

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** CAVENDISH CEMETERY (OLD)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Scott Street (extension) CAVENDISH

**STUDY NUMBER:** 233

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** Cavendish

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 432 C; VicRoads 228 7H; located at the western end of the extension of Scott Street on the floodplain beside the Wannon River about 2kms west of the centre of the township.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Cavendish Cemetery (Old), Scott Street, Cavendish

**Image Date:** 16/11/03

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the surviving graves, monuments, fences, etc., plantings and the whole of the cemetery reserve.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Old Cavendish Cemetery is located on the banks of the Wannon River, approximately 1.5 kilometers west of the centre of the township of Cavendish. The site is approximately 0.7 hectares of sloping grassland with 32 above ground graves or headstones. There is a boundary planting of Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*), two mature Blue Gums (*Eucalyptus globulus*). A typical cemetery planting, an Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta') is planted on one of the graves, and a variety of different perennial plantings have escaped from individual graves sites to spread over the site. Some of these include Sweetpeas, Roses, Belladonna Lilly and Iris.

## HISTORY:

The passing of the English Metropolitan Internments Act granted the Board of Health in London to provide burial grounds. This seems to have influenced legislation in the Australian colonies. Cemeteries were usually developed in association with particular churches or as a result of public meetings of concerned citizens. "In 1854, an 'Act for the Establishment and Management of Cemeteries in the Colony of Victoria' was passed by the Victorian Government forming the basis of cemetery management as we know it today. The Government had the power to appoint and remove trustees and lend or pay money for the establishment of cemeteries. The trustees were charged with the responsibilities to construct structures and avenues; impose rules and regulations to manage and protect the cemeteries; allow ministers of religion free access and religious denominations to build mortuary chapels; have the right to veto and remove inappropriate vaults and monuments; and to keep accounts and statements" (Sagazio, 13). The passing of the 'Municipal Institutions Establishment Act' in 1854 became the basis of Victoria's local government. Local councils were given control over amenities including roads, bridges, streets, sanitation and public health. The 'Public Health Act' was also passed in 1854 and it was envisaged that local councils would also have the responsibility for management of public cemeteries. "Under the provisions of the Public Health Act 1889 the Minister for Health and the Department of Public Health became responsible for the management of cemeteries and the responsibility has remained within the Health portfolio since that time" (Sagazio, 15).

Most small suburban and country cemeteries were simple in layout with graves in straight lines in either a grid or a design of winding paths. The latter was an influence from English cemetery design, particularly from John Claudius Loudon, and to a lesser extent American cemetery design, from such landscape garden designers as Calvert and Vaux. Plantings were typically those with a funereal iconography such as *Cupressus funebris*, *C. sempervirens*, various *Pinus* species, Laurels, Yews and Junipers. Their common quality was their evergreen and sombre foliage. In special cases trees, shrubs or minor plants were planted with specific association for the deceased. Cemeteries were subdivided into sections according to the major Christian denominations. In rare cases there were also sections for non-Christians, such as the Jews.

The township of Cavendish was first known as 'Wilton' until about 1858, when Thomas Ham surveyed it, and renamed the township 'Cavendish', the family name of the Duke of Devonshire (Rowe, et. al., 15). The Wilton Cemetery, as shown on the 1850 Wade map was located to the north of the present township of Cavendish, where later the site of a tannery was developed. The cemetery was gazetted in 1861, and consisted of an 8 acre reserve, set out with sections for Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Independents and other Denominations (Rowe, et. al, 18). Two graves, with a marble headstone remain on the site of the first Cavendish (Wilton) Cemetery, that of Eliza Donelan, aged 1 (buried 1875) and Viola Donelan (buried 1886), aged 15 weeks. They were the daughters of Robert and Bridget Donelan, the owners of the Karabeal Inn, located on the south side of the Dunkeld Cavendish Road, about 12 kilometers south east of Cavendish.

The other burial site for the Cavendish area was used from the 1850s, and is what is now referred to as 'Old Cavendish Cemetery', located just west of the township, on the banks of the Wannon River. It is mentioned as a 'burial ground', and noted that it is 'Subject to Flood' on Henry Wade's 1850 survey of Wilton, and Thomas Ham's 1858 survey of the Township of Cavendish. Rowe et. al., 21). Probably due to the close proximity to

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the township, it seems that the informal 'burial ground' on the banks of the Wannan was the preferred site for the Cavendish Cemetery, and in 1877, the Cavendish Cemetery Committee wrote to the Surveyor General requesting a two acre reservation "to fence in, as graves are left unprotected and it is the unanimous wish of the residents and friends of those buried there, that the small reservation asked for might be granted in order that graves might be enclosed. Already there are considerably over a hundred persons buried there...the ground is part of the town common" (DSE, in Rowe, et. al, 22). The Cemetery Reserve of one acre, two roods and 36 perches was temporarily reserved as a site for the Cavendish Cemetery (also known as the Cavendish settler's cemetery) in 1877. The Inspector of the Board of Health surveyed the Cavendish Cemetery in 1895, and a sketch from this time shows that there were central gravelled paths which intersected off centre, forming a cross. the paths created four denominational areas divided into Presbyterian, Catholic, Protestant sections. The first burial in the Cavendish (Old) Cemetery was for John Walker in November-December, 1850, and the last recorded burial was in July 1922, for Mathilda Yates (Rowe et. al, 26).

It is not known when the first concerns were raised regarding sanitation and the cemeteries proximity to the Wannan River. In 1894, the Health Officer, A. Bennett inspected the Old Cemetery in response to a request from the Shire of Dundas. His recommendation was not to re-locate the cemetery. His arguments for were that the water of the Wannan was not used immediately for many miles downstream, that any nitrogenous or other material would filter a good deal before reaching the river, and that a substantial amount of money had already been spent on beautification and maintenance of the Cemetery. Despite this report, the Board of Health stated that the site should be given up and a new site obtained, John Taylor, who made the 1895 survey of the Cavendish (Old) Cemetery stated "It is certainly a most undesirable site for burial purposes and should never have been granted" (DSE, in Rowe, et. al., 31).

Two suggestions of land suitable for the new cemetery were put forward; one was the early Wilton Cemetery, reserved and gazetted in 1861 (also known as the Tannery Cemetery), the other being the site of the Cavendish (New) Cemetery. The Cavendish Cemetery Trust, and the townspeople clearly did not want to move their Cemetery, although the Board of Health demanded it. Finally, in 1906, the Cemetery Trust accepted the decision to open a new Cemetery, and applied for funds for fencing and laying out the new site. As the Trust did not have the funds to prepare the site for burials, and the old Cemetery was condemned, the Trust were missing out on burial funds, as local people were buried elsewhere. Funds were eventually supplied, and burials proceeded from 1908. The Cavendish (New) Cemetery still accepts burials

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 9: Marking the phases of life

9.7 Dying

9.7.1 Dealing with human remains

9.7.3 Remembering the dead

## **CONDITION:**

The condition of the cemetery grounds and graves is good.

## **INTEGRITY:**

Excellent degree of integrity

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The Old Cavendish Cemetery is located approximately 1.5 kilometres west of the centre of Cavendish, on the banks of the Wannan River. There are a number of graves dating from 1850 to 1922, even though the cemetery was condemned in 1895. The boundary is defined by Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*) and two mature specimens of Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*). The cemetery is in good condition and retains an excellent degree of integrity.

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## How is it Significant?

The Old Cavendish Cemetery is of historical, social and architectural significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

## What is significant?

The New Cavendish Cemetery is of historical significance as an enduring record of those who have lived and died in the community, as a reflection of passing phases, ways of life and death, particular events, and as a source of documentary evidence. The cemetery has further historical significance for the burials of individuals and families who made important contributions to their community. The Cemetery is of social significance for reflecting the customs and tastes of the community, for reflecting different religious values, and for reflecting different economic and social status. It is also important as a place of homage and of passive recreation. The New Cavendish Cemetery is of architectural significance for its range of tombstones, memorials and iconography reflecting the aesthetics of different periods and groups within the community. It is also of interest for its overall design and position within the broader landscape.

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## COMPARISON:

135 Coleraine Cemetery, Lower Hilgay Road, Coleraine  
180 Tarrayoukyan Cemetery, Tarrayoukyan Rd, Tarrayoukyan  
041 Glenthompson Cemetery, Scott Street, Glenthompson  
130 Balmoral Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Balmoral  
261 Byaduk Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Byaduk  
291 New Hamilton Lawn Cemetery, Henty Highway, Hamilton

**ASSESSED BY:** AEN

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

12-Dec-03

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

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## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Celestina Sagazio, ed.	Cemeteries, Our Heritage	1992	13 & 15
David Rowe, Wendy Jacobs & Susie Zada	Old Cavendish Cemetery: Cavendish	2003	var.