

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT



ALPINE SHIRE

name: Freeburgh Cemetery (Burial Ground)
Address: Great Alpine Road FREEBURGH
Place Type: Cemetery/Graveyard/Burial Ground
Citation Date: 2007

File No: AS0463

Significance Level: Local



Freeburgh Cemetery (Burial Ground)

**Recommended
Heritage Protection**

VHR -
HI -
PS -



History and Historical Context

Gold diggings probably began at Freeburgh shortly after Bright, but little is known of its very early history and it is assumed that it began as an alluvial mining camp in about 1854. Chinese miners were working there in the late 1850s and a Chinese camp was mentioned in January 1860.

The key event in the transformation to a township was the discovery of the first of a number of rich reefs, the Woolshed Reef, in May 1860. Further reefs were quickly found, and two adjacent, vibrant settlements sprang up, each based around a hotel and a crushing machine. The upper township was Woolshed, also known as Woolshed Flat. Frederick Dibbin was a member of the party which discovered the Woolshed reef.

Frederick and Emily Dibbin lived in the vicinity of Woolshed Reef for several years. In 1861, their son William Henry drowned in the water race running past Barnett's Restaurant. He was buried in a bush grave where later three more of Dibbin's children were to be buried. After mining, the Dibbins family turned to farming and grazing and became well known as mountain cattlemen, taking their cattle up to the high country via Dungeys Track. They built a log hut on the upper reaches of the Cobungra River.

It is believed that there are more unrecorded burials in the cemetery and this site has been referred to as the unofficial burial ground in Freeburgh. Other burials may include the 8-year old Robert Winter in 1860, and Ah Le Ung in 1874 (Talbot 1999, p140). The burial ground was locally known as Deadmans Gully and the small childrens' graves were originally surrounded by picket fences, still visible in the 1930s. One former resident remembers a white quartz boulder marking one grave. At least one Chinese person was also believed to be buried there (pers comm - Ref 3). This may be Ah Le Ung, mentioned by Talbot (1999).

In 1972 the Freeburgh cemetery was marked with two memorial cairns and plaques, by the Harrieville Historical Society.

References:

Talbot D, 1999, Grave Recollections, Diann Talbot, p. 140

Lloyd B, 1987, Bright Gold, Histec Publications, p. 82

Mrs A Smith, Albury NSW & Mrs B Beaumont, Narooma NSW, 2007, Pers comm, January 2007

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

3.16 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure.

9.7.3 Remembering the dead

Description

Physical Description

The Freeburgh Cemetery or burial ground is located on the side of a steep gully above the Great Alpine Road. There are no visible graves or headstones, although some faint traces of cut 'benches' may represent graves. Two stone cairns with plaques have been erected by the Harrieville Historical Society in 1966, one by the side of the Great Alpine Road and the other up the gully at the cemetery site.

The plaque at the cemetery reads:

Children of Frederick William and Emily Dibbin were buried here

William Henry died 3rd December 1861 aged 3 years

Arthur William died 20th October 1867 aged 10 weeks

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Fanny died 3rd November 1868 aged 2 years

Charles Frederick died 29th July 1868 12 years

Catherine Elizabeth died 3rd April 1875 aged 2 years

Physical Condition

Poor archaeological condition

Usage / Former Usage

Early 1860s (+late 1850s?) - early 1870s: unofficial burial ground

Intactness

Fair - no structural fabric remains, but state of preservation is typical of non-official burials of this early period, consistent with the effects of nearly 150 years of exposure to the elements.

Recommended Management

Where possible, participate in any Departmental processes relating to activities in the graves area, particularly during bushfire events, to assist in reducing chances of inadvertent disturbance of the graves areas, or damage to the two monuments.

Comparative Analysis

The burial ground at Freeburgh is one of several known in the Alpine Shire. The others are at Germantown, Buckland (a number), and Tawonga (Tawonga Station graves). Only the Freeburgh and Germantown burial grounds have been marked and acknowledged in modern times, while the Tawonga graves are the only ones which retain structural fabric. Numerous other lone graves/burials are known in the Alpine Shire, all dating to the very earliest eras of European settlement of the various parts of the Shire.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Freeburgh Cemetery is a small unofficial burial ground located up a steep gully above the the Great Alpine Road. Four children from the Dibbin family were buried there, the first in 1861. The site is marked with two stone cairns with plaques, one by the roadside at the bottom on the gully. The second cairn is up a steep gully at the site of the burials of the Dibbin's children, a local pioneer family. The site is considered to Freeburgh's first burial ground, and more burials are believed to have taken place there, including at least one Chinese person.

How is it significant?

The Freeburgh cemetery is of historical and social significance to the Alpine Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Freeburgh Cemetery is historically and socially significant to the Alpine Shire and the local community as a poignant reminder of the hardships face by pioneering families in the district.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE COURSE, OR PATTERN, OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

A.1 Importance in the evolution of Australian flora, fauna, landscapes or climate.



A.2 Importance in maintaining existing processes or natural systems at the regional or national scale.

A.3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscapes or cultural features.

A.4 Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, State, region or community.

Criterion B

ITS POSSESSION OF UNCOMMON, RARE OR ENDANGERED ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

B.1 Importance for rare, endangered or uncommon flora, fauna, communities, ecosystems, natural landscapes or phenomena, or as a wilderness.

B.2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practised, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest

Criterion C

ITS POTENTIAL TO YIELD INFORMATION THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

C.1 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of Australian natural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality, reference or benchmark site.

C.2 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of Australia

Criterion D

ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF: (I) A CLASS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL PLACES; OR (II) A CLASS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

D.1 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of landscapes, environments or ecosystems, the attributes of which identify them as being characteristic of their class.

D.2 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, philosophy, custom, process, land use, function, design or technique).

Criterion E

ITS IMPORTANCE IN EXHIBITING PARTICULAR AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS VALUED BY A COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP

E.1 Importance for a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community

Criterion F

ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING A HIGH DEGREE OF CREATIVE OR TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT AT A PARTICULAR PERIOD

F.1 Importance for its technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement

Criterion G

ITS STRONG OR SPECIAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH A PARTICULAR COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP FOR SOCIAL, CULTURAL OR SPIRITUAL REASONS

G.1 Importance as a place highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, symbolic, cultural, educational, or social associations.

Criterion H

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ITS SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE LIFE OR WORKS OF A PERSON, OR GROUP OF PERSONS, OF IMPORTANCE IN AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

H.1 Importance for close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, State or region

Recommendations 2007

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No