

**Place name** Alberton Cemetery

**Survey Date:** 31/07/2002

**Other name**

**Id:** 732

**Street** 214 Yarram-Port Albert Road

**Last Update** 29/08/2006

**Locality** Alberton

**Postcode** 3971

**Official Locality**

**Property No**

**Local Government Area** Wellington Shire

**Precinct:** Not in precinct

**Easting** 5723500

**Northing** 471300

**Map** 8220-4-2

**Workshop number**

**Workshop votes**

**Field survey number**

**Community priority**

**Designer**

**Builder**

**Ownership**

**Built Date** c.1850

**Change Date**

**Description** The Alberton Cemetery is situated on the west side of Port Albert Road. The reserve occupies a rectangular allotment of approximately 26 acres with the Albert River as its rear boundary. At the entrance, a picturesque gate house is located with its scalloped gable valences, double doors and a verandah with scalloped end-boards. It is likely that the gatehouse was designed by the trust's architect of late in the 19th century, George Hastings (Layout plans of the cemetery in 1895 prepared by George Hastings are held by Alberton Cemetery Trustees, however, the gatehouse not shown) (Butler, 1982:107-8). A new similar shelter has been added nearby (Butler 2002).

Historic graves include Robert McClure's grave (buried 1842) (which was pictured by Cox early this century with painted decoration to its unusual headstone), Ronald McKenzie's obelisk in memory of his father and mother and five dead children, the Gellion family grave which contains David Turnbull's pointed-arch granite headstone and Catherine Anderson's (1855) finely carved freestone memorial. Masons, whose work is evident, include Huxley, Parker and Co. of Melbourne (freestone, 1872) and Marsh and Grout Wrought-Iron fencing survives, whilst a single timber picket fence of 1877 is in disrepair. Memorials, particularly in the Old Section are in varying states of destruction and decay and it is evident that many have already disappeared (Butler, 1982:107-8).

The notable Canary Island pines that once lined the main pathway through the cemetery have been cut down (stumps remain) with one exception. New related picket gateway and weatherboard shelter, new rocks and pressure treated pine markers to compartments. Some Monterey pines remain at the perimeter. The early memorials are gradually losing their inscriptions, some have been pushed over, some vandalised (Butler, 2002).

There are remnants of indigenous vegetation identified in 1857 at the riverbank and scattered throughout the site. This includes Casuarina stricta (Weeping Sheoak) in clumps and Leptospermum varieties (Tea Tree), Acacia mearnsii (Black Wattle), A. implexa and Myoporum insulare (Boobialla). An effective ground cover of Watsonia is also spread through the reserve, covering large areas which appear to be unmarked graves in the middle section (Butler, 1982:107-8)

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

A Register of the National Estate Study, 'Cemeteries of Victoria' (LP Planning), lists 'A -Class' public cemeteries in the State; the Alberton cemetery is earlier than the dates cited for first burials or gazettal of reserves, (where stated) and, given the dismantling of the Old Melbourne cemetery, only cemeteries such as at Portland, Geelong or Port Fairy would represent the same pre-gold rush period as at Alberton. (Alberton was not considered in this report). The Alberton Cemetery is of immense historical importance to the State (Butler 1982:107-9).

**SOURCES**

Butler, Graeme, 'Port Albert Conservation Study', 1982  
Graeme Butler & Associates, 'Alberton-Port Albert Heritage Review', 2002

**Condition**

**Integrity**

Public	Building Cemetery Tree(s)
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<b>National Themes</b>	<b>Local Themes</b>
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**History**

Charles Tyers, Commissioner of Crown Lands at Alberton, surveyed the first cemetery site (described as part of Crown allotments 54-5), late in 1846 and despatched it to Melbourne in January 1847 (1). This was the site of Robert McClure's grave (buried 21/3/1842), placed on the banks of the Albert River, just over a mile south of Alberton (2). The reserve was extended, with the gazettal of 1860, to meet the Port Albert Road which, by then, had been cleared (3). The existing vegetation of 1857 was described as 'Thornbush, Lightwood and She Oak' which grew in 'Very Good Black Soil' as contrasted with the morass to the north and the dense tea tree scrub to the south (13).

In 1857, comment was made by Jacob Ferris, editor of the Gippsland Guardian, that the cemetery was neglected and was in need of fencing and planting; there were no trustees as yet (4). Five months later, six trustees were announced for the Alberton Cemetery viz. Cpt. Carey R.M., Edward T. Newton, M. Goy, John Gellion, Edward O'Meara and Edward Buckley who represented the Church of England, Presbyterian and Catholic, respectively. Trustees were announced also for the Tarraville cemetery which was located on the Tarraville - Port Albert 'water road' (5). This reserve was eventually sold to V. W. B. Langhorne in 1932. (6). Despite one change of a trustee, when Edgar Slade replaced Cpt. Carey in 1858, no works were undertaken until 1860, when tenders were called by secretary, E. T. Newton, for fencing the reserve (8). Ferris again called for some beautification of the reserve, four months later, when he announced that Dr Mueller, the government botanist, had offered to provide plants and seeds for the ornamentation of public reserves in the Colony (9). He had already expressed the need for 'neatly kept grounds with avenues adorned with flowers and shrubs..' (10) Newton called for further tenders at the end of 1861 to survey the laying out of the reserve, into denominations, whilst in the following month, a price was requested for part clearance of the reserve, (11) presumably the extension of the Alberton Road, and in the following year a paling fence was built on the north, side (12). This may have signalled the establishment of planting and the need for a more substantial fence.

Original burials were made possible by boat, via the Albert River, and although Government roads bordered the reserve, on the south and east, these were impassable due to areas of swamp. Hence the present long, winding, internal access road serves groups of graves dating from the earliest at the river to more recent burials afforded by road access.

The following was written of the cemetery early in the twentieth century:... 'the Cemetery is reached, and from the oldest portion of it, a lovely prospect is obtained, and there must have been a good deal of poetical sentiment in those rough old pioneers when they chose such a beautiful spot... wild flowers are numerous, and amid the rank grass surrounding the graves, with their broken tombstones lying about, grow thickly numbers of canna lilies of the most brilliant red, in marked contrast with the sombre tone of the dilapidated and worm-eaten wooden fences which surround the graves, some of them surmounted by wooden tablets upon which are roughly inscribed characters that in many instances are now indecipherable.. The grave of John Martin, who dropped dead upon the Yarram Yarram road on the 26th of August, 1883, offers a striking contrast to some of the graves adjoining, which are thickly planted with flowers, whereas this is overgrown with grass, without any floral decoration save a small wild red rose ... for it was John Martin who introduced the dog rose into the settlement on his arrival' (15).

**REFERENCES**

This place was originally identified and assessed by Butler (1982:107-9), who cites the following sources listed in this report:

- 1) CPO A14B, 6/1/1847
- 2) Rev. Cox: photo of headstone
- 3) G.G. 1860, p958
- 4) G.G. 13/2/1857
- 5) Alberton East, CA92
- 6) G.G. 13/12/1858
- 7) G.G. 17/2/1860
- 8) G.G. 18/6/1860
- 9) G.G. 13/2/1857
- 10) G.G. 13/12/1861
- 11) G.G. 18/7/1862
- 12) CPO A-8
- 13) Layout plans held by Alberton Cemetery Trustees, by George Hastings 1895; gatehouse not shown
- 14) C. of V. V3, p623

Heritage Protections Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
Victorian Heritage Register	601814		File only

## National Estate

## Research Required

**Recommendations** Documentation, assessment and significance are sufficient to enable this place to be proposed for immediate protection under the Planning Scheme.

Council should immediately seek entry of the cemetery on the Australian Heritage Commission National Estate Register and the Historic Buildings Register of Victoria. From this basis, seek grants or loans for headstones, fencing and landscape restoration (Butler 1982:108-9).

Council should support the cemetery trustees maintenance of buildings, headstones, fencing and landscape, particularly in perpetuation of the major elements of the latter (pines). (For example, sheep grazing is a low hazard form of ground cover control: water reticulation for the sheep could be undertaken by Council. Council should assist in the micro-filming of the trustees records (registers), indexes, layout plans). The Victorian Genealogical Society has headstone inscriptions taken at 1974, and a copy of the burial register 1849-59. The index and other registers exist and should be copied (Butler 1982:108-9).

Recommendations 2002

Recommended for inclusion in the Wellington Planning Scheme heritage overlay schedule, with potential for the Victorian Heritage Register (Butler, 2002).

## Fieldwork priority?

**Stage 1 Ranking** Assessed: Port Albert Herit **Stage 2 priority** Planning Scheme: Individua

**Final Ranking** State Significance **Final Recommendation**

**Statement of significance** The Alberton Cemetery, established c.1850, at 214 Yarram-Port Albert Road is of State significance historically:

- for the burial sites that are among the earliest in the State, comparing with cemeteries such as at Portland, Geelong and Port Fairy in representation of the pre-gold rush period in the Colony. (RNE criterion C.2)
- for the historical importance of the headstone inscriptions and form to Gippsland and the history of its settlement. (RNE criterion A.4)
- for the memorial groupings that show the change in access to the site from river to road. (RNE criterion B.2)
- for the early date and fine craftsmanship of many of the memorials and the rarity of some of the surviving timber structures and headstones. (RNE criteria E.1 & F.1)
- as a picturesque example of a nineteenth century cemetery with a notable gatehouse (RNE criterion E.1)

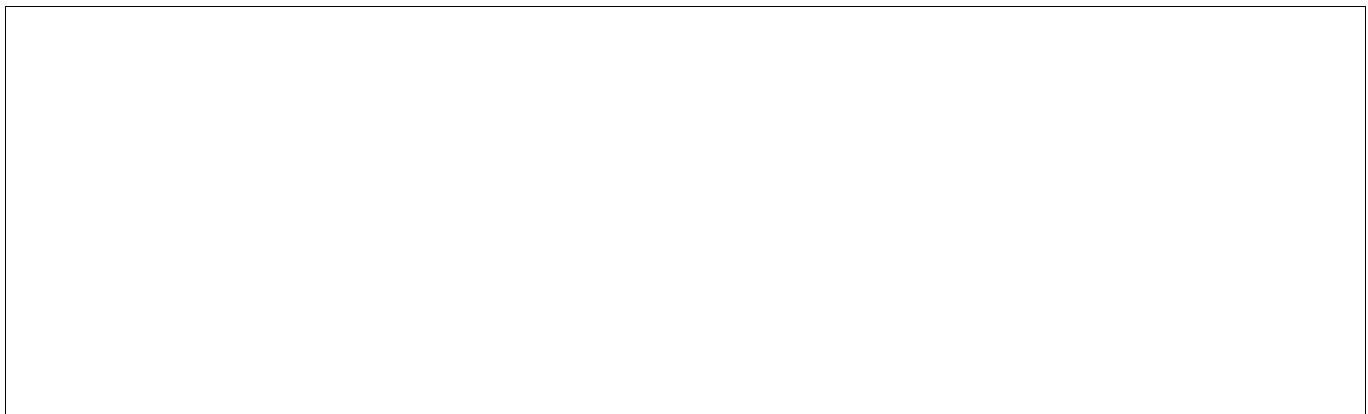
## Extent of designation

### Informant

**Notes** CA 54-5, 26a. 3.0

### Follow up

**Bibliography** Butler, Graeme, (1982), Port Albert Conservation Study, South Gippsland Publishing Company, Foster, 107-109  
Context Pty Ltd, (May 2005), Wellington Shire Heritage Study: Stage 1  
Graeme Butler & Associates, (July 2002), Alberton - Port Albert Heritage Review (Wellington Heritage Study)



Yarram Port Albert Rd 0214 Alberton Cemetery3, ID 732iii.jpg

Jason Pullman

14/08/2006



Yarram Port Albert Rd 0214 Alberton Cemetery1, ID 732i.JPG

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Yarram Port Albert Rd 0214 Alberton Cemetery2, ID 732ii.JPG

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Update Yarram-Port Albert Road 0214, ID732iv.jpg

Graeme Butler

1/01/1982



■ Gatehouse, probably designed by George Hastings

Update Yarram-Port Albert Road 0214, ID 732v.jpg

Graeme Butler

1/01/1982



■ Margaret Anderson (d. 21.1.1877), wife light keeper; mason, Marsh Groat & Co., Mfulb.

Update Yarram-Port Albert Road 0214, ID 732vi.jpg

Graeme Butler

1/01/1982

