenly April 21, 1856

Aged 48 years.

This prioritising of earlier service is notable across generations buried at Riverside. It reflects a tendency during the Victorian and

¹⁹ "Plaque Commemorating Alured Tasker Faunce," (Cnr. Rutledge Street and Church Lane, Queanbeyan, 1856).

Edwardian eras to honour in memorialisation military service over community service or other achievements and eschews the otherwise proud egalitarianism of the community.²⁰ Often, military service was also evoked through symbolism and grave art, as well as a direct reference in the epitaphs of deceased soldiers.²¹ This trend is further illustrated within Riverside Cemetery through the more recent example of Thomas Braithwaite, a resident of Oaks Estate between 1925-1958. Braithwaite's otherwise modest grave features a reference to an exceptional military history:

In memory of

Thomas Braithwaite

Died 24th June 1958

A veteran of six wars

Resting

Like Faunce, other dominant aspects of Braithwaite's life faded into obscurity when his epitaph was prepared. In Braithwaite's case

²⁰ Sonia Letitia Batten, "Memorial Text Narratives In Britain" (Doctor of Philosophy University of Birmingham, 2011), 112-13; KS Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, 3rd ed. (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 44-45.

²¹ Batten, "Memorial Text Narratives In Britain," 13.

though, this shadowing was perhaps even more remarkable. Despite being charged with “attempting to commit suicide by drowning” in 1910, as well as “wife desertion” 1917, he was commemorated as a military hero who served his empire first and foremost.²² Braithwaite had served at the Siege of Chitral in India (1895), the Ashanti Campaign (1896), Battle of Omdurman (1898), the Boer War (1899-1902), and both World Wars.²³ Peter Jupp suggests that at the time, clergy often taught that soldiers, having died in a good cause, went directly to heaven despite other sins.²⁴ No doubt, when having to distil a person’s life into a few words, a family or community will often focus on elevating the status of the deceased, thus cultivating certain aspects of the deceased’s reputation to bring consolation and strength to the bereaved.²⁵ When this occurs across an entire cemetery, whole aspects of a community’s history can be elevated, or conversely ignored.

During World War One, Australia witnessed a previously unknown phenomenon, whereby families of servicemen killed on active

²² "Attempted Suicide," *The Inverell Times* 18 January 1910, 3.; "Apprehensions," *New South Wales Police Gazette and Weekly Record of Crime* (Sydney) 9 May 1917, 212.

²³ "Fighting Athletes Forming the Unit," *The Sun* (Sydney) 29 April 1917, 9.; R. L. Cross, E. J. Lea-Scarlett, and P. B. Sheedy, *Queanbeyan Pioneer Cemeteries Volume 2: Anglican Portions, Riverside & Lanyon Drive Cemeteries*, 108 (Queanbeyan: Queanbeyan & District Historical Museum Society, 1984).

²⁴ Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth, eds., *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1997), 145.

²⁵ Pat Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death: A Social and Cultural History* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002), 185.

duty were unable to bury their beloved dead due to government policy around the non-repatriation of war dead.²⁶ Although this conflict led to the development of civic memorials to the fallen, the inability to farewell a loved one through the rites of a funeral led to many families erecting memorials and grave markers to their fallen within local civic cemeteries, despite their body being interred in a battlefield war cemetery, or indeed being missing entirely.²⁷ Riverside Cemetery features several such markers referring to the military service of the deceased without actually including a body. The family of Charles Bingley, for example, added the following details to a family marker:

PTE C.S. Bingley 50th Batt.

Died of wounds on active service

Nov 2nd 1916, Buried at Sheet Albert

FRANCE

Aged 24 years

²⁶ "Our Story," Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 2021, accessed 21 February 2021, www.cwgc.org/who-we-are/our-history/; Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, 7.

²⁷ Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, 101.

In this enterprise toward remembrance, military service was evidently respected by all levels of society regardless of an individual's social status. It can thus be concluded that one's social standing within the early Queanbeyan community did not necessarily rely upon wealth, religion, or qualifications.

This emphasis rises from a nationalistic sentiment across the country during the mid 1800s through to the World Wars.²⁸ Indeed, early versions of Advance Australia Fair include references identifying Britain as the "fatherland" and inarguably identifying Australian men as "Britannia's sons."²⁹ That sense of deep deference towards Britain and the perception that its Empire and its causes was one of the defined forces of esteem led to an imagined community, one where all British emigres had a common interest: the betterment of the Empire through the success of the nation.³⁰ One of the most visible ways in which one could serve the Empire was through military service; this was a means

²⁸ Russell McGregor, "The Necessity of Britishness: Ethno-Cultural Roots of Australian Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 3 (2006): 493-94.

²⁹ "Advance Australia Fair," First World War: Popular Music, National Film and Sound Archive, 22 February 2021, www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/advance-australia-fair.

³⁰ Peter Putnis, "News, Time and Imagined Community in Colonial Australia," *Media History* 16, no. 2 (2010): 166, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688801003656082>.

through which men from any calling or social status could show his worth.³¹

Immigration

In a closely related way, questions of origin mattered deeply in framing the terms of memorialisation. The graves within Riverside Cemetery tell a story of waves of immigration, particularly within the time periods 1860-1880 and 1950-1960. For reasons that will be explored further in Chapter 2, it is possible to view immigrants represented in Riverside Cemetery during the 1800s along neat lines of nationality or religion. In a contemporary nation built upon multiculturalism, it is important to observe that the early Monaro region, whilst predominantly white and Christian, was clearly marked by religious and national differences, and that differences were – it seems – the attributes or traces most recorded of the deceased.

The foundation of Riverside itself reflects the profound significance of these differences. The dominance of religious communities by particular nationalities is reflected within the cemetery; the number of graves proudly showing links to each country of origin in

³¹ *Ibid.*

turn indicates the growth of the Irish, Scottish and English sub-communities. Across the entire cemetery, grave markers from the late 1800s often reflect the ethnicity of the deceased through direct reference to countries of origin, or sculpted artwork. Examples include Mary Ryan, an Irish immigrant and wife of an immigrant farmer, buried in the Roman Catholic portion of Riverside Cemetery:³²

In memory of

MARY RYAN

A native of Rossgray

County Tipperary, IRELAND

Who died August 21st 1863

Aged 51 years

Donald McDonald was a Scottish immigrant working as a grazier in Far North Queensland, while his widow Eliza was based in Queanbeyan and Sydney at the time of his death.³³ Despite dying in

³² "Death by Choking Inquest," *The Golden Age* (Queanbeyan) 27 August 1863.

³³ "In the Estate of Donald McDonald, Deceased," *Empire* (Sydney) 21 April 1866, 2.

North Queensland, McDonald was buried in the Presbyterian portion of Riverside Cemetery.

In memory of

Donald McDonald

Native of Inverness Shire, Scotland

Died 14th April 1866

Aged 50 years

Requiescat in pace.

Anthony Rolfe was the patriarch of a highly successful farming family in what is now the Gunghalin and Gold Creek areas of Canberra. He emigrated from northern England as a simple farm labourer in 1849, working alongside his older brother William who had been transported for theft in 1835 and then earned his ticket of leave.³⁴ Rolfe and his family are buried in the Catholic portion of Riverside. Despite his abundant success as a pastoralist and businessman in Australia, his epitaph simply focussed on his English origins:

³⁴ Chris Newman, *Gold Creek: Reflections of Canberra's Rural Heritage*, (Canberra: Gold Creek Homestead Working Group, 2004).

In memory of

Anthony Rolfe

Native of Norfolk, England

Who died 30 October 1876

Aged 74 years

And

Catherine

His beloved wife, also (unreadable)

Norfolk, England

Who died 22nd October 1874

Aged 61 years.

These memorials reflect a powerful desire by immigrants to have their place of origin recorded, thus tying together their places of birth and death. Sandra Hayward suggests that including reference to place of birth on epitaphs gave the deceased and their family greater credence

within the local migrant community.³⁵ Furthermore, they reflected documented waves of immigration within the area.³⁶

Analysis of graves from the period 1950-1960 indicates reduced immigration from the United Kingdom but a sharp increase in European immigrants. In the 1950s and 1960s, a large proportion of these immigrants were based in Southeast NSW, working on the Snowy Hydro scheme, coastal industries such as coal and steel, or the construction of Canberra's suburbs and other infrastructure.³⁷ Many of these immigrants settled in the Monaro region following the cessation of their government-sponsored work.³⁸ Correspondingly, Riverside's graves from the mid-20th century reflect a far more diverse and blended community than the previous century.

Corresponding burial practices within Riverside also reflected this diversity. European graves became grander than their Anglo counterparts, combining innovative measures such as coloured stone and

³⁵ Sandra F. Hayward, "Colonial Expressions of Identity in Funerals, Cemeteries, and Funerary Monuments of Nineteenth-Century Perth, Western Australia," *Genealogy* 2, no. 23 (2018): 10, <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy2030023>, www.mdpi.com/2313-5778/2/3/23.

³⁶ "New South Wales Census," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney) 11 November 1851, 3.

³⁷ Nicholas Conner and Sandra Heilpern, *Focused Study on Non-English Speaking Background Immigrants in Remote / Rural areas of Australia*, Humanities and the Arts Faculty of Law, University of Wollongong (Wollongong, 1991), 21; Wendy Walker-Birckhead, "Dutch Identity and Assimilation in Australia: An Interpretive Approach" (Doctor of Philosophy Australian National University, 1988), 194.

³⁸ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 30th June 1947, (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1947).

inset photographs, with traditional measures, like gold text, archaic font and often miniaturised columns and porticos. As well as linking the deceased with the traditions of the living, the opulence of this style of grave illustrated the relative success of the deceased in their chosen home. As will be explored in Chapter 2, Anglo graves evolved from the modest graves of the World War eras, demonstrating increasing affluence within the community. However, there remained a trend for these graves to be sombre and low-key in comparison with the larger, colourful graves of mid- and eastern-European burials.

Across the Anglican and Roman Catholic sections, names reflecting Italian, German, Greek and Balkan heritage are quite prominent in this period. In a sample of ten graves from this period in each portion, family names such as Antonakos, Kuleas, Malarczyk, Dzunda, Deroczyszyn and Twerdochlib stood out.

Analysis of immigration records tell poignant stories of emigres beginning new lives in the area, often as women with husbands or fathers working as labourers or skilled tradesmen, sometimes as single men seeking a new future. Maria Kuleas sailed from Greece aboard the *Jervis Bay* with her two young children to join her husband who had earlier

settled in Queanbeyan.³⁹ With her husband already settled in Queanbeyan, one can only imagine how overwhelming the task of sailing to the other side of the world with young children must have been.

Bricklayer Antoni Malarczyk emigrated from Poland as a 27yo single man aboard the *Protea* in 1948.⁴⁰ Some seven years after arriving in Fremantle, Antoni was married with children, based in Queanbeyan and a naturalised Australian.⁴¹ Sadly, Antoni passed away at the age of only 44 years.⁴²

Janina and Wasyl Twerdochlib arrived in Melbourne from Poland in 1949 and established themselves in Queanbeyan later that year.⁴³ They had four children in quick succession, but experienced tragedy when their 4-year-old son Roman passed away just eight years after they arrived.⁴⁴

³⁹ Immigration Record: KULEAS Maria K Born 1898; Pautelis Aged 13; Stavcoula Aged 9, NAA: A12508, 22/1261, Item 7257114 (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 1939).

⁴⁰ Incoming Passenger List to Fremantle "Protea" Arrived 16 December 1948, NAA: K269, 16 DEC 1948 PROTEA, 10 (Canberra: National Archives of Australia).

⁴¹ Application for Naturalisation - MALARCZYK Antoni born 13 June 1912, NAA: A446, 1955/32693, Item 8367208 (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 1955).

⁴² "Funerals," *The Canberra Times* (Canberra) 8 December 1956.

⁴³ TWERD [TWERDOCHLIB] Janina - Nationality: Polish/Ukrainian - Arrived: Melbourne per SVALBARD KNM 13 April 1949, NAA: A1870, TWERD J, Item 4032155 (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 1949); Application for Naturalisation - TWERD Wasyl [aka TWERDOCHLIB] born 19 August 1909; Yaraslav born 6 October 1940; Maria Alina born 18 November 1946, NAA: A446, 1956/57172, Item 8364045 (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 1954).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Whilst immigrants in 1880's Queanbeyan created an imagined community based upon ties to the Empire and struggles of living in an isolated regional town, immigrants in the 1940s - 1950s shared experiences around leaving their homelands, navigating their way in a strange new society and creating a post-war life. From this time on, the people of the region remained ethnically diverse. In the 1954 census, 17 different nationalities were represented, making up 16% of the population, compared with just four nationalities in the 1921 census.⁴⁵ These brief stories of immigrants in the Queanbeyan area provide an understanding of who was joining the community during the mid-twentieth century and how they integrated into the local community.

Reflections of individual interactions with society

As well as illustrating broad social trends, cemeteries can also be repositories of deeply personal individual stories, often reflecting situations where individuals failed to fulfil social expectations, or where

⁴⁵ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia Taken for the Night Between the 3rd and 4th April 1921, 576-77 (Canberra 1921); Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 30th June 1954, 98-99 (Canberra 1954).

they chose to defy community expectations and follow their own path.⁴⁶ At the time, such behaviours may have included “improper” relationships, criminal behaviour, or suicide. Cemeteries reflect common social attitudes to these behaviours. For example, it was not uncommon for suicides to be buried in unconsecrated ground, as suicide was viewed as a mortal sin.⁴⁷ Alternatively, those convicted of capital crimes were frequently buried in unmarked graves, or with small markers, often including a request to pray for the deceased’ soul.⁴⁸ Riverside Cemetery has several examples of personal values conflicting with societal standards. One example, Mrs Flora Blundell, was a Presbyterian immigrant from Scotland. Mrs Blundell was a long-time resident of Blundell’s Cottage on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. Her husband was of English ancestry and, importantly, followed the Anglican faith.⁴⁹ This is remarkable, as marriage outside the faith was highly frowned upon in the nineteenth century, as well as between nationalities (particularly between an Englishman and a Scot). Upon her death, Mrs Blundell was

⁴⁶ Katie McClymont, “‘That eccentric use of land at the top of the hill’: Cemeteries and Stories of the City,” *Mortality* 21, no. 4 (2016 2016): 390, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2016.1151865>.

⁴⁷ Robert Halliday, “The Roadside Burial of Suicides: An East Anglican Study,” *Folklore* 121, no. 1 (April 2010): 83.

⁴⁸ Preserving Sacred Ground: Should Capital Offenders Be Buried In America’s National Cemeteries?, 109-729 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 22 September 2005).

⁴⁹ Anne Claoue-Long, Blundell’s Cottage Heritage Management Plan - Appendix C, Historical Timeline, 2-3 (Canberra 2012).

buried alongside her daughter on the very outskirts of the Presbyterian section (Figure 6). Notably, unlike any other graves in the cemetery at the time, this grave faces west; generally, an alignment reserved as a punishment for those thought to have sinned against God (Figure 7).⁵⁰ Upon his death in 1933, George Blundell was buried at St John's Anglican Church in Canberra, some 15 kilometres from Flora.



Figure 6: Map showing position of Flora Blundell's grave (Google Maps)

⁵⁰ Nicholas Pitt et al., "The Old Sydney Burial Ground: the 2008 Archaeological Investigations," *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 35 (2017): 18.



Figure 7: Photograph of Flora Blundell grave, including fragment of original marker. Note orientation of other graves. (Photo credit: Author)

Occasionally, examples may be found in a cemetery of an individual or family choosing to commemorate their loved one in a way that separates them from the norm and invites closer attention. In Riverside Cemetery, a particular grave appears lonely on the western edge of the Methodist portion. The grave marker bears no reference to the inhabitant's family name, nor is there any mention of her husband or four children.

In loving memory of

Our dear sister

Susie

Who was cut off suddenly

23 August 1903

Aged 32 years

Erected by her sorrowing

Brothers & Sisters

Peace, perfect peace

Susie, or Susan Gale, was married to Charles Gale, editor-in-chief of the *Queanbeyan Herald* and son of John Gale, journalist, coroner and avowed champion of Federation. By examining her grave against the grain, one can deduce that not all was ordinary about her death. Susan was buried in the Methodist portion, as far as possible from the Gale family plot, despite not appearing to be of the Methodist faith. This interpretation is reinforced by the lack of surname on the grave marker, as well as the lack of reference to a husband on her epitaph; it is also notable that Susan's siblings erected her grave, rather than her husband.



Figure 8: Map showing location of Susie Gale's grave. (Google Maps)

From media reporting, it appears that Charles suffered from depression and began to manage this through heavy drinking.⁵¹ On 23 August 1903, he shot Susan when she failed to rise from her chair whilst breastfeeding their baby, to provide him money for beer.⁵² Newspaper articles at the time described the tragedy with relish, and in the resulting inquest and murder trial, little consideration was given to the impact of this on Susan's children and extended family.⁵³ Consequently, researchers using only formal archival records could discover what occurred, but little of the personal impact. However, closer analysis of

⁵¹ "Tragedy at Queanbeyan," *The Burrowa News* 28 August 1903.

⁵² "The Queanbeyan Tragedy: Inquest on Mrs. Gale," *The Burrangong Argus* 29 August 1903.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

her grave provides a deep insight into the emotional trauma experienced by her family.

Susan Gale's interment in a portion not dedicated to her religion speaks to a deeper emotional resonance with the community and reflects an accepted double-standard; a tragic young victim of domestic violence and murder was interred and accepted by the community, whilst Flora Blundell, an older woman who dedicated her career as a midwife to the community, was shunned and marked as a sinner simply for marrying outside her faith.

This phenomenon isn't peculiar to Queanbeyan; anthropologist Jack Kamerman states that social valuation of the dead also influences the degree of loss that may be felt.⁵⁴ A great deal can be concluded about a community's attitude to minorities through analysis of its' cemeteries; specifically, who was buried in the cemetery and who was excluded.⁵⁵ Cemeteries reflect the values of a specific community, as well as the broader society of which that community is a part. Attitudes to minority groups are reflected not only in *whether* they're included in a cemetery,

⁵⁴ Jack B. Kamerman, *Death in the Midst of Life: Social and Cultural Influences on Death, Grief and Mourning* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), 20.

⁵⁵ Sloane, *Is The Cemetery Dead?*, 216-17.

but also *how* they are included.⁵⁶ Cemeteries can grow to include a range of religions, ethnicities, and cultures, but for these to be included, a community needs to accept them as an integral part of itself.

It was not uncommon for non-Christians to be excluded from cemeteries such as Riverside; as late as the 1930s, the committee responsible for the design and construction of Canberra Cemetery (built as an alternative to Riverside Cemetery) specifically excluded non-Christian religions, as well as some smaller denominations, from the allocation of space within its bounds.⁵⁷ This was especially notable, given a steady rise in followers of Judaism in the region around this time.⁵⁸ Additionally, the 1947 Census shows only one more follower of the Salvation Army faith than those claiming to follow Judaism, yet the Salvation Army was included in the cemetery design.⁵⁹ Furthermore, whilst Judaism, Islam, Hinduism were excluded, a large portion of the cemetery was set aside for a non-denominational portion dedicated to ex-servicemen.⁶⁰ Importantly, these were not ex-servicemen who had

⁵⁶ Glennys Howarth, "Australian Funerals," in *Death and Dying in Australia*, ed. Allan Kellehear (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 83; Beverly Raphael, "Grief and Loss in Australian Society," in *Death and Dying in Australia*, ed. Allan Kellehear (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 117-18.

⁵⁷ Griffin and Tobin, *In the Midst of Life: The Australian Response to Death*, 73.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 30th June 1947, Short, 472.

⁶⁰ Canberra Cemetery - Proposed AIF section, NAA: A659, 1942/1/638 (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 1942).

died from their injuries, but simply returned servicemen who'd proudly served in the military. This reinforces the emphasis placed on national military service over wealth or religious expression at that time.

In the 1800s, society's elite were often seen as those who'd succeeded in their calling and who'd attained visual signs of this success. Those who had not succeeded were generally viewed as failing due to personal inadequacy, a lack of effort, or an inherent racial constraint.⁶¹ Such views are often reflected in older cemeteries; whilst personal wealth is frequently a factor in grave design, so too was one's perceived success.⁶² The deceased deemed as successful in life were often celebrated by families via extravagant memorials, whilst those who struggled, are marked by a small, non-descript grave marker or simply are not marked at all.⁶³

Many older cemeteries were designed according to a strict hierarchy, with those deemed "important" often interred in prominent positions such as higher ground, or along main thoroughfares.⁶⁴ Cemetery trustees often placed limits on grave marker size and design,

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁶² *Commemorative Structures: Listing Selection Guide*, 2nd, (London: Historic England, December 2017), 7-8, <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-commemorative-structures/>.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁶⁴ *Landscapes of Remembrance: Register of Parks and Gardens*.

ostensibly to ensure quality and good taste, but also to ensure that graves reflect social and racial standards of the time. In contrast, Riverside Cemetery was developed with each denomination maintaining and operating their own discrete cemetery, each with its own rules and regulations (Figure 9).⁶⁵

In contrast to some extravagant stone memorials and family vaults, a substantial number of graves were originally marked with low iron fences, or simple wooden grave markers. This disparity is further emphasised by the effects of the elements on the cemetery; because of floods, fires and simple age, early wooden markers no longer exist, while graves previously marked by low railings now only feature small sections of twisted, rusted metal.

⁶⁵ Cross, Lea-Scarlett, and Sheedy, "Queanbeyan Pioneer Cemeteries Volume 3: Roman Catholic Portion."

Roman Catholic Cemetery

RULES AND REGULATIONS (under the provisions of Act 31. Vic. No. 14.)

1. All moneys for the purchase of ground and the opening of graves must be paid to the Undertaker, who shall remit all such sums in due course to the Secretary. Order for opening grave must be exhibited to the Sexton.
2. No Vaults or Monuments are to be erected unless the emblems, inscriptions, and designs have been submitted to and approved of by the Committee.
3. All Monuments, Vaults, Graves, Gravestones &c., must be kept in repair and proper condition at the expense of the owners thereof.
4. Masons and all other workmen shall clear away all refuse made by them, and shall repair and make good all damage caused by or through them or their servants, to the satisfaction of the Officer in charge.
5. The Committee reserve to themselves the right to make alterations from time to time in the Scale of Charges and the Regulations now adopted by them.
6. In the event of dispute arising in reference to right of ground any three members of Committee shall be sufficient to settle the matter in question.
7. All Orders for Interment must come through the Secretary; also, Undertakers and others entering the ground for the purpose of Interment, or otherwise, without authority from the Secretary, will be liable to be dealt with for trespass.

SCALE OF CHARGES

For Single Interment in open ground, not less than 6ft. deep		15s.
" Children under 7 years		12/6.
Opening Grave		10s.
Land for Vault, per square foot		2s.
Permission to erect Tomb or Monument on Vault or Grave		15s.
" " " Headstones and Footstones, fee, according to value, not to exceed		10s.

By Order of the following Committee:-

Rev. J. SHERIDAN, Trustee and Chairman of Committee

J.J. SMALLHORN

M. NAMARA

W. WEIR

J.J. PURCELL

R. HAYES

GEORGE J. LESMOND

JOINT SECS

Figure 9 - Facsimile of Roman Catholic Cemetery Regulations

Non-European Burials

During the period 1850-1950, the Queanbeyan region had a predominantly British-centric population, with just 11 non-European residents in a total population 2,620 in 1947 (noting that Indigenous Australians were not counted in the census).⁶⁶ This is reflected in the composition of Riverside Cemetery; until the 1950s, the cemetery was a bastion of white Christianity, with only one non-European buried within the cemetery. Joseph Abdoo was the son of a prominent Syrian farming family from the Northern Rivers district who'd first settled in the Queanbeyan region before moving to Taree.⁶⁷ Joseph was working as a rabbit-catcher for a local grazier, when he decided to bathe in the Queanbeyan River before returning to camp after work one evening, when he slipped on a wet log, and broke his neck.⁶⁸ Joseph Abdoo is buried within the Roman Catholic section, and his grave features two plaques – an epitaph in Arabic script, with an additional small plaque in English:

⁶⁶ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 30th June 1947, Short, 46-47.

⁶⁷ "Obituary," *The Northern Champion* (Taree) 16 September 1939.

⁶⁸ "A Fatal Fall," *Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer* 11 June 1915.

JOSEPH ANTHONY ABDOO

Born 4th August 1888 A.D.

Died 7th June 1915 A.D.

R.I.P.

Sadly, the larger Arabic plaque is now too degraded to be read. However, it is notable for being the only non-English inscription within the cemetery at the time, reflecting the predominantly European and Christian culture of the community.

Other non-Europeans in the region were not treated as well as Joseph Abdoo. For example, people of Asian ethnicity, as well as Indigenous Australians, were routinely buried outside the boundaries of the cemetery. Ten burials are recorded in the cemetery register as having taken place outside consecrated ground. However, the register also notes that it is likely unregistered burials occurred, thus it is possible that other burials occurred outside and were not recorded.

Of these ten burials, eight are registered as Chinese:

- Yin Chaw (d.o.d. 7 November 1881)
- Jim Bowen (d.o.d. 20 October 1883)
- Peter Ah Get (d.o.d. 11 August 1885)
- Sam Tye (d.o.d. 5 January 1891)

- Ah Too (d.o.d. 11 June 1891)
- Ah Too (d.o.d. 28 January 1897)
- Ah Wey (d.o.d. July 1904)
- Moy Sam (d.o.d. 20 May 1906)

Unfortunately, little historiographical information is available in relation to these men; this paucity could possibly indicate that each man maintained a quiet and withdrawn lifestyle. However, Darry Low Choy notes that Australian media and authorities invariably muddled the names of Chinese individuals, often even confusing them with the names of Chinese-owned businesses.⁶⁹ He also notes that a

*Lack of attention to detail, a misunderstanding or ignorance of Chinese customs and traditions, and diverse attempts at romanising Chinese words, has led to various degrees of confusion and uncertainty when attempting to reconstruct past events from the written records...*⁷⁰

Given that several of the burials listed above feature European names, as well as repeated simple names (such as two instances of “Ah Too”), it’s

⁶⁹ Darryl Low Choy, "Lost Opportunities: The Case of a Chinese Merchant of Late Colonial Sydney," *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 8 (2019): 103.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

likely that the names of the deceased were assigned to them at some stage, perhaps as nicknames or some arbitrary designation, rather than these being their birth names. This then limits the researcher's ability to discover more about the men in question.

Permission was granted by the NSW Minister for Justice in 1890, to George Ah Gwan of from the Jembaicumbene mining community near Braidwood NSW, to disinter the remains of three Chinese buried at Riverside (presumably those of Chaw, Bowen and Get).⁷¹ A newspaper article suggests that Mr Gwan was planning to take these remains back to China for reinterment, although no evidence of this was provided.⁷² Given the Chinese were the largest non-British population on the Jembaicumbene goldfield, it's reasonable to surmise that Ah Gwan either knew the three deceased personally, or acted to repatriate their remains as a concerned member of the Chinese community.⁷³

Other local newspaper articles of the time refer to local Chinese as "repulsive looking" and "lying", suggesting common community attitudes toward Asians.⁷⁴ Thus, given Chinese burials were openly excluded from

⁷¹ "Department of Lands," *Queanbeyan Age* (Queanbeyan) 15 June 1887.

⁷² "From the Times," *Goulburn Evening Penny Post* 3 June 1890.

⁷³ Kate Bagnall, "'To His Home at Jembaicumbene': Women's Cross-Cultural Encounters on a Colonial Goldfield," in *Migrant Cross-Cultural Encounters in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. J Leckie, A McCarthy, and A Wnhalla (London: Routledge, 2017), 57.

⁷⁴ "Local Intelligence," *Queanbeyan Age* (Queanbeyan) 12 October 1886.

within Riverside Cemetery until the mid-twentieth century, it is safe to say that the cemetery is reflective of community attitudes to Asians at the time.

Indigenous Burials

It is believed that the remaining two burials outside Riverside's consecrated ground are those of indigenous people, Nellie Hamilton (also known as Queen Nellie), and "Marvellous" (referred to on the register as "an elderly aboriginal, not of the Queanbeyan tribe"). Both were elders of their people and today would be known as activists, due to their work on behalf of their people.

Queen Nellie was ostensibly respected within the Queanbeyan community, enough so that in 1888, the Queanbeyan Council applied to the Aboriginal Protection Board to have Nellie's leadership of her people recognised with an engraved brass breastplate.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Queen Nellie was a guest of honour at the opening of the Tharwa Bridge in 1895, where it was reported that "Queen Nellie Hamilton, resplendent in her new silk gown acquired for the occasion, shook hands with all the children who had been lined up as part of the procession." However, this

⁷⁵ "Presentation to Queen Nellie," *Queanbeyan Age* 15 September 1888.

apparent respect was dubious; when the presentation of the plaque was made, the Queanbeyan Age disparagingly referred to Nellie as “the last of the Queanbeyan tribe of blacks”.⁷⁶ Despite being thought of as “a good old soul who never did anyone any harm, even in thought”, public respect or sympathy for Queen Nellie’s status disappeared after her death, reputedly being assigned the ultimate disgrace of an unmarked grave outside the cemetery.⁷⁷ Despite this story being commonly accepted within the community and the subject of an interpretive panel within the cemetery itself, no evidence can be found to support the story that Queen Nellie is in fact interred in or near Riverside Cemetery.

“Marvellous” is known to have been an elder from the Gundagai region who trekked to Canberra with another elder “King Billy” to protest for indigenous sovereignty at the opening of Parliament House in 1927. The two succeeded in obtaining an audience with the Prince of Wales, although the matters they discussed were not disclosed.

Unlike his friend Marvellous, King Billy was buried within the Anglican section of Riverside after he died in Queanbeyan. Unfortunately, King Billy’s grave was lost to the major flood in 1974. His

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ “Queen Nellie Hamilton,” *Thunderstone* (2020). www.thunderstone.net.au/queen-nellie-hamilton.

name is now recorded on the memorial within the cemetery that lists all the known graves lost during successive floods. The only other burial within the cemetery that is recorded as indigenous in the cemetery register is that of “Jacky Aboriginal”, who passed away on 5 September 1890 at the age of 25 and was recorded as being buried in an unmarked grave within the Methodist portion.

No record exists to explain why King Billy or Jacky Aboriginal were buried within the cemetery whilst Queen Nellie and Marvellous were apparently not. Conversely, it is difficult to definitively confirm that no other indigenous people were buried within Riverside as ethnicity or origin is not always specified within the cemetery register or can be confirmed in other primary sources. However, it is possible that indigenous people simply did not wish to be buried within a white man’s cemetery, that the placement of graves outside the boundary of the cemetery reflects the attitudes and customs of indigenous people at the time. Unfortunately, I have been unable to obtain any insights from local indigenous groups.

Grave markers usually display basic demographic information, including names, dates of birth and death.⁷⁸ Depending on the era in which they were created and the relative affluence of the family, they can also provide an indication of a person's place within a family structure, whether they were a local or moved to the area, even what political or ideological views they held. Individually, these graves can tell us a great deal about a person's origins and values, but it's when viewed in a broader context that cemeteries can tell us about social structures and interactions within a community. From this broad analysis, one can identify hard evidence of prevailing racial attitudes, evolution of individual "sub-communities", as well as the way some tragedies were viewed by the community, as well as how they impacted people in turn.

⁷⁸ Gilbert, *A Grave Look at History: Glimpses of a Vanishing Form of Folk Art*, 76; Jeremy Jones, *How to Record Graveyards*, 3rd ed. (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1979), 6-7.

Chapter 2 – Cemeteries as cultural records

Clara: *Gravestones are a bit basic.*

The Doctor: *It's a battlefield graveyard. My final battle.*

Clara: *Why are some of them bigger?*

The Doctor: *They're soldiers. Bigger the gravestone, higher the rank.*

- Steven Moffat, 'The Name of the Doctor', *Doctor Who*.

When arriving at Riverside Cemetery, visitors pull off the cracked asphalt of Erin Street and drive slowly down the pitted and dusty Baden Powell Place (these street names in themselves perhaps indicating some of the themes in the previous chapter) until reaching the small car park adjacent to the Presbyterian portion. Whilst pulling up, they may briefly consider the name of Erin Street, without considering the likelihood that it reflected the strong links between Ireland and the early Queanbeyan community.¹ Cemeteries are, inevitably, if without plan or due to coincidence, but always part of an inheritance, inscribed into the sentimental lives of a community.

¹ John D. Johnston, *A Guide to the Naming of the Streets of Queanbeyan* (Queanbeyan: Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society, 1979).

Regardless of the time of year, visitors will notice a calming lassitude about the place. Louder birds seem to forego the trees in the senescent cemetery, instead preferring the large trees down by the river. The sound of traffic noise is muted by distance from the city centre, the only real noise being the occasional breathless conversation of joggers on the path following the northern boundary of the cemetery, or the excited chatter coming from the Scout Hall behind the carpark. Again, the cemetery is by default layered with different histories.

When facing the cemetery, visitors would likely be surprised by its size. Even though they may know there are round 5,000 graves, experiencing the site is surprising; it has the feel of a small village cemetery, but it's big, so big that one can't take in the vista without turning a full 180 degrees. The next thing to notice is the apparent emptiness. With over half the graves unmarked, Riverside looks empty, almost unfinished. The many established trees in and around the Catholic portion to one's right, yet only two trees within the rest of the cemetery intensify this perception. The Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian portions are laid out in a row, while the large Roman Catholic portion on the right stretches back up the hill to Erin Street. Once stepping through a gap in the fence into the Presbyterian portion, the visitor is greeted by the first of a series of interpretive panels highlighting this site as part of the *Canberra Tracks* program. Stepping past this panel, one comes face-to-face with the people of the region's

past: their lives and deaths, their beliefs, how they were loved and how they were mourned.

Regardless of our origins, or location, the desire to commemorate and mourn our dead with ritual or tradition seems to be rooted deep within the human psyche.² The traditions demonstrated in Riverside Cemetery not only reflect the past stories of the community, their beliefs, and desires for the future. They are also reflective of the community's evolving culture and beliefs.³

Analysis of the evolution of traditions and beliefs facilitates the understanding of a community's cultural development as well as contributing toward the understanding of its collective story and place within a wider social history.⁴ A visitor examining the layout and grave designs in Riverside Cemetery would realise that religion in early Queanbeyan was dominated by these four Christian denominations, in fact the largest religions in Australia at the time. Furthermore, while

² Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death: A Social and Cultural History*, 1; Celestina Sagazio, "Cemeteries: Their Significance and Conservation," *Historic Environment* 12, no. 2 (1996): 13; Jon Davies, "Introduction: Ancestors - Living and Dead," in *Ritual and Remembrance: Responses to Death in Human Societies*, ed. Jon Davies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 13-14.

³ "Culture, Values, and Beliefs," Introduction to Sociology, Lumen, accessed 20 February 2021, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-introductiontosociology/chapter/values-and-beliefs/>.

⁴ Gavin I. Langmuir, "Tradition, History, and Prejudice," *Jewish Social Studies* 30, no. 3 (July 1968): 159, www.jstor.org/stable/4615344.

walking amongst the graves, they would notice from the language used in epitaphs, as well as the styles of grave artwork, that the traditions and beliefs of each of these Churches were strongly affected by the ethnicity of their congregations, manifesting in often markedly different mortuary practices. This chapter seeks to draw out the significance of some of these commonalities and differences.

Symbolism in Grave Art

One of the most visible responses to the Victorian and Edwardian attitudes to death, and the reflection on the family of the deceased's connection with God, was the overt symbolism associated with the funeral rites, the burial of remains and the manner in which grief was publicly demonstrated.⁵ Indeed, the degree of public grief shown and the subsequent public esteem toward the deceased was seen to reflect directly onto the family – if the deceased was highly thought of, then the family benefitted socially.⁶ Links to religion are strong: if the deceased is perceived to have lived a good life, then their chances of making it to heaven were higher, and the family benefitted from this spiritual

⁵ Arnold, *Necropolis: London and Its Dead*, 220.

⁶ James Walvin, "Dust to Dust: Celebrations of Death in Victorian England," *Historical Reflections* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1982): 354, www.jstor.org/stable/41298792.

affirmation. If the family paid homage to God in their mourning and commemoration, then that helped even more.⁷

Walking through the long grass of Riverside Cemetery, these covenants are evident in beautiful displays of religious iconography on many headstones across each denomination between 1860-1890. Some are relatively small and easy to understand. Margaret Rolfe's grave (died 1873) features a dove carrying a scroll in its beak, commonly used to symbolise a messenger of God.⁸ Similarly, Liam Gregg O'Neill's grave (died 1888) features a small inset angel, reflecting a Victorian tradition: angels representing the messenger of God, come to guide the soul to Heaven.⁹

⁷ Allison C. Meier, "The Cemetery Symbol of Eternal Love," *JSTOR Daily* (14 February 2019). <https://daily.jstor.org/the-cemetery-symbol-of-eternal-love/>.

⁸ Loren N. Horton, "Messages in Stone: Symbolism on Victorian Grave Markers," *The Palimpsest* 70, no. 2 (January 1989): 72.

⁹ Bret Petersen, "Cemetery Symbolism in Stone" (The Association for Gravestone Studies, 17 March 2018).



Figure 10: Detail of art from grave marker of Margaret Rolfe (Photo credit: author)



Figure 11: Detail of art from grave marker of Liam O'Neill (Photo credit: author)

In contrast, the grave of Rebecca Emma Collett is by no means small or simple. It features a statue of an angel a little less than two metres, clad in robes and a garland of flowers, standing atop a tall plinth.¹⁰ This angel dominates the cemetery landscape and is visible throughout.



Figure 12: Angel adorning grave of Rebecca Collett (Photo credit: author)

¹⁰ Cross, Lea-Scarlett, and Sheedy, *Short Queanbeyan Pioneer Cemeteries Volume 2: Anglican Portions, Riverside & Lanyon Drive Cemeteries*, 112.

Many Riverside graves feature art with such symbolism, often alluding to the grief, anger and bewilderment experienced by the bereaved and reflecting a familiarity with these symbols, or at least a preparedness to pay stonemasons who made their case. An example of emotion subtly expressed through art is evident on the grave of Edward Evans and his daughter Margaret. Evans was well-known in the community, having built the Methodist chapel in 1867 and several houses in Googong.¹¹ On Sunday 23 November 1873, Evans' horse was found in a paddock, fully saddled; Evans himself had not been seen since he left work the previous evening and set off for home in a storm.¹² A search party was assembled and late in the afternoon, Evans was found unconscious under a tree. Severely concussed, "in a deplorable condition", and suffering exposure as well as the "revolting consequences" of ants and flies, he was taken to the closest inn and attended to by Doctor Newton.¹³ Despite treatment, Evans passed away the next day, aged 41. A dedicated family man, he left behind a widow

¹¹ Cross, Lea-Scarlett, and Sheedy, *Short Queanbeyan Pioneer Cemeteries Volume 2: Anglican Portions, Riverside & Lanyon Drive Cemeteries*, 118.

¹² "Death Under Shocking Circumstances," *Queanbeyan Age* (Queanbeyan) 27 November 1873.

¹³ *Ibid.*

and five children.¹⁴ Evans' grave is adorned with two sculpted plants (Figure 13): Morning Glory, signifying the beginning of eternal life, and hops, signifying injustice.¹⁵ The emotional conflict here is clear: Evans' family are expressing their hope he will find eternal life with God, yet feel that he was unjustly torn from them far too early.



Figure 13: Detail of Edward Evans' grave, featuring Morning Glory (left) and Hops (right) plants (Photo credit: author)

¹⁴ "Evans and Other v. Rutledge," *Queanbeyan Age* (Queanbeyan) 27 November 1875.

¹⁵ S. Theresa Dietz, *Floriography Today* (Fayoneshire Limited, 2013), 441, Kindle edition; Petersen, "Short Cemetery Symbolism in Stone." 3.

For hundreds of years, iconography of this kind was an accepted, even expected, part of mourning.¹⁶ A rich vocabulary of mourning developed over the centuries, expressing a language of love and loss in a manner transcending words. Although the meaning of much of this iconography is now best understood with the assistance of reference books or experts, it's likely many people in Victorian times would have understood the symbolism of religious iconography and botanic art or aspired to what it added to memorials. That Shakespeare refers to the folk names and symbolism of certain plants in his work demonstrated a common understanding of the language spoken through this form of iconography in earlier ages.¹⁷

Of course, the capacity to evoke such social status through grave design was mainly restricted to the middle and upper classes; many working class or paupers were buried in unmarked or poorly marked graves, with little ceremony.¹⁸

¹⁶ Horton, "Messages in Stone: Symbolism on Victorian Grave Markers," 62.

¹⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

¹⁸ Walvin, "Dust to Dust: Celebrations of Death in Victorian England," 355.

Culture and Design in Australian Cemeteries

Australia in the mid-nineteenth century saw its identity as inextricably linked to Great Britain.¹⁹ Riverside Cemetery, like many other regional cemeteries, reflected this distinctly British culture.²⁰ The layout is reminiscent of other British and Australian cemeteries developed at the same time, whilst avoiding the issues of over-crowding experienced in some contemporary Australian cemeteries, such as Sydney's Devonshire Street Cemetery.²¹ The four distinct portions demonstrate that this a place for the exclusive burial of members of the local community hailing from an Anglo-Celtic background. This distribution also reflected on the makeup of the Queanbeyan / Canberra community at the time; population data from Commonwealth censuses is in Table 2 illustrate this correlation.²²

Table 2: Proportion of religions in community, from past censuses

¹⁹ Benjamin Mountford, "Colonial Australia, the 1887 Colonial Conference, and the Struggle for Imperial Unity," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 47, no. 5 (2019): 919-20, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2019.1677341>.

²⁰ Murray, "Modern Innovations?" Ideal vs. Reality in Colonial Cemeteries of Nineteenth-Century New South Wales," 130.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

²² G.H. Knibbs, *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia Taken For the Night Between the 2nd and 3rd April 1911*, 836-37 (Canberra 2 April 1911); *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 30th June 1954, Short, 126-27.

	1911	1954
Anglican	4,129 (37%)	2,466 (34%)
Catholic	3,022 (27%)	2,982 (41%)
Methodist	545 (5%)	414 (6%)
Presbyterian	1,807 (16%)	470 (6%)
Others	1,668 (15%)	978 (13%)

Although the NSW government legislated to take responsibility for public cemeteries in 1915, disparate powerbases within local church groups held a great deal of influence.²³ For example, in the 1930s, the NSW Department of Lands surveyed the extended Roman Catholic portion at Riverside with the intention of building an access road into the cemetery, ending in a small roundabout. Our curious visitor, walking through the lower half of the Catholic portion may look up the hill

²³ *Ibid.*

toward Erin Street and notice the route of the proposed access road as a distinct avenue from the southern boundary to a point roughly halfway down the portion. However, instead of the planned roundabout, they would notice a grave marked by a large white obelisk. This is the grave of local priest Rev. Patrick Deenihan, placed by Catholic authorities at the point where the roundabout would have been, and preventing its construction.²⁴ The site of Reverend Deenihan's grave is shown in Figure 14, along with the proposed driveway. It is hard not to read this internment as an act of sectarian defiance.²⁵

²⁴ O'Keefe, *Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery - Excerpt From Draft Conservation Management Plan*, 11.

²⁵ Cross, Lea-Scarlett, and Sheedy, "Queanbeyan Pioneer Cemeteries Volume 3: Roman Catholic Portion," 371.



*Figure 14: Location of Rev. Patrick Deenihan's grave and route of proposed driveway
(Google Maps)*

Reverend Deenihan's grave is not small and discreet. Instead, Church trustees interrupted government plans with a large, gleaming white marble obelisk, featuring an epitaph completely in ecclesiastical Latin; along with Joseph Abdoo (detailed in Chapter 1), this is just one of two graves with a non-English epitaph:

Ora pro Anima	Pray for the soul of
Rev. Patritii	Rev. Patrick
Deenihan	Deenihan
Pastoris huius Paroeciae	Parish Priest of
Queanbeyanensis	Queanbeyan,
Qui apud Lixnaw	Born at Lixnaw,

In Comitatu Kerryensi	In County Kerry,
In Hibernia Natus	Ireland,
Anno Aetatis Isuae	Who gave up his soul
Quadragesimo Quarto	to God
Reddidit Spiritum Deo	12 July 1936
Die Duodecim a Julii	In his 44 th year.
MCMXXXVI	
RIP	RIP
Dilectio Fratrum in	As a mark of their esteem, his
Ministerio	brothers in the Ministry erected
Hoc Monumentum	this monument. ²⁶

The message here is clear; this cemetery is under the authority of the Church and secular bureaucratic rules are irrelevant to what this community seeks to enshrine. This lack of agreed planning contributed to a change in the appearance of the cemetery, from a structured order to

²⁶ Cross, Lea-Scarlett, and Sheedy, "Queanbeyan Pioneer Cemeteries Volume 3: Roman Catholic Portion," 371.

a messy and cluttered layout, akin to British cemeteries of the Romantic school of design.

Denominational Differences, Attitudes to Death, and Cultural Trends

Reflecting broader Australian (and indeed, British) culture, Riverside Cemetery served a local community that observed the four major Christian faiths.²⁷ For the main part, each portion observed British trends, reflecting how the local community and specific subgroups of the community viewed death and bereavement.

Anglican Church

The attitudes of Anglican Australians in the mid nineteenth – twentieth centuries were greatly influenced by the predominant beliefs in England.²⁸ Victorian-era England had a fascination with death and spirituality, a fascination often dubbed a ‘Cult of Death’.²⁹ Under strict

²⁷ Pamela Welch, "Constructing Colonial Christianities: With Particular Reference to Anglicanism in Australia, ca 1850-1940," *Journal of Religious History* 32, no. 2 (June 2008): 235.

²⁸ Graeme M. Griffin, "Defining Australian death: Religion and the State," in *Death & Dying in Australia*, ed. Allan Kellehear (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 40-41.

²⁹ Deborah Lutz, "The Dead Still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewellery, and Death Culture," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39, no. 1 (2011): 127.

rules, mourning periods, dress, even funeral arrangements were dictated according to one's social class.³⁰

Other than the ever-present Victorian fascination with death, the Anglican ideal of a 'good death' was a strong reflection of a desire to provide service to one's community, or even simply to one's family. The idea of an immediate judgement of the soul could arguably be linked to the Christian values of generosity and love; living a virtuous life according to the values of the church would logically require a person to display charity and compassion to others. Thus, it is through their actions that the deceased earns their place in heaven.

The Anglican portion at Riverside Cemetery displays a trend to extravagance amongst graves from the period 1860-1880, reflecting an aspiration to publicise one's grief and demonstrate the virtue of the deceased. Grave markers featuring sculptures and carvings are typical of the time, as are extensive epitaphs that reflect the ties of the deceased to their extended family.³¹ There is also a dominant sense of community in the early Anglican graves; many proclaim the deceased as being members

³⁰ Lyndon Fraser, "Death in Nineteenth-Century Australia and New Zealand," *History Compass* 15 (2017): 8-9, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12399>; Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death: A Social and Cultural History*.

³¹ Lutz, "The Dead Still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewellery, and Death Culture," 132.

of the Church or civic councils, local teachers, even members of the local cricket team. From the grave markers in Riverside, a visitor could be excused for inferring that most community leaders were of the Anglican faith. This may be true, given that the Anglican Church was, in effect, often regarded as the 'State Religion' in the early years of Australia's development.³² Renae Barker posits that a bias against Catholicism in early colonial policy-made it inevitable that positions of civic management would be held by Anglicans.³³ Conversely, it could also logically be argued that the Anglican tenet of service or 'charity' would compel a high proportion of its devotees working or volunteering in positions of service within the Queanbeyan community, which would then be reflected in grave markers and memorials.³⁴

Roman Catholic Church

In contrast to the predominantly English Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church in nineteenth century Australia was dominated by the Irish.³⁵ Indeed, in a report prepared for his superiors in Rome in 1880,

³² Renae Barker, *State and Religion: The Australian Story* (Oxford: Routledge, 2019), Chapter 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 6.

³⁴ "Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral," (Chicago: House of Bishops, 1886). www.anglicancommunion.org/media/109011/Chicago-Lambeth-Quadrilateral.pdf.

³⁵ Rev. Brian Maher, *Planting the Celtic Cross: Foundations of the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn* (Canberra: Genie Publishing, 1997), 11.

Bishop Lanigan, Bishop of Goulburn diocese, identified that the Irish formed over 90% of the membership of his congregation.³⁶ The clergy was also largely trained and recruited in Ireland.³⁷ Unlike the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church was initially limited in the number of available clergy, and during the early years of the colony the Catholic Church was not recognised by the colonial administration.³⁸ As such, a uniquely Australian version of the Roman Catholic Church evolved, featuring a limited number of priests to cover an enormous territory.³⁹

Early Catholicism in Australia was dominated by the working class and former convicts. This led to a different grieving focus or intent for Catholics; rather than paying homage to the deceased's beneficence in a community, there was a far greater focus on family, geographic origins and political ties.⁴⁰ Markers would commonly reflect the deceased's abiding love of their homeland, through statements of their place of birth, inclusion of Gaelic lettering, even sculptures reflecting their Irish heritage.⁴¹ Early graves within the shady early Roman Catholic portion of

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Gyorgy Borus, "Irish Catholics in Australia: A Brief Survey up to 1945 ("Rockchoppers")," *Hungarian Studies in English* 23 (1992): 120.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ "The Catholic Church in South Australia," Cathlic Archdiocese of Adelaide, <https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-people/archbishop-wilson/history>.

⁴⁰ Hayward, "Colonial Expressions of Identity in Funerals, Cemeteries, and Funerary Monuments of Nineteenth-Century Perth, Western Australia," 5-6.

⁴¹ Gilbert, *A Grave Look at History: Glimpses of a Vanishing Form of Folk Art*, 76.

Riverside Cemetery reflect these cultural trends. Like the Anglican graves, they feature substantial and beautiful markers that include detailed carvings and extensive epitaphs. However, one notices that the real focus with these graves is not on ties to God or the community, rather to family and home. Specifically, whilst religious observances are shown predominantly through grave art, epitaphs instead demonstrate strong links to Irish ancestry (as noted in Chapter One). Furthermore, most Catholic graves of the time specify where the deceased was born and when they emigrated to Australia. This reflects both a strong tie between the Catholic Church and the Irish community, and the strength of the local Irish culture.

This focus on religious and family ties within the Catholic portion demonstrates almost a blanket disregard of social standing or material contribution toward the community; being identified as part of the Catholic community seemed itself sufficient. Of all the portions in Riverside, it is the Catholic that demonstrates a primary solidarity within religious affiliation; no other portion includes such a range of ethnicities across the entire history of the cemetery, nor does any other portion demonstrate such equality among the deceased.

Presbyterian Church

In contrast to the English influence in the Anglican Church and the Irish influence in the Catholic Church during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Scottish ministers dominated the Presbyterian Church in Australia.⁴² Furthermore, the Presbyterian Church was built upon a literal interpretation of sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, which required specific biblical support for religious ceremonies – if it was not mandated in the bible, it was viewed with suspicion.⁴³ Consequently, the Presbyterian burial service and attitudes to death were remarkably austere. The common guide to Presbyterian services, John Knox's 1564 *Book of Common Order* included the following suggestion for the conduct of a funeral:

The corpse is reverently brought to the grave, accompanied with the Congregation, without any further ceremonies. When buried, the Minister if he be present, and required, goeth to the Church, if it not

⁴² Malcolm Prentis, "The Presbyterian Ministry in Australia, 1822-1900: Recruitment and Composition," *Journal of Religious History* 13, no. 1 (June 1984): 46-47, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9809.1984.tb00185.x>.

⁴³ Griffin and Tobin, *In the Midst of Life: The Australian Response to Death*, 130.

*be far off, and maketh some comfortable exhortation to the people, touching death and resurrection.*⁴⁴

It is unlikely that the practice of funerals in the nineteenth century was so perfunctory, especially given the extra income for those provided services available from funeral services.⁴⁵ However, suspicion of ceremonies remained, ensuring these services remained brief.⁴⁶ In 1882, American scholar and Presbyterian minister A.A. Hodge overtly countered the Anglican and Catholic traditions of focussing on preparing the deceased for the afterlife, by writing:

*The minister should always be careful not to imply, by use of Scripture or otherwise, the salvation of men whose lives and death possessed no marked Christian characteristics.*⁴⁷

With these words, Hodge provided context around the Presbyterian attitudes to death and memorialisation, by essentially stating that a person's life and deeds should stand upon their own merits. Any attempts to elevate a person after death were an affront to God.

⁴⁴ *The Liturgy of The Church of Scotland or John Knox's Book of Common Order*, ed. Rev. John Cumming (London: Robson Levey and Franklin, 1840), 105.

⁴⁵ James Brent Bates, "Resignation, Denial, and Hope: Shifting Attitudes and Practices in Protestant Funeral Liturgy and Pastoral Care in the United States" (Doctor of Philosophy Drew University, March 2008), 192.

⁴⁶ Griffin and Tobin, *In the Midst of Life: The Australian Response to Death*, 131.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Presbyterian grave markers often reflected this attitude, generally containing minimal epitaphs and little in the way of adornment or artwork; indeed, Pat Jalland suggests nineteenth century Presbyterians saw such adornment as “Papist”.⁴⁸ Simple family vaults or memorials were common among Presbyterian cemeteries, allowing families to publicly acknowledge their grief and their eternal links to the deceased, without overtly focussing on spirituality or the lifetime accomplishments of the deceased.⁴⁹

In contrast to the extravagance of the Catholic and Anglican portions, the Presbyterian portion of Riverside demonstrates the austerity so closely aligned with these beliefs. All large memorials are exclusively family markers, rather than for individuals. These are nearly all fenced, with at least one large central memorial surrounded by small markers for individual graves (see Figure 15). Grave art typically features generic religious icons, alluding back to the idea that God is the ultimate judge and a person’s worth is decided upon long before their death. Smaller graves, while well-constructed, are predictably austere. Tellingly,

⁴⁸ Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death: A Social and Cultural History*.

⁴⁹ Hayward, "Colonial Expressions of Identity in Funerals, Cemeteries, and Funerary Monuments of Nineteenth-Century Perth, Western Australia," 7.

nearly all Presbyterian grave markers within Riverside from this era are made from utilitarian sandstone, rather than polished marble or granite.

In Riverside, the Presbyterian philosophy that the individual should not be elevated above God is evident through the way small, almost nondescript markers seem to exist not to honour the individual, but to claim a position within the broader family network. That is, the individual is but one small part of the family, while the family unit pays homage to God.



Figure 15: McInnes family plot, within Presbyterian portion. Note names listed on obelisk, as well as small individual markers (Photo credit: author)

Methodist Church

Methodism grew from the Anglican Church and as such, reflected many of the same practices and philosophies.⁵⁰ In practice, Methodist funerals still focussed on publicising the deceased's qualities and enhancing the family's links with the deceased's spiritual accomplishments.⁵¹ Similarly, grave markers often publicised the family's grief, as well as their wishes for a good afterlife.

The Methodist portion at Riverside Cemetery is relatively small in comparison to the other portions. It was the only original portion never to have been extended and remains the only portion to not be filled with burials. The story told by Methodist graves in Riverside is not one of accomplishment, but one of identity; there is a sense that this portion is almost designed to tell a story about the Methodist community. There is an echo of similarity in the design of each grave. The Southwell family is prominent within this portion, as they are in the broader Canberra/Queanbeyan Methodist community. Although these graves are not large or extravagant, there is a level of complexity in their design. From this, there is a strong sense that the Methodist community at the

⁵⁰ Griffin and Tobin, *In the Midst of Life: The Australian Response to Death*, 132.

⁵¹ Griffin and Tobin, *In the Midst of Life: The Australian Response to Death*, 133-34.

time sought to be well-respected, even looked up to. However, the emptiness of this portion and a lack of modern graves simply shows that this dream remained unfulfilled, demographically if not spiritually or politically,

Evolution of Cemeteries and Graves

Our visitor, having walked from the shade of the Catholic portion to the emptiness of the Methodist portion, would notice that the trends illustrating differing cultures around death and memorialisation are well reflected amongst the graves in Riverside Cemetery.

During the Edwardian period, grave markers in Riverside cemetery typically began to reduce in size. Edwardian society saw a more modest focus on spirituality and the Victorian desire to publicise grief.⁵² Thus, while grave monuments were still grand by today's standards, they were less elaborate than before, with less emphasis on religion, spirituality and ethnic ties. Catholic and Anglican graves might be still relatively imposing, but the tone was less celebratory and more sombre, acknowledging the loss felt by a family, rather than publicising the attributes of the deceased. Presbyterian graves during this time became

⁵² *Commemorative Structures: Listing Selection Guide*, 7-8.

far smaller, mostly recumbent graves with minimal adornment. It is difficult to identify broader trends within the Methodist portion, as only four marked graves are still extant.

Unlike graves from the Victorian and Edwardian eras, graves in each portion in the years 1915-1925 are low and markedly similar reflecting previously described trends of wartime and post-war graves design. With even a cursory glance, a visitor would notice epitaphs are generally restricted to basic biographic information, occasionally with a small religious symbol included. What is presented in these graves is less a celebration of life and contribution, rather than immense grief at a family and community loss. This illustrates the overwhelming effect of the Great War on families and communities.

Post-World War One graves in Riverside Cemetery typically exhibit a non-descript, almost uniform style. Gone are extravagant sculptures and flowing epitaphs.⁵³ The evolution of a uniformly muted approach to memorialisation demonstrates a distinct end to the Victorian-era fascination with death. With millions of families worldwide having to face the death of loved ones due to war, the earlier idea of celebrating

⁵³ *Commemorative Structures: Listing Selection Guide*, 8.

death and bereavement was seen as vulgar in a very short time.⁵⁴ In essence, burials had become a merely practical event, rather than an overt form of memorialisation. This wholesale change in attitude resulted in a rapid and widespread change in grave design.⁵⁵ Indeed, by 1916, the majority of new burials in public cemeteries featured small markers, with little information other than the name of the deceased, their date of birth and date of death.⁵⁶ Figure 16 show examples of graves from 1915-1918, taken across three of the four denominational portions,

⁵⁴ Walvin, "Dust to Dust: Celebrations of Death in Victorian England," 371.

⁵⁵ Griffin and Tobin, *In the Midst of Life: The Australian Response to Death*, 95.

⁵⁶ Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 371.

illustrating both the uniformity in design and the stark simplicity of the graves.



Figure 16: Examples of WW1-era graves (Photo credit: author)

Forty years after this period saw an influx of European immigration following World War 2, as well as an increase in family incomes. Census data from 1954 (7,310) and 1961 (9,448) display a marked increase in residents from 1933 (1,962).⁵⁷ Many immigrants working on the Snowy Hydro scheme based themselves in the region, bringing their cultures, languages and religion with them.⁵⁸ Once more,

⁵⁷ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 30th June 1954, Short, 5; Census Bulletin No 27: Nationality (ie Allegiance) of the Population of Australia by States and Territories, 32-33 (Canberra 30 June 1961); Roland Wilson, Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 5-6 (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printer, 30 June 1933).

⁵⁸ "What the Snowy Scheme Will Mean for Australia," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney) 12 July 1950.

families had sufficient means to express their grief and reflect the personality of the deceased through a combination of grave size, artwork and stonework selection.⁵⁹ Grave designs again became more demonstrative, with large coverings, ornate lettering and a range of polished, even coloured stones featuring. Across Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian graves, the trend reflects a focus on the individual, with a distinct change in grave design, including features such as coloured stone, polished granite, gold script and alternatives to simple recumbent graves and plain markers, as illustrated in Figure 17.

⁵⁹ Robert Nicol, "Australian Burial Customs," in *Death & Dying in Australia*, ed. Allan Kellehear (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 101.



Figure 17: European graves from the 1950s and 1960s. Note the variation in materials, colours and design (Photo credit: author)

However, rather than extensive (and expensive) epitaphs, these graves still mainly display basic biographical information. Reflecting localised immigration discussed in Chapter One, around half of the

graves surveyed from the mid-twentieth century in the Catholic and Anglican portions feature notably European names, in contrast to the specifically Anglo-Celtic names of the 1800s. Similarly, these European graves nearly all feature a picture of the deceased, whereas none of the more Anglified graves do. In contrast to the 1860-1880 period, carvings, sculptures, and iconography are nearly absent.⁶⁰ As Pat Jalland writes, “there was a deep chasm between the cultural norms relating to death and loss in 1851 and in 1951.”⁶¹ Whilst families in the mid-twentieth century appear to have returned to a demonstrated need to publicise their grief through beautiful grave markers, there is far less emphasis on religious observance. These markers alone demonstrate a discernible change in cemetery demographics in the twentieth century, as well as a distinct evolution in the method of religious observation.

Religious Observance

Census data shows that levels of religious observance in Australia across the four main denominations mostly remained relatively steady during the 1950s-1960s. While this is reflected in Riverside cemetery, the

⁶⁰ *Landscapes of Remembrance: Register of Parks and Gardens*, 6.

⁶¹ Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: Loss and Grief in England, 1914-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2.

exception is that only four marked graves for the period 1950-1960 exist within the Methodist portion. There are several potential reasons for this; this could possibly indicate a decline in members of the Methodist faith, as examined by Peter Procter in his history *Queanbeyan Methodists*. Indeed, he cites a writer in the *Weekend Advocate* in 1878, suggesting that "Methodism... has not achieved that success its ardent admirers expect."⁶² However, the census data does not reflect this. Some 80 years following this suggestion in the *Weekend Advocate*, levels of Methodist faith within Queanbeyan, whilst certainly not high, remained generally static. It is more likely that the decline in Methodist burials within Riverside is linked to greater choice of burial places; at this stage, Woden Cemetery had been open for use for some 20 years, as well as a dedicated Methodist cemetery at Weetangera that opened in 1873. Thomas Southwell was said to have brought Methodism to the region in the 1840s; by the 1860s, the Southwell family was conducting Methodist services from their home and a small chapel in Weetangera, co-located with the cemetery. It is logical that the faithful from Canberra would have preferred to be buried in their own locale, rather than Queanbeyan.

⁶² Peter Procter, "Queanbeyan Methodists: The Historical, Social and Architectural Importance of Their Church Buildings 1847/1977," *Canberra Historical Journal*, no. 35 (March 1995): 24.

Table 3: Comparison of religious observance in Queanbeyan and NSW over successive censuses

	1947	1954
Anglican:		
NSW	48.8%	42.5%
Qnbyn	42.1%	33.7%
Catholic:		
NSW	25.6%	24.6%
Qnbyn	31.3%	33.2%
Methodist:		
NSW	9.3%	7.8%
Qnbyn	6.4%	5.7%
Presbyterian:		
NSW	9.9%	8.7%
Qnbyn	6.9%	6.4%
Other Christian denominations:		
NSW	5.4%	5.6%
Qnbyn	3.1%	14.4%
Other religions:		
NSW	0.6%	0.7%
Qnbyn	<0.1%	<0.1%

With these four denominations demonstrating different methods of memorialising after death, it's clear that a range of factors contribute toward a community's culture, including methods of religious

observance, ethnic traditions, even relative affluence.⁶³ In turn, culture can affect how a community interacts with outsiders and people from within that may break perceived boundaries.⁶⁴ Reviewing a culture from a historical perspective is inherently difficult as, like many aspects of society, cultures evolve; they ebb and flow according to external influences and changes within the society they shape and resist being viewed through a particular lens.⁶⁵ Thus, our Riverside visitor is witness to not only an archive of personal memories and bereavement, but evidence of the evolution of a community, its culture and composition.

Cemeteries exist as an accidental repository of cultural records within any society.⁶⁶ While graves commemorate individual deceased, on a broader scale the unintentional result is that cemeteries record and reflect the influence of family, religion, and homeland. On an individual basis, grave markers demonstrate the love and grief of a family for a single person; collectively, they demonstrate community attitudes to love, life and death. Who is commemorated, how and by whom also

⁶³ Alberto Alesina and Paola Guiliano, "Culture and Institutions," *Journal of Economic Literature* 53, no. 4 (2015): 893.

⁶⁴ Brendan H. O'Connor, "Culture, After All," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* (2021): 2-3.

⁶⁵ Alesina and Guiliano, "Culture and Institutions," 903.

⁶⁶ Sloane, *Is The Cemetery Dead?*, 62.

reflects attitudes to minorities and 'outsiders', as well as fluctuating attitudes to prosperity, work ethics, and law and order.

Chapter 3 – Cemeteries as heritage assets

Who chose burial monuments? Were the wishes of the deceased taken into consideration? It was a subject I'd never considered before.

- Susan Hubbard, The Society of S.

The physical state of Riverside Cemetery

As a cemetery born of mid-nineteenth century ideals and community needs, yet still containing contemporary burials, Riverside exists within two worlds. Although closed to new burials, families with pre-purchased plots, double graves or family vaults are still able to bury their recently deceased. As such, burials took place in Riverside as recently as 2016.¹

This mix of continuities and discontinuities creates something of a paradox, with the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (formed in a merger of two councils in 2016) managing a heritage cemetery that still has links to recently bereaved families, for which the cemetery remains an active a place of loss and mourning.

This paradox – not uncommon in cemetery management – places the Council in the unenviable position of possessing a community asset

¹ "Grave of John Petro," (Riverside Cemetery, 20 January 2016), Grave marker.

that generates no income; thus, the cemetery has become a liability. Furthermore, cemeteries worldwide are often subject to stringent heritage conservation requirements that place further restrictions on municipal authorities in relation to maintenance and ongoing use of the site. With families of recently deceased possessing a strong emotional link to the cemetery, the Council is required to walk an ethical tightrope, balancing the need for heritage conservation and promotion with respect for the grief of the recently bereaved.² At the time of writing, despite Riverside being listed as a site of local significance, it is not specified in any publicly available planning or environmental strategies published by the Council. Furthermore, Riverside and the land to the east and west, while zoned as special use for public access/recreation, are also designated as requiring flood planning.³ According to Council documents, these reservations prevent most forms of development.⁴

While the land upon which the cemetery lies is subject to these substantial restrictions, the land adjacent to it has more flexible planning

² "Cemetery Conservation: Side Effects of Best Intentions," Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2021, accessed 19 July, 2021, <https://dhr.virginia.gov/cemetery-newsletter-content/cemetery-conservation-side-effects-of-best-intentions/>; Faye Sayer and Duncan Sayer, "Bones Without Barriers: the Social Impact of Digging the Dead," in *Mortuary Archaeology in Contemporary Society*, ed. Howard Williams and Melanie Giles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 145.

³ "Online Mapping," (Queanbeyan: Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council). <https://publicmaps.qprc.nsw.gov.au/intramaps80/?project=QPRC%20Public#>.

⁴ Queanbeyan Local Environmental Plan, Part 2: Permitted or Prohibited Development (Queanbeyan: Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, 2012).

options.⁵ There are many potential reasons for the lack of planning for Riverside's future, but the cemetery exists in a contemporary setting without a clear purpose or use while Queanbeyan has become one of the most dynamic regional growth areas in New South Wales, including in population growth and property development. With these pressures in place, residential areas surrounding the cemetery are likely to grow and change. Thus, any future decisions around the future of the cemetery and adjacent residential development must be relatively symbiotic: planning and development decisions for one will affect and be affected by the other.

Clearly, there exists an underlying tension between the cemetery and this potential residential development. Despite a perception that cemeteries may lower residential property prices, studies demonstrate that the opposite is often true; an adjacent historic cemetery can actually increase property prices, possibly due to a sense of prestige of being so close to a heritage site and also the proximity of open space and amenity.⁶ In order to balance the opposing needs for property

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ James E. Larsen and Joseph W. Coleman, "Cemetery Proximity and Single-Family House Price," *The Appraisal Journal* (Winter 2010): 34, www.researchgate.net/publication/255702538; William Jolly, "Spooky: Do Cemeteries Affect Property Prices?," *Savings.com.au* (28 October 2019). www.savings.com.au/home-loans/cemeteries-affect-property-prices.

development and ongoing grieving of families, any future land development adjacent to the cemetery may be subject to restrictions (on height or oversight, for example, access or curtilage) that respect the atmosphere and significance of the cemetery, such as restrictions. Conversely, any adjacent residential development may result in increased demand for community space or communal facilities on cemetery land and, in turn, for more active attention to the maintenance of the cemetery itself. Such tensions illustrate the imperative for both strong planning policies and a clear understanding of the value of heritage sites to the broader community.

Physically, Riverside Cemetery is a crumbling, decaying entity. Early graves upon which small shrubs were planted have been smashed or covered over as these shrubs have grown to large trees or declined into untidy senescence, as illustrated in Figure 18.



Figure 18 - Example of grave planting having caused unintended damage due to size

(Photo credit: Michael McDonald-Smith)

Most wooden grave markers have disappeared, while many early stone markers are eroded to the point of illegibility or lie shattered in the oft-overgrown grass. Boundary fences are rusty, while those around many plots are barely holding together (see Figure 19). Yet this physical decay contributes toward the overall atmosphere of Riverside.⁷ Canberra journalist Lucy Monaghan observes

*...by choosing not to restore the fallen headstones, Riverside takes on an atmosphere of final rest. While we could try to fight against time, Riverside chooses to accept that nothing lasts forever.*⁸

Evocative of associations and an attitude, this view also captures the ironic tension between finality and impermanence associated with Riverside.

⁷ O'Keefe, *Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery - Excerpt From Draft Conservation Management Plan*, 9.

⁸ Lucy Monaghan, "All That is Solid Melts into Air - A Journey Through Canberra's Cemeteries," *NowUC* (2021). <https://nowuc.shorthandstories.com/all-that-is-solid-melts-into-air/index.html>.



Figure 19 - Examples of degraded grave fences (Photo credit: Michael McDonald-Smith)

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David Sloane writes of the evolution of cemeteries from aesthetics dominated by trees and climbers, through to the lawn cemeteries of the mid-twentieth century.¹¹ However, he reflects that modern cemeteries feature

*none of the sensitivity and imagination of earlier cemetery designs, just a utilitarian space with almost no diversity in its plantings.*¹²

This observation reflects the perception that while modern cemeteries are functional they can lack the symbolism of death and mourning that retain a place in our cultures. Older cemeteries, even those that are clearly run-down, are by contrast seen as beautiful, with romantic symbolism, combinations of art and grief, and symbiosis with

¹⁰ Monaghan, "All That is Solid Melts into Air - A Journey Through Canberra's Cemeteries."

¹¹ Sloane, *Is The Cemetery Dead?*, 82.

¹² *Ibid.*, 42

the natural environment. Not only places of mourning, older cemeteries also provide a sense of connection or continuity in intriguing physical evidence of how our ancestors lived, died, and remembered their loved ones.

There are signs of Riverside currently being used as a secluded place for behavior that could well be regarded as incongruent with new residential development. It is not unusual to find empty bottles, food wrappers, even condoms littering the ground beneath large sheltering monuments and in isolated leafy corners of the cemetery. Should residential development be increased in the immediate vicinity of the cemetery, one would expect measures to be taken to prevent anti-social behaviour around the new housing. Such measures would need to be in balance with the heritage nature of the cemetery, yet still be effective. It is likely the isolated nature of the cemetery, with the closest houses some 100 metres from the older portions (see Figure 22), that makes it attractive for these activities. In such a situation, the presence of closer housing, or a higher density of residents, may discourage anti-social activities without a need for hard barriers. Equally, greater ease of access to the site could encourage such use. An open demarcation between the cemetery and residential areas would, in turn, facilitate that sense of

connection with the past and closer interaction with residents.¹³ At some point, then, the issues of historic and conservation value which have been considered in this thesis will conceivably require more sustained consideration.

David Sloane writes of the evolution of cemeteries from sites and aesthetics dominated by trees and climbers, through to the lawn cemeteries of the mid-twentieth century.¹⁴ However, he reflects that modern cemeteries feature “none of the sensitivity and imagination of earlier cemetery designs, just a utilitarian space with almost no diversity in its plantings.”¹⁵ This observation reflects the perception that while more modern cemeteries are functional they can lack the symbolism of death and mourning that retain a place in our cultures. Older cemeteries, even those that are clearly run-down, are by contrast seen as beautiful because of their romantic symbolism, combinations of art and grief, and symbiosis with the natural environment. Not only places of mourning, these older cemeteries provide a sense of connection or continuity in intriguing physical evidence of how our ancestors lived, died, and remembered their loved ones.

¹³ Grete Swensen and Margete Skar, "Urban Cemeteries' Potential as Sites for Cultural Encounters," *Mortality* 24, no. 3 (2019): 344, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2018.1461818>.

¹⁴ Sloane, *Is The Cemetery Dead?*, 82.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 42

Often, however, these cemeteries have a level of separation – spatial or physical (in fencing or hedging for example) – from residential areas largely absent from Riverside. Equally, there are signs of Riverside currently being used as a secluded place for forms of behavior that could well be regarded as incongruent with new residential development. It is not unusual to find empty bottles, food wrappers, even condoms littering the ground beneath large sheltering monuments and in isolated leafy corners of the cemetery. Should residential development be increased in the immediate vicinity of the cemetery, one would expect measures to be taken to prevent anti-social behaviour around the new housing. Such measures would need to be in balance with the heritage nature of the cemetery, yet still be effective. Yet it is likely the relatively isolated nature of the cemetery, with the closest houses some 100 metres from the earlier portions (see Figure 20), that makes it attractive for these activities. In such a situation, the presence of closer housing, or a higher density of residents, may discourage anti-social activities without a need for hard barriers. Equally, greater ease of access to the site, including its more over-grown areas, could encourage such use. An open demarcation between the cemetery and residential areas would, in turn, facilitate that sense of connection with the past and closer interaction with residents.¹⁶

¹⁶ Swensen and Skar, "Urban Cemeteries' Potential as Sites for Cultural Encounters," 344.

At some point, then, the issues of historic and conservation value which have been considered in this thesis will conceivably require more sustained consideration.

Heritage conservation in cemeteries

Early cemeteries are perceived by communities, governments and heritage specialists as a form of link to the past, a time capsule capturing demographic, cultural, religious and political information.¹⁷ Indeed, Julie Rugg argues that these older cemeteries now hold a special purpose; that is, while a cemetery is a place of permanence and pilgrimage, it is also a museum and a link to long gone ancestors.¹⁸ Additionally, cemeteries are also frequently microcosms of historic aesthetic inheritance on display, with horticultural and artistic landscape designs in place, reflecting past design trends or including rare plants.¹⁹ These associations in themselves enhance a conservation value extending beyond remembrance to environmental considerations that can complicate considerations of maintenance. In Australia, such botanical heritage can range from the

¹⁷ Lisa Murray, *Cemeteries as Places of Memorial and Leisure*, *Radio National - Big Ideas* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 21 November 2018).

¹⁸ Rugg, "Defining the Place of Burial: What Makes a Cemetery a Cemetery?," 262.

¹⁹ Kate Woodthorpe, "Sustaining the Contemporary Cemetery: Implementing Policy Alongside Conflicting Perspectives and Purpose," *Mortality* 16, no. 3 (2011): 263, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2011.586125>.

grand and elaborate to more ambiguous issues of preserving remnant, captured or historic ecologies.²⁰ Thus, heritage conservation in cemeteries must account for a range of different issues; how these issues are handled vary according to the requirements of each site.

With such a broad range of factors to consider regarding the conservation of cemeteries, most authorities follow a structured plan that recognises the value of each heritage aspect. In Australia, the benchmark is the Burra Charter (the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*). Although the way public authorities actually interpret those principles is generally a decision for that authority alone, as long as any decisions are made with the cultural history of the site in mind, the responsibility for making these decisions can sometimes be blurry and contentious.²¹ Factors affecting this process include geographical location, zoning decisions, available resources, and levels of heritage significance reflecting (in the terms of the Charter) different weightings of aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

²⁰ EJ McBarron, DH Benson, and MD Doherty, "The Botany of Old Cemeteries," *Cunninghamia* 2, no. 1 (1988): 104; Gary W. Barrett and Terry L. Barrett, "Cemeteries as Repositories of Natural and Cultural Diversity," *Conservation Biology* 15, no. 6 (2001): 1821.

²¹ Meredith Walker and Peter Marquis-Kyle, *The Illustrated Burra Charter* (Burwood: Australia ICOMOS, 2004), 31.

Despite the natural decay evident in Riverside, the Council pursues (to put it in the most positive light) an active policy of not interfering with the site, leaving the effects of nature as they are and ensuring the romantic atmosphere of the cemetery remains untainted.²² While the Council has not confirmed such a policy, this approach is endorsed on a Canberra Tracks interpretive panel at the entrance to the cemetery:

*The atmosphere of this historic cemetery can be lost with over-zealous cleaning up. It is current practice to leave fallen tombstones and not to embark on a full restoration of the cemetery.*²³

While this principle may appear to be both convenient and neglectful, it accords with the following articles in the Charter:

*Article 3.1: Conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.*²⁴

²² "Canberra Tracks Cemeteries - Queanbeyan Riverside Cemetery," in *Main entrance panel* (Queanbeyan Canberra Tracks).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Walker and Marquis-Kyle, *The Illustrated Burra Charter*, 20.

At Riverside, paths are mowed, and the main gates maintained to facilitate access, holes in pathways are filled and tree branches are trimmed to ensure safety. It is difficult to confirm whether this work is actively implemented in alignment with the Burra Charter principles, or whether the Council's routine maintenance and risk management addresses these principles by default. Grave markers and fences are not interfered with; instead, they are left to continue in a process of deterioration unless otherwise tended by families.

Article 8: Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate visual setting and other relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place. New construction, demolition, intrusions or other changes which would adversely affect the setting or relationships are not appropriate.

Article 8 encourages the maintenance not just of the physical aspects of the cemetery, but the overall atmosphere of the site. A lack of clear guidance from Council during my research inhibits any attempt to decide on the intentions of Council's conservation processes, and no doubt reflect service constraints and priorities. Yet many in the community would expect a higher level of transparency from their local government.

On this basis, it can at least be suggested that the minimal conservation work evident at Riverside would seem to accord with the

Burra Charter. Perhaps further reflecting constraints and priorities, a conservation management plan commissioned by Council in the late 1990s was never finalized.²⁵ This situation contributes further to the level of ambiguity associated with the cemetery: a heritage listing refers repeatedly to a conservation management plan that has never been completed, while the Council Local Strategic Plan refers to that heritage listing.

Compounding this dilemma, application of the Burra Charter is not a clear-cut process, and still demands a degree of discretionary and perhaps subjective judgement. The main issue in terms of such judgement is the use of the term ‘appropriate’, which requires either contingently informed values around what is appropriate, or the creation of binding criteria. Whilst Council must consider broader criteria that encompass multiple and diverse aspects such as consistency and cost within a set historical narrative, the community appreciates the cemetery as a place that offers one of the most tangible forms of the overall story of place: beginnings, ends, triumphs, tragedies, hardships and changing

²⁵ Brendan O’Keefe, "Email: Riverside Cemetery Conservation Management Plan," ed. Gillian Kelly (Correspondence between local historian Gillian Kelly and the co-author of the draft Conservation Management Plan for Riverside Cemetery, 5 August 2021). Mr O’Keefe was contacted to ascertain whether his Conservation Management Plan had been completed. He advised that this had not been, due to inaction by his co-author. After a protracted attempt to obtain a completed report, Council ceased negotiations.

values and eras.²⁶ Future residential development in the vicinity of the cemetery, as well as any development of the cemetery itself, would require consideration and public debate over 'appropriate' levels of distinction between community facilities, community heritage and residential demands. Research for this thesis has suggested that, at least at an official level, the resources to support such consideration lack coordination.

While the Burra Charter applies to any heritage site in Australia, cemeteries around the world are also found to be the subject of special heritage orders or policies.²⁷ Established in 2015 as a non-department government agency to address such issues in the United Kingdom, Historic England describe this multiple status in these terms:

The combination of architecture, sculpture, landscape, wildlife and poetry makes cemeteries like no other place in the historic environment.... Many of our historic cemeteries are still being used for

²⁶ Nichole Overall, "Email Correspondence With Author," in *Written interview with local journalist and historian* (19 August 2021).

²⁷ Swensen and Skar, "Urban Cemeteries' Potential as Sites for Cultural Encounters," 333-34.

*the business of burying and mourning. They are valued as places for quiet reflection, as green spaces, and for their wildlife interest.*²⁸

This ambiguity creates numerous challenges for public authorities, not the least is the issue of balancing maintenance with reduced income. The conversion of cemeteries to community spaces is a means of overcoming this issue, yet risks commercialising a place of personal reflection and grief.

Christoph Jedan et al. suggest that, while a cemetery is shaped and maintained by municipal authorities, it is customised and co-created by its users.²⁹ This dynamic of co-creation can manifest through direct interaction by cemetery users. A common example is the existence of “Friends of the Cemetery” groups within larger cemeteries.³⁰ These organisations have a direct means of input to conservation policy through consultation with the relevant state or municipal bodies; they can also have a valued role in assuming some of the tasks of maintenance and advocacy.

²⁸ "The Importance of Historic Cemeteries and Burial Grounds," Historic England, updated 20 July 2021, 2021, accessed 24 July 2021, <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/cemeteries-and-burial-grounds/importance/>.

²⁹ Christoph Jedan et al., "Co-creating Ritual Spaces and Communities: An Analysis of Municipal Cemetery Tongerseweg, Maastricht 1812-2020," *Religions* 11 (2020): 452, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11090435>.

³⁰ "Friends of Rookwood Inc.," Friends of Rookwood Cemetery, Incorporated, accessed 24 July, 2021, <http://friendsofrookwoodinc.org.au>; Sloane, *Is The Cemetery Dead?*, 141.

Cemeteries without an active Friends organisation do not benefit from direct interaction between users and policy makers. Input from users at cemeteries such as Riverside instead comes via more circuitous routes, such as submissions to Council, participation in public events such as ACT Heritage Week, and indirect lobbying methods that include letters to the editor, and social media campaigns.³¹ These often occasional, discontinuous methods do not always prompt efficient maintenance or improvements within older cemeteries, with public support required and open debate needed before authorities begin to consider changing policy. Increasingly, however, the development of strategies relating to places such as Riverside might need to rely on such methods of raising awareness and advocacy.

In this context, Riverside Cemetery has moved directly – if in limited ways – from being perceived as an active cemetery to a community heritage site. Whilst a cemetery is often ignored by members of the community without a direct link to it, Riverside's status as a heritage site has brought with it a greater level of oversight and

³¹ *2021 Heritage Festival Program - REIMAGINE*, (Canberra ACT Government, 2021); Georgie Burgess, "Walk With Me Through the Hidden Treasures of Queanbeyan," *NowUC* (27 April 2021 27 April 2021). www.nowuc.com.au/2021/04/walk-with-me-through-the-hidden-treasures-of-queanbeyan/; Sue W, "Mysterious Queanbeyan by Moonlight Tours," *Weekend Notes* (16 October 2016 16 October 2016). www.weekendnotes.com/mysterious-queanbeyan-moonlight-tours/.

expectation from the community. That attention, however, can have its own conditionality. Nichole Overall is a journalist, historian, author, and social commentator, who proudly focuses on Queanbeyan's rich history in much of her written work, and regularly runs tours of Queanbeyan's heritage sites, including Riverside Cemetery.³² During correspondence with Ms Overall, she pointed out the prevalence of local social media groups as examples of the local community recognising the value of Riverside to the Queanbeyan community, and becoming increasingly concerned about the status of Riverside within the community.³³

Heritage value of Riverside Cemetery

Riverside Cemetery is listed in the NSW State Heritage Inventory as a place of Local Significance.³⁴ The Statement of Significance says that Riverside is "part of the surviving late nineteenth century and early twentieth century building fabric of the town, that contributes to the town's historic character."³⁵ Other fields in the State Heritage Inventory entry refer to this connection to the town's early heritage, including "it is

³² "An Overall View," 2019, 25 August 2021, <https://anoverallview.wixsite.com/blog>.

³³ Overall, "Email Correspondence With Author."

³⁴ "Heritage Item: Riverside Cemetery," State Heritage Inventory, Heritage NSW, 2007, accessed 2 July 2021, www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=2290105 (Heritage Item ID: 2290105).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

the an integral part of cities history from the 1840s” (sic).³⁶ There is also reference to the site being “a good example of an early multi-denominational site with extensive historical and funeral values.”³⁷ No context is provided to explain why the cemetery is a “good example” or indeed what the extensive historical values refer to.

Riverside’s heritage listing makes an oblique reference to “early pioneers”, but there is no specific reference to any individual markers or memorials. Viewed alongside the broad comments on “extensive historical values”, this generality implies it was sufficient to view the site as a ‘type’ or form, rather than focus on the significance of individual aspects or graves. Chapters One and Two of this thesis have demonstrated the value of what might can be deduced from these more specific elements.

Furthermore, there is minimal context provided in the listing. No detail is provided to explain *why* this place is special; it simply notes that it *is* special. This suggests a lack of engagement by the city with its own history, a perspective strengthened by the fact that Nichole Overall’s book *Queanbeyan - City of Champions*, published in 2013, was the first

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

broader history of the city published locally in more than fifty years.³⁸ Riverside's listing draws on only three references, including the *draft* Conservation Management Plan which, as noted earlier, was never completed or adopted.³⁹ While the Council rated the cemetery as important enough to preserve, that policy decision was based on an incomplete appraisal process.

Whilst Queanbeyan's Local Environmental Plan contains clauses relating to Heritage Conservation, these mainly focus on restrictions around altering or damaging heritage sites.⁴⁰ The plan itself does not provide any context around what criteria are used to assess the heritage value of a particular site.⁴¹ Nor does the Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement or Community Strategic Plan which, as expected, focus on broader strategies such as "preserving our community and cultural heritage."⁴² Taken together, these statements beg the question of how that heritage might be defined.

³⁸ Overall, "Email Correspondence With Author."

³⁹ O'Keefe, "Email: Riverside Cemetery Conservation Management Plan."

⁴⁰ Queanbeyan Local Environmental Plan, Short, Clause 5.10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Towards 2040 - Local Strategic Planning Statement, 22 (Queanbeyan: Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, July 2020). Community Strategic Plan - One Heart, Many Parts, 52 (Queanbeyan: Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, 2018).

As a result of this lack of clarity regarding the cemetery's heritage value, one then must question whether the Council sees the site as possessing a *definable* heritage value, or whether it believes that value varies between individuals or community groups. As a community asset, any heritage site possesses a value to the community. This value is difficult to define beyond the broad guidelines provided by the Council or other bodies such as Heritage NSW or the National Trust. Instead, a heritage asset can mean something different to every person or visitor. David Yencken and others posit that there are both tangible and intangible components to heritage.⁴³ That is, some aspects may be measured or categorised: the location of a major historical event, the grave of a pioneer, etc. However, the impact or meaning of these events is more intangible. In Riverside Cemetery, some of the more tangible aspects of the community's heritage are plain. The *meaning* of these is far less tangible, however, and connotes something different to each visitor.⁴⁴ Marijke Bassani writes, for example, that interpretations of cultural heritage is explicitly different between European and Indigenous

⁴³ David Yencken, *Valuing Australia's National Heritage* (Sydney: Future Leaders, 2019), 12; Leanne White, "Cathy Freeman and Australia's Indigenous heritage: a new beginning for an old nation at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 2 (2013): 153, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.670127>.

⁴⁴ Rui Zhang, Kimberly A. Noels, and Richard N. Lalonde, "Know Your Heritage: Exploring the Effects of Fit in Cultural Knowledge on Chinese Canadians' Heritage Identification," *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (5 November 2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02100>.

communities.⁴⁵ While tourism and heritage promotion illustrate the graves of Gale and Faunce as memorials to prominent community leaders, such an approach is inherently Eurocentric and fails to consider both the position of indigenous or Chinese within the early community or in the cemetery itself, and indigenous history overall.⁴⁶

These struggles for balance and definition are not restricted to Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council. Indeed, the difficulties in planning for appropriate heritage management experienced by the Council reflect experiences common across local government in Australia. Planning expert Dirk Spennemann wrote in 2006 that community involvement in heritage management is imperative, as a place cannot be protected for the long term if it is not “embraced” by a community.⁴⁷ However, he posits that the engagement of a community in the heritage management process can create two diametrically

⁴⁵ Marijke Bassani, "International Cultural Heritage Law and World Heritage Listing: A Vehicle for “White Control of Indigenous Heritage”?," *Santander Art and Culture Review* 2, no. 3 (2017): 281, <https://doi.org/10.4467/2450050XSNR.17.032.8433>.

⁴⁶ Peter Corlett, "The Father of Canberra," (Queanbeyan: Meridan Foundry, 2001), Sculpture, 282-83; "Explore Historic Queanbeyan," Queanbeyan Museum: Telling Queanbeyan's History, Queanbeyan Museum, accessed 10 July, 2021, <https://queanbeyanmuseum.org.au/explore-historic-queanbeyan/>; Bassani, "International Cultural Heritage Law and World Heritage Listing: A Vehicle for “White Control of Indigenous Heritage”?."; White, "Cathy Freeman and Australia's Indigenous heritage: a new beginning for an old nation at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games," 154-55.

⁴⁷ Dirk H.R. Spennemann, "Your Solution, Their Problem—Their Solution, Your Problem: The Gordian Knot of Cultural Heritage Planning and Management at the Local Government Level in Australia," *disP - The Planning Review* 42, no. 164 (2006): 30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02513625.2006.10556945>.

opposed approaches: one driven by experts and policy, and another driven by community.⁴⁸ The former may tend to underestimate the importance of a place to the community, while the latter may favour 'popular' places and can ignore sites that don't fit the local ideal.

Stephen Harris points to elected members of local government as being both a cause of the problems associated with heritage protection at local levels, as well as victims of opposing expectations. Elected members of Council often have differing views on the value of heritage protection over development.⁴⁹ Furthermore, with the ultimate decision on protection being held by elected representatives, Su Wild-River suggests that even well-informed elected representatives make many small decisions that cumulatively amount to shifts in heritage values.⁵⁰ In relation to Riverside Cemetery, elected representatives must balance the expectations of the community with advice from planning and heritage experts to implement a strategy that is effective in both preserving and utilizing the cemetery, whilst remaining cost effective and ensuring it aligns with community expectations. However, there is little clear evidence of this occurring, with the only known conservation

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Stephen Harris, *Cultural Heritage Protection in Australia - Legislation and Some Comments*, Australia ICOMOS (Sydney, 2002), 86, <http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/545/1/84.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Su Wild-River, *The Role of Local Government in Environmental and Heritage Management*, (Canberra: Australia State of the Environment Committee, January 2006).

management plan being Brendan O’Keefe’s previously mentioned partially complete plan from 2000.

Harris, Wild-River, et al. demonstrate that these issues are common, nearly universal across local government in Australia. Other authors, such as Anna Jorgenson, discuss remarkably similar issues experienced by municipal government in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States.⁵¹ This consensus illustrates that, not only is the balance between conservation and town planning a universal dilemma, it also shows that the Queanbeyan community’s emerging desire to engage with Riverside’s heritage is also universal.

Paradoxically, the use of multiple categories by municipal government or heritage authorities to assist in defining heritage value is designed to make this process more objective, yet the perspective required to utilise these categories can change over time, or be influenced by different cultural lenses. Organising heritage into aspects such as built heritage, natural, environmental, etc should ostensibly make it easier to define why a site such as Riverside is important. Yet the values attributed to these categories are a product of their time and

⁵¹ Anna Jorgenson, Stephen Dobson, and Catherine Heatherington, "Parkwood Springs - A Fringe in Time: Temporality and Heritage in an Urban Fringe," *Sage Journals* 49 (2017), <https://doi.org/https://doi-org.virtual.anu.edu.au/10.1177%2F0308518X17704202>.

circumstances. Riverside's heritage listing was originally prepared in 1997 and is remarkably brief. If this listing was revisited today, in an environment where indigenous heritage and diversity is valued, the importance given to cultural or environmental aspects could potentially be very different. Furthermore, to Indigenous people, heritage not only encapsulates historic and social aspects, but also spiritual and aesthetic values.⁵² Thus, a heritage plan now would include links to the City's past only as one part of a multi-layer approach. Other aspects could include evidence of such issues as precocious multiculturalism, relationships with local Indigenous people, evidence of cultural changes prompted by twentieth century immigration, and the evolution of social identity within the Monaro region.

These observations are not meant to imply that the existing listing is substandard or erroneous, rather to simply reflect that evolving societal values can influence heritage evaluation. Given this relationship between heritage values and the time in which the value is assessed, comparing the heritage value of different sites can be difficult. Sites of a similar nature and age may be perceived as having a different value

⁵² Jane Lennon, "Whose Places? Community Involvement in Protection of Heritage Places in the Landscape" (1999 Fenner Conference on the Environment, Canberra, Australian Academy of Science, 2-5 May 1999).

depending on their cultural or social history. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on the social or cultural aspects of a site varies according to the importance of these aspects at the time of listing. For example, Sydney's Rookwood Cemetery and Necropolis is of a similar age to Riverside, with multiple denominations included in separate plots. However, Rookwood is deemed to be of state significance, rather than local, due largely to its reflection of New South Wales's social history, the number of Victorian markers and their role in facilitating understanding of the state's cultural history, as well as the number of notable burials.⁵³

Riverside's place as a tourist attraction

Although Canberra benefits from the status of being Australia's capital city, Queanbeyan predates its larger neighbour by at least 75 years.

While Canberra was a planned city with a purpose, Queanbeyan grew organically, starting as a small squattage and growing as primary industry and mining developed in the area. Despite only being separated by a short distance, the two cities have developed very different atmospheres,

⁵³ "Heritage Item: Rookwood Cemetery and Necropolis," State Heritage Inventory, Heritage NSW, accessed 19 July, 2021, www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5045470 (Heritage Item ID 5045470).

with Queanbeyan often referred to as ‘Struggletown’ in the past.⁵⁴ However, the histories of the two cities are inextricably linked, with Queanbeyan providing much of the labour and materials for the construction of Canberra’s first buildings.⁵⁵ Much of Queanbeyan’s current prominence as a growth centre reflects this continuing relationship, most particularly in providing an alternative to inflated property markets in the national capital. A prominent lobbyist for the placement of the nation’s capital in the region was Queanbeyan citizen John Gale (often referred to as the “Father of Canberra”), the newspaper proprietor and coroner, and the dimensions of his own memorialization at Riverside have been referred to in earlier chapters.⁵⁶

It could be expected that the focus of Queanbeyan’s heritage tourism would thus be on expressing its own identity, to distinguish itself from Canberra. However, a large part of the *Visit Queanbeyan* campaign focusses on the deeds of John Gale, and his link to Canberra, with Gale’s former houses and offices also being features of a Council-promoted

⁵⁴ Zoya Patel, "I Was Trashed For living in Queanbeyan as a Teenager – Is the Rivalry Finally Over?," *The RiotACT* (Canberra), 3 June 2021, Opinion.; Ian Warden, "Queanbeyan: The Struggle and the Strength," *Brisbane Times* (Brisbane), 28 September 2013, www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/act/queanbeyan-the-struggle-and-the-strength-20130927-2ujxw.html.

⁵⁵ Paul Daley, *Canberra* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2012), 75; Herbert W. H. King, "The Canberra-Queanbeyan Symbiosis: A Study of Urban Mutualism," *Geographical Review* 44, no. 1 (January 1954), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/211788>.

⁵⁶ Adjournment - Centenary of Canberra, (Australian Parliament House: Senate Hansard, 19 June 2007).

walking trail.⁵⁷ This walking trail, and the *Visit Queanbeyan* web page also focus heavily on the history of commerce and business in the city. Other prominent places include churches, schoolhouses and, of course, pubs. The narrative of this walking tour and the broader Council Community Plan is clearly intended to tell the story of the development of business and primary industry within Queanbeyan. Indeed, the dominant theme of the Heritage Walk is one of success – success in building a community, successful entrepreneurs, successful business. While Riverside is a stop on the *Visit Queanbeyan* Heritage Walk, there is no instruction or detail of the people buried therein. Indeed, the most compelling and visual representation of Riverside's heritage value is the afore-mentioned Canberra Tracks signage in and around the cemetery (see [Appendix 3](#)).

Much of Queanbeyan's tourism promotion and marketing, including the Heritage Walk, focusses on the achievements of individuals or the development of community, rather than the physical aspects of the city itself. This may be due to a sense of local pride, a recognition that the city would not be successful without the work of individuals or a broader community. However, this could also reflect a perceived 'culture

⁵⁷ "Queanbeyan Heritage Walk: Start Your Journey Here," Visit Queanbeyan, 2021, accessed 19 July, 2021, <https://visitqueanbeyanpalrang.com.au/explore/queanbeyanheritagewalk/>.

gap' between Queanbeyan and Canberra; to whit, it would be difficult to effectively to market the heritage of a small city so closely aligned to the national capital.

This narrative of success is overwhelmingly white. Despite the presence of Chinese, Middle Eastern and Indigenous communities within the region discussed in earlier chapters, the role of non-Europeans in the development of the community is not explored within the Council's Heritage Walk. Nor is the relationship between the growth of the European settlement and the decline of the local Indigenous population. For example, the Heritage Walk guide states that the Queanbeyan Showground "used to be an Aboriginal camping site of the original occupants of the region, the Ngarigu people", yet there is no exploration of how this campsite became a showground, or the impact of this on the indigenous community.⁵⁸

Such an approach to the success of the European / Christian settlement, omitting the part played in the region's history by non-Europeans, mirrors the demographics of Riverside Cemetery. As stated earlier, Riverside tells a striking narrative of success; success at building a frontier community, success at building industry, successful immigration,

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

and success of Christian values. However, like the Heritage Walk, this narrative omits those who do not fit the previously accepted ideal of a strong, white Christian, literally pushing them outside the boundary, anonymising them.

Given the role played by many of Riverside's residents in forming and developing a community (or communities) as well as a thriving city, and the Cemetery's listing as a place of heritage significance, it is striking that this site is not promoted alongside other places where community and ritual came together. Furthermore, it is notable that, of all the heritage sites listed on the *Visit Queanbeyan* website, Riverside is arguably the one least maintained. Whilst Riverside Cemetery is recognised by the Council as a valuable place of local significance, its place within the community is less clear-cut. With many burials less than a decade old, it remains for many in the community as an active cemetery, a place where they visit to grieve the loss of their loved ones. Furthermore, it is also clearly still a place of reflection and reverence. During one visit, I found numerous small crosses placed around a larger memorial (see Figure 23). Closer investigation showed that the names on these crosses were of ex-servicemen who are commemorated on local walls of remembrance. Thus, Riverside is being unofficially used by community groups or schools for commemorative activities.



Figure 20 - Miniature crosses found in Riverside

There is a substantial understanding within parts of the community of the heritage value of Riverside, but a broader appreciation of the historical value of the site is still lacking. Those crosses – informal yet concerted in their placement – perhaps indicate values within the community that are not fully recognized in official sites. Whilst ghost tours, heritage walks and commemorative activities conducted by historians such as Nichole Overall and Gillian Kelly are valuable in creating an awareness of the site and its links to the past, they do not in and of themselves create a complete understanding of the history of the site. None of these activities promote focus on the creation and evolution of the site, nor an interpretation of the burials and what they represent.

With so many recent burials, the ethics of transforming the cemetery into a shared community space are questionable. As a heritage place, it is an asset to the community, yet remains essentially a Council liability. While it tells a remarkably clear story of the growth of a city through nearly a century and a half, it also tells a complex story of racism and elitism. It is this ambiguous nature that makes Riverside so intriguing, yet so fragile. The site always has been an archive of social and cultural history, with flooding events adding another level of environmental vulnerability, yet it's the site appears to be undervalued and misunderstood. It is still clear that a nineteenth century cemetery retains the power to enthrall, move and engage, and an early twentieth century the capacity to draw out the dimensions and complexities of national development. The inscriptions and artwork that remain provide us with thousands of stories. We may not know who these people are, but because of places like Riverside Cemetery, we can imagine their stories and learn about our own.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Monaghan, "All That is Solid Melts into Air - A Journey Through Canberra's Cemeteries."

Conclusion

Cemetery designs are constantly evolving. From monolithic grave markers of prehistory to efficient and minimalist contemporary lawn cemeteries, the ways any society buries and mourns its dead relentlessly changes over time. As a result, careful analysis of mortuary practices can provide a clear insight into not only how societies died, but also how they lived. By reviewing the manner in which people are not just buried, but also remembered and cherished, it is possible to paint a picture of how earlier communities were structured, who was included, who was not, and how these practices changed over time. Furthermore, by investigating the historical record against the grain, one can use the stories of individuals to explore how different groups, ethnicities and sub-cultures were accepted within communities and begin to see how societal values influenced daily life.

Using Riverside Cemetery as a case study provides the ability to view broader mortuary traditions and practices through a localised lens. Combining archival information with analysis of memorials, grave markers and cemetery infrastructure, we can see the development of community within Queanbeyan, including interactions between different ethnicities and religions, developing acceptance of minorities, and changing attitudes to social issues such as domestic violence and divorce.

This thesis explored the political and religious contentions involved in the creation, development and maintenance of cemeteries. It illustrated the conflicting priorities of the different religious denominations within Riverside Cemetery in creating their individual cemeteries, then in balancing religious views with changing social expectations following war and natural disaster.

Finally, this thesis explores the difficulties in managing heritage cemeteries once they have closed to burials, including balancing the legislative and social obligations of municipal authorities to continue maintaining the site and the expectations of communities to continue using the site to grieve, reflect and learn.

Through examining these issues, it became clear that a series of ambiguities existed in and around Riverside Cemetery. Some of these relate to the implementation of nineteenth century societal values and standards, including the treatment of non-European Christians in a Christian cemetery, or the interrelation between social status and community service. Further ambiguity exists around the interrelation between the religious denominations; what is now one cemetery began as four separate cemeteries with different memorial standards and maintenance processes, ultimately leading to varying standards of quality within the cemetery today.

Riverside Cemetery is also an effective example of the ambiguities surrounding heritage cemeteries in contemporary society. It demonstrates that the value of heritage cemeteries within Australian communities is not clear, even as heritage interest in them has grown. Whilst authorities have an obligation to maintain, even promote heritage sites within the community, the ethics of developing or transforming cemeteries into educational sites or shared spaces is fraught.⁶⁰ Additionally, the growth of “heritage industries” contributes greatly to the awareness of heritage sites within a community, but often do little to add to the historical understanding of such sites.

This research provides clear evidence of the value of Australian cemeteries as a form of historical archive. It also provides new insights into the historiography of early colonial Canberra-Queanbeyan, which will enable further research into the links between mortuary practices and local social / cultural history.

⁶⁰ Christien Klaufus, "Cemetery Modernisation and the Common Good in Bogota," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 37, no. 2 (2018): 221; Anne-Marie Broudehoux and Guylaine Cheli, "Beyond Starchitecture: the Shared Architectural Language of Urban Memorial Spaces," *European Planning Studies* (2021): 4-6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2021.1931665>.

Appendix A – Graves examined to illustrate trends over time periods

	Surname	Given Name	Date of Death	Age	Section
A1	Sutton	Emily Ellen	1 Apr 1860	2y 9m	Anglican
A2	Moore	Alice Emily	10 Dec 1878	Unknown	Anglican
A3	Blewitt	George	21 Oct 1860	41 yrs	Anglican
A4	Bunt	Mary Arnold	24 Jul 1862	47 yrs	Anglican
A5	Wright	Warre Barron	28 Jun 1879	14 yrs	Anglican
A6	Triman	John	3 Sep 1871	36 yrs	Anglican
A7	Hayley	William Foxton	5 Jun 1867	10 yrs	Anglican
A8	Rusten	Mary Ann	5 June 1875	63 yrs	Anglican
A9	Herbert	Percy William Nass	22 May 1865	2y 1m	Anglican
A10	O'Connor	William Richard	15 May 1876	5 yrs	Anglican
A11	Blewitt	Thomas John Roger	22-January-1915	9 yrs	Anglican
A12	Wellman	Harold Cecil	07-April-1915	22 yrs	Anglican
A13	Cartwright	James	30-December-1917	66 yrs	Anglican
A14	Black	Charles	29-January-1918	89 yrs	Anglican
A15	Beatty	Archibald	10-August-1921	91 yrs	Anglican
A16	Collett	Rebecca Emma	02-February-1922	73 yrs	Anglican
A17	Blundell	Lucy	15-January-1924	68 yrs	Anglican
A18	O'Brien	Sydney John (Jack)	17-April-1924	18y 4m	Anglican

A19	Tong	Thomas	30-October-1925	92 yrs	Anglican
A20	Richardson	Sydney Longden	16-October-1918	57 yrs	Anglican
A21	Smith	Ernest Athol	28-January-1950	54 yrs	Anglican
A22	Thompson	Stella	01-November-1950	49 yrs	Anglican
A23	Antonakos	Stoianka Dimitry	01-March-1951	37 yrs	Anglican
A24	Long	Alice Louise	15-December-1952	76 yrs	Anglican
A25	Mayo	Wilhelmina Ellen	05-March-1953	92 yrs	Anglican
A26	Moore	Albert Edward	28-April-1954	70 yrs	Anglican
A27	Lagos	Merle Audrey Freda	17-February-1955	23 yrs	Anglican
A28	Beatty	Ernest	24-October-1956	81 yrs	Anglican
A29	Menge	Norbert Franz	18-May-1957	Unknown	Anglican
A30	Kuleas	Maria	06-January-1959	61 yrs	Anglican
RC1	Devlin	Catherine	1 Nov 1880	64 yrs	Catholic
RC2	Rolfe	Anthony	1 Oct 1876	Unknown	Catholic
RC3	Lonegan	Mary	12 Jun 1873	41 yrs	Catholic
RC4	Tilden	Mary	13 Jan 1866	61 yrs	Catholic
RC5	McDonald	Donald	14 Apr 1866	59 yrs	Catholic
RC6	Moloney	Jeremiah	16 Sep 1872	44 yrs	Catholic
RC7	Lenane	William	19 Aug 1860	40 yrs	Catholic
RC8	Pike	Thomas	20 Dec 1875	21 yrs	Catholic
RC9	Darmody	John	20 Feb 1877	60 yrs	Catholic
RC10	Ryan	Mary Maria	21 Aug 1863	51 yrs	Catholic

RC11	Freebody	Archibald Willaim	26-August-1915	2 yrs	Catholic
RC12	Woods	John	05-September-1916	Unknown	Catholic
RC13	Rolfe	Edmund	07-October-1918	77 yrs	Catholic
RC14	Pike	Ernest Joseph	10-June-1919	42 yrs	Catholic
RC15	Ryan	Norman Keith	23-December-1919	8 yrs	Catholic
RC16	Paynter	Essie	24-October-1920	29 yrs	Catholic
RC17	Ryan	Ellen	29-October-1920	64 yrs	Catholic
RC18	Tong	Mary Sophia	04-December-1921	82 yrs	Catholic
RC19	Fox	Owen	10-May-1922	81 yrs	Catholic
RC20	Lazarus	Harriett E	12-September-1924	100 yrs	Catholic
RC21	Langhorn	John Cornelius	10-November-1950	67 yrs	Catholic
RC22	Morrison	John Foley	11-April-1951	80 yrs	Catholic
RC23	Malarczyk	Anton	06-December-1956	45 yrs	Catholic
RC24	Dzundza	Stepan	08-December-1956	11 mths	Catholic
RC25	Schmidt	Maria	11-March-1960	77 yrs	Catholic
RC26	Coster	Frederick Charles	28-October-1959	60 yrs	Catholic
RC27	Twerdochlib	Roman	16-November-1957	4 yrs	Catholic
RC28	Greer	John Daniel	07-January-1957	47 yrs	Catholic
RC29	Deroczyszyn	Hnat	27-January-1957	49 yrs	Catholic
RC30	Spencer	Thomas	02-October-1954	67 yrs	Catholic
P1	McKeahnie	Jane Elizabeth	22 Sep 1877	2 y 9 m	Presbyterian
P2	Gale	Ettie Ethel Eliza	13 Mar 1878	16 mths	Presbyterian

P3	McDonald	Kenneth	6 Jan 1875	70 yrs	Presbyterian
P4	McInnes	Archibald	6 Jan 1878	36 yrs	Presbyterian
P5	McInnes	Annie	8 Feb 1865	1 yr	Presbyterian
P6	Gale	John Benjamin (Bennie)	20 Jan 1877	14 yrs	Presbyterian
P7	N/A				
P8	N/A				
P9	N/A				
P10	N/A				
P11	McKeahnie	Archibald James	19-July-1915	32 yrs	Presbyterian
P12	Horrock	Andrew Charles	01-July-1916	65 yrs	Presbyterian
P13	Stuart	George	17-August-1917	35 yrs	Presbyterian
P14	Gale	Francis W	01-May-1918	10 mths	Presbyterian
P15	Gale	Loanna	19-July-1919	84 yrs	Presbyterian
P16	Gale	Wilfred Ernest	20-November-1921	47 yrs	Presbyterian
P17	McIntosh	John Malcolm	09-February-1922	70 yrs	Presbyterian
P18	Royal	Eliza	05-September-1923	63 yrs	Presbyterian
P19	McInnes	Sarah Jane	29-August-1925	83 yrs	Presbyterian
P20	Dawson	Annabella	11-December-1922	38 yrs	Presbyterian
P21	Rowley	Arthur Richard	26-July-1950	71 yrs	Presbyterian
P22	McInnes	Daniel Michael	31-January-1951	2 days	Presbyterian
P23	Morton	Elizabeth (Lilly)	09-April-1952	80 yrs	Presbyterian
P24	Eversons	Alfred	27-December-1953	51 yrs	Presbyterian

P25	Edmonds	Alice L	30-November-1954	62 yrs	Presbyterian
P26	Harshaw	Andrew	07-February-1955	76 yrs	Presbyterian
P27	Bell	William Henry	23-December-1956	70 yrs	Presbyterian
P28	Smith	Edward George	08-August-1957	54 yrs	Presbyterian
P29	Reeks	Stanley Bramwell	16-November-1958	64 yrs	Presbyterian
P30	Winter	Elizabeth Alice	09-October-1959	80 yrs	Presbyterian
W1	Cantle	Catherine	24 Sep 1873	33 yrs	Wes
W2	Southwell	Lucy	3 Dec 1879	3 yrs	Wes
W3	Taylor	Leslie Aaron Robert	8 Nov 1880	77 yrs	Wes
W4	N/A				
W5	N/A				
W6	N/A				
W7	N/A				
W8	N/A				
W9	N/A				
W10	N/A				
W11	Cooper	Clara	20-March-1915	40 yrs	Wes
W12	Harman	John James McInnes	07-December-1915	19 y 7 m	Wes
W13	Southwell	Lewis	15-July-1916	48 yrs	Wes
W14	Taylor	Aaron	09-April-1917	57 yrs	Wes
W15	Edlington	Gordon Leslie	20-June-1921	2 mths	Wes
W16	Southwell	Mary Ann	14-September-1922	70 yrs	Wes

W17	Shepherd	S L Barney	15-January-1925	36 yrs	Wes
W18	N/A				
W19	N/A				
W20	Taylor	Samuel John	26-February-1950	53 yrs	Wes
W21	Gregory	Vera Gladys	21-June-1957	62 yrs	Wes
W22	Taylor	H C (Henry Charles)	06-October-1958	67 yrs	Wes
W23	Moore	Jean Alma	13-May-1959	61 yrs	Wes
W24	N/A				
W25	N/A				
W26	N/A				
W27	N/A				
W28	N/A				
W29	N/A				
W30	N/A				

Appendix B – Detailed images of specified grave markers

The following graves are specifically described in the body of this thesis. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, not all of these graves could be photographed.

All photographs taken by the author.

Abdoo, Joseph



Bingley, Charles



Blundell, Flora



Braithwaite, Thomas

Not photographed

Collett, Rebecca



Deenihan, Fr Patrick



Evans, Edward



Faunce, Alured



Gale, Susan



McDonald, Donald



O'Neill, Liam

Not photographed

Rolfe, Anthony



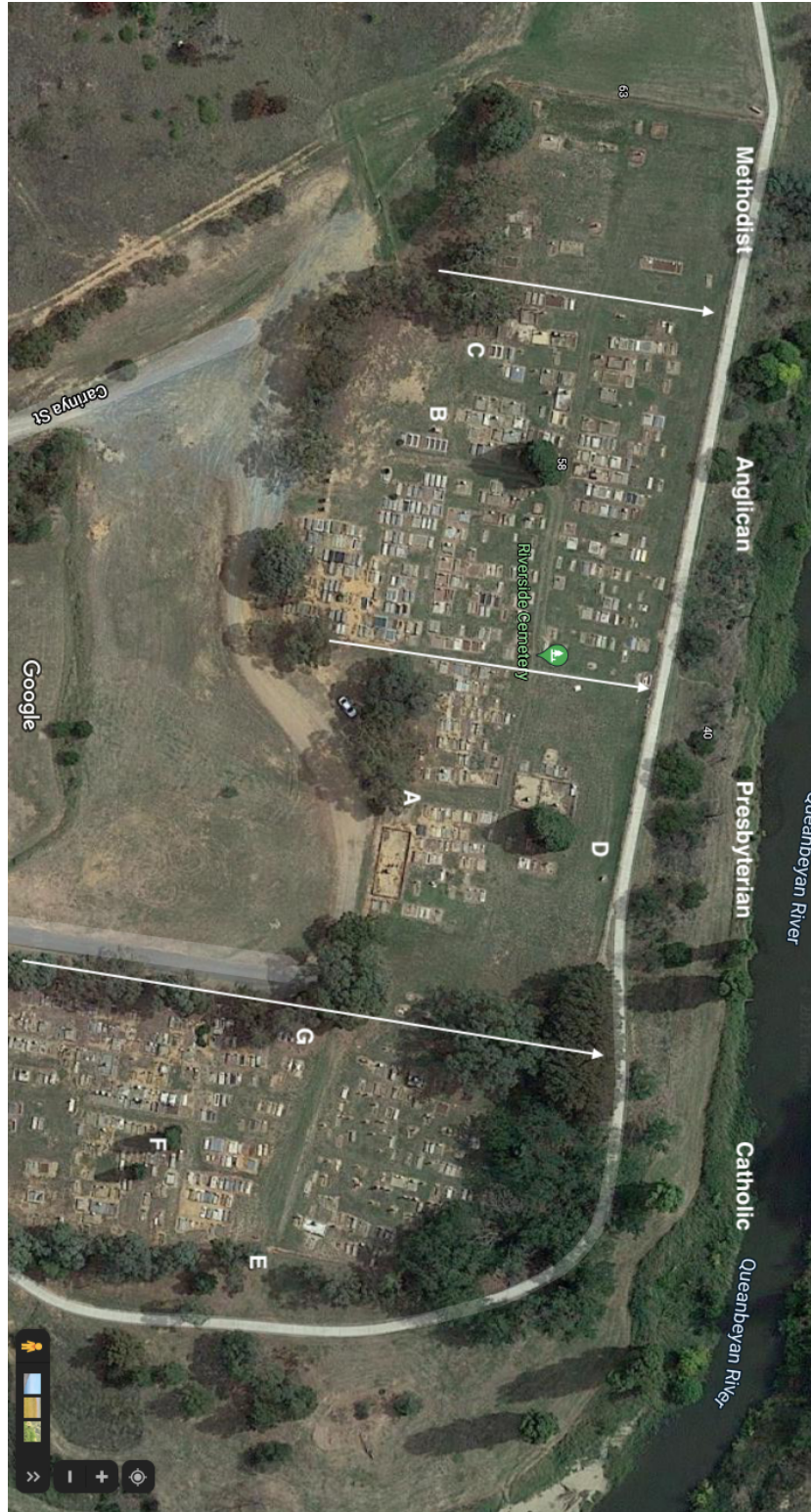
Rolfe, Margaret

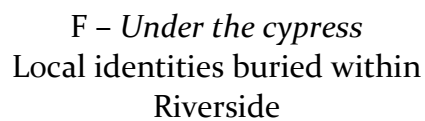
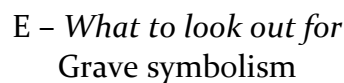
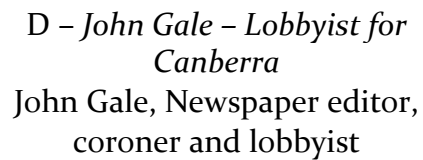
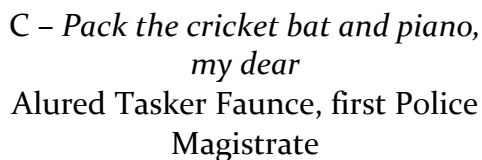
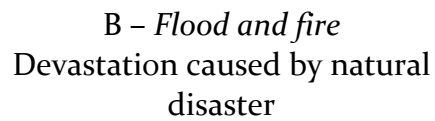
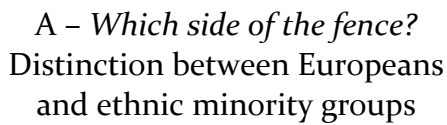


Ryan, Mary



Appendix C - Canberra Tracks information panels







G – Main entrance panel

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