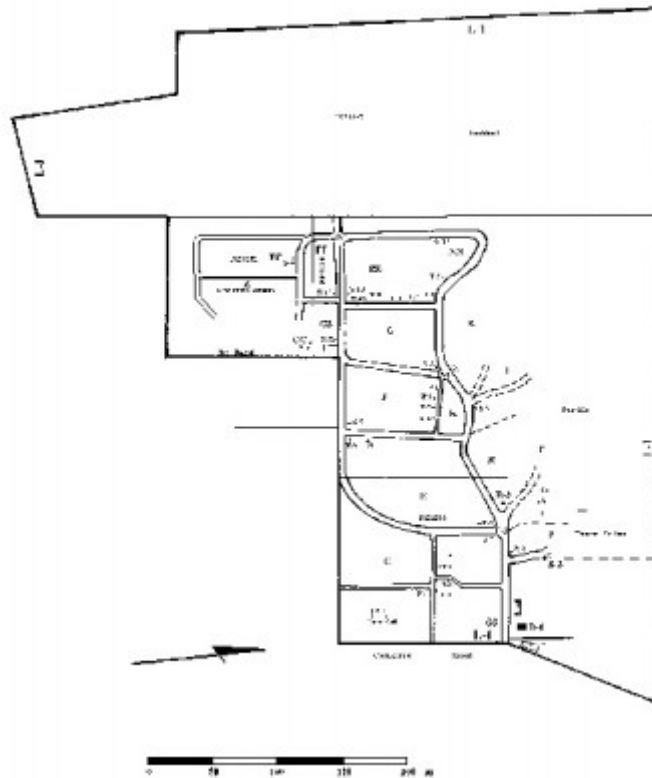


# CASTLEMAINE PUBLIC CEMETERY (CAMPBELL'S CREEK)



CASTLEMAINE PUBLIC CEMETERY  
(CAMPBELL'S CREEK) SOHE 2008



castlemaine cemetery extent of registration

## Location

CEMETERY ROAD CASTLEMAINE, Mount Alexander Shire

## **Municipality**

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1776

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO985

## **VHR Registration**

February 18, 1999

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - July 1, 1999

What is significant?

The first Castlemaine cemetery occupied a small area in the fledgling township that was soon straddled by Templeton Street. After a great deal of controversy a site for a new cemetery was chosen outside the municipal boundary, at Campbell's Creek. The first interment at this site was in 1852, with the original four acres being enclosed the following year. Amid further controversy, in December 1856 the bodies from the old cemetery were exhumed and re-interred at Campbell's Creek. In April 1858 the cemetery was placed under the care of trustees, and this move initiated improvements; between this date and October 1859 a layout plan was adopted (July 1859). A sexton's office was built, a carriageway was constructed, and each religious denomination was allotted its section, with the Chinese compartment being enclosed by a rail fence. About 107 footstones survive in the Chinese section. By 1859 the Chinese community had also erected a building for performing their burial rites, and the burning tower which survives in the Chinese section may indeed be this structure. Some of these design elements are detailed on a large plan of the cemetery dated December 1875 drawn by M Brown, District Mining Surveyor and Registrar of Castlemaine remains in the office. Throughout the twentieth century many older elements within the cemetery were renewed; old wooden water channels and bridges were replaced by concrete, senescent trees were replanted, the front wooden fence replaced by pipe and wire (1957). The old sexton's residence replaced and a lawn cemetery was introduced in 1961 resulting in the transferral of many cemetery monuments.

How is it significant?

The Castlemaine Cemetery is of historical, social, architectural, and aesthetic significance to Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Castlemaine Cemetery is historically and socially important for its direct association with one of Australia's significant episodes of immigration. Within a decade Victorian gold had drawn 600,000 immigrants, tripling the entire population of Australia, with the Mount Alexander diggings at Castlemaine being one of the largest and richest goldfields in the colonies. This influx is demonstrated by the large numbers of burials and memorials

dating from the 1850s and 60s, which provide information on many immigrants, including the Chinese alluvial miners who arrived in large numbers during this period. The development of the Castlemaine Cemetery and the construction of the sexton's office in the late 1850s provide physical evidence of the permanent public facilities and structures which replaced the ephemeral arrangements of early goldfield days. The c1875 layout of the cemetery is historically important for its rarity and for the information it yields about nineteenth century cemetery design. The graves are important for the information they provide about burial customs and patterns.

The Harcourt granite War Memorial erected in 1932 by the DADS Association, Castlemaine, is of significance to the community and commemorates servicemen who fought in the war.

The Castlemaine Cemetery is architecturally important for its rare structures, being the sexton's office, and Chinese funerary tower, both of which are rare in the stock of nineteenth century structures that survive in Victoria's cemeteries. The office has further importance for exhibiting the principal characteristics of a typical mid-nineteenth century sexton's building, and is the oldest and best surviving example in this State of a cemetery building of this type. The cemetery memorials, tombstones, all of the Chinese footstones and other funerary art are collectively important for their design characteristics and craftsmanship. Also of note are the cast iron and metal alloy denomination and section markers.

The Castlemaine Cemetery is aesthetically important as an early example in Victoria of a cemetery influenced by Romantic and Picturesque ideals which gained worldwide popularity in the early to mid-nineteenth century. This is demonstrated in the layout, which picturesquely rises through the clefts in the surrounding hills, and in the pattern book-style Picturesque sexton's office. Other notable features contributing to the layout are bulbs and several tree species which include *Cupressus sempervirens* x3, *Chamaecyparis funebris* x 2, *Pinus pinea* x 2, a *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, *Cupressus lusitanica* var. *benthamii* x 2, and rare *Arbutus x andrachnoides* x2.

## Permit Exemptions

<span class="c1"><br /> Policy:<br /> The importance of the cemetery lies in the presence of a rare sexton's office, Chinese funerary tower and collection of about 107 footstones in the Chinese section. The picturesque layout dating from 1875 or earlier, section markers and tree planting, represents an important nineteenth century cemetery landscape.<br /> <br /> General Conditions:<br /> 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.<br /> 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.<br /> 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.<br /> 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.<br /> Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.<br /> <br /> General:<br /> \* Interments and erection of monuments, reuse of graves, and exhumation of remains in accordance with the Cemeteries Act 1958, and amendments.<br /> \* Stabilisation, restoration, and repair of monuments and the Chinese footstones.<br /> \* Emergency and safety works to secure the site, and prevent damage and injury to property and the public.<br /> \* Monument works undertaken in accordance with Australian Standard, Headstones and Cemetery Monuments AS 4204.<br /> \* Removal of buildings not registered under the Heritage Act.<br /> \* Earthworks greater than 3 metres from registered buildings and structures.<br /> \* Repainting registered structures in the same colour as previous painted.<br /> <br /> Exterior of Sexton's Office:<br /> \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.<br /> \* Painting of previously painted eaves, spouting and roofing in the same colour.<br /> <br /> Interior of Sexton's Office:<br /> \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.<br /> \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.<br /> \* All internal non structural works, including removal of concrete floor and constructing a timber replacement to the Sexton's Office which does not affect the exterior of the registered building<br /> \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.<br /> \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.<br /> \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.<br /> \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits

then the conduits should remain in-situ.  
\* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.  
\* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.  
Layout  
\* Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings and structures, ornaments, roads and paths, fences and gates, drainage and irrigation systems  
\* Maintenance of gravel driveway and paths, concrete gutters to retain their existing form. A permit is required for new kerbing and paving  
Landscape  
\* The process of gardening and maintenance to care for the cemetery landscape, planting themes, bulbs and rose bushes and removal of dead plants  
\* Management of plants in accordance with Australian Standard, Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373  
\* Removal of vegetation to maintain fire safety and to protect monuments, registered buildings and structures  
\* Removal of plants listed as State Prohibited and Regionally Controlled Weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994  
\* Replanting to retain the existing landscape themes and character

Construction dates 1852, 1859, 1858, 1859,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,

Hermes Number 5275

Property Number

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## History

**Contextual History: History of Place:** In September 1851 three shepherd's and a bullock driver who were working on William Barker's run announced that they had discovered gold. By December some 20,000 people had poured into the area and the population by March 1852 was estimated to be 25,000.  
A Government camp was soon established near the junction of Barkers and Forest Creeks, the two main, and most heavily worked of the local creeks. The Camp, as it was called, was the administrative centre of the goldfield, overseeing licensing, law and order. Some, but by no means all of its duties were taken over by the Castlemaine Municipal Council on its inauguration in 1856.  
**History of Place:**  
**The First Burial Ground**  
In the early 1850s the Castlemaine authorities were involved in the establishment of a local general cemetery. The first Castlemaine cemetery occupied an area approximately surrounded by Barker, Campbell, Hargraves, and Templeton Streets. It is thought that many early graves were dug on the site of the present Technical College, but most of the graves were north of Templeton Street. Having been established before the town was laid out, many of the graves ultimately occupied the middle of Templeton Street, so their removal became a priority. The last interment here was in January 1853.  
After a great deal of controversy with the government, who refused to endorse several proposals to establish a local cemetery within the municipality, Council were forced to accept the present Campbell's Creek site which was outside the municipality. Undertaker, William Newbold took the £225 contract to 'Disinter and remove The Remains from the old cemetery and commit them to the ground at the new' cemetery. The old resting place in Templeton Street was only about five years old, and many were concerned to see the remains of their loved ones disturbed so soon after burial. After considerable deliberation, Council determined that the bodies should be exhumed at 6pm on Friday 5 December 1856.. The Mount Alexander Mail criticised the exercise stating:  
we suspect the local authorities - who instigated this - must be satisfied with the exceeding folly of their proceedings in the affair, though we understand it is their intention to attempt to add eclat to the removal, by themselves following the relics as chief mourners, to the Campbell's Creek Cemetery - the procession to form in order at 6 o'clock this evening ...  
We hope we respect the sanctity of the dead with much deeper feelings than have been exhibited in thus uselessly desecrating it ... While on this subject, we may venture to ask the Council what they are doing with respect to the new Cemetery? Have they yet attempted the selection of a site? If not - why not?  
Three months notice was given and in many cases relatives of the dead made their own private arrangements, sometimes providing a second funeral service. The removal went ahead, and in the Mount Alexander Mail of 8 December 1856, the following report appeared:  
Yesterday evening the bodies which have been interred in the cemetery were removed to the cemetery at Campbell's Creek, and the street will henceforth be open to public traffic ... The remains [were received into the new ground with] all decorum and solemnity, and in the presence of many witnesses.  
Many of the bodies were in coffins, but some were found in packing cases, boxes, or were wrapped in bark, in graves that had been dug only to the depth of two to three feet. In all, the bodies of 48 adults and 8 children were placed on 9 drays covered with black calico,

and carted in pouring rain through the streets. Once the municipal precinct was left behind all 'decorum' was dispensed with. A race ensued jolting some bodies from the carts onto the road, with one laden vehicle capsizing into the creek.

The Castlemaine Public Cemetery (Campbell's Creek)

The first burial at Campbell's Creek Cemetery (as it was earlier called) occurred in 1852 when a burial took place 'under the shade of an old gum tree'. In 1853 the government enclosed four acres and until 1858 this portion of ground was 'in the charge of two or three different persons, who acted as sextons, and received in payment all monies and fees for digging graves, making fences etc.'. Up to the end of 1858 the cemetery records reveal that about 1800 bodies had been interred. By October 1859 there were 2300. The records indicate that on average about 450 bodies were interred each year with one third of burials being children under seven years old, and about 80 being Chinese.

In April 1858 the cemetery was placed under the care of trustees. This move brought improvements for the cemetery; between this date and October 1859 an office was built, a carriage road which wound through various sections of the grounds was constructed, and each religious denomination was allotted its section, with the Chinese compartment being enclosed by a rail. The Mount Alexander Mail 'correspondent' who visited the cemetery observed that it was 'formerly the custom to bury all classes together, but the evil of this system is most visible when the Chinese visit their dead, especially twice a year, for the purpose of feeding the spirits of the departed. They were allowed, on these occasions, to light fires and crackers, burn candles and papers, and spread on the graves various kinds of food, from whole roasted pigs to boiled fowls and jam tarts, together with copious libations of brandy. Although they were mostly very orderly amongst themselves, great confusion was caused by men and boys attracted to the spot by their strange ceremonies. At present they can only perform their religious rites at the building erected on purpose on their own ground.'

The correspondent witnessed two Chinese from Ballarat praying at 'the shrine of a friend who died nearly six years ago'. With them they had brought four oranges, cakes, tea, pork chops, brandy wax tapers and joss sticks. After praying they collected their gifts in a bucket, first offering some to those around.

Further improvements were planned from 1859 notably the construction of catacombs on the hill near the entrance 'after the manner of those so much in favour in England'. The catacombs appear on a large plan that still exists in the sexton's office. Dated 24 December 1875, the plan was probably drawn by cemetery sexton and secretary, D. Randall. The plan indicates that the rocky 'range' behind the office was still reserved for catacombs as late as this date, but the catacombs never eventuated, and the land to this day still remains unused by the cemetery.

The 1859 Plan

The cemetery was laid out in July 1859, and plan of c.1859 shows the grounds divided into sections denoting religious denominations. The entrance is situated at the beginning of a carriageway which divides the hilly 'range' from the older, larger square-shaped sections nearest the front of the cemetery. The plan indicates that these three sections of 'old ground' are 'filled up' or 'nearly filled up'. A Roman Catholic compartment completes the fourth section in the older grid of the cemetery.

Although the lodge (office) has yet to be erected, the building is obviously planned for the site, as indicated by the writing 'site for lodge'. The lodge was built by October 1859, so it is likely that it was erected during the three month interval; between the execution of the plan and arrival of the correspondent from the Mount Alexander Mail. Behind the 'range' are three sections containing the Bible Christians, Pauper Ground, and Chinese and Pagans. The railing around the Chinese & Pagan section is indicated by a thick line, but there is no evidence of a structure within the compartment. Behind these denominations are sections allocated to the Church of England, Wesleyan, Independent, Primitive Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterians, Jews and Others.

1920s - 1980s

No further information about the cemetery is available until the year 1894, the date of the earliest records now held by the Department of Community Services. Scant information is held until the 1920s when yearly reports begin to be appended to the department files. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the condition of the cemetery is constantly reported as poor, with fences, roads and gutters needing frequent attention. During this period many of the old wooden water channels were removed and replaced by concrete, and small bridges across channels were underpinned or replaced. Old trees, such as pines were also being removed and replaced by 'more suitable kind[s] of evergreen tree[s]'. Reference is made to explosives at the cemetery, which no doubt were required for blasting graves in the rocky terrain. A small powder room exists in the sexton's office which does not appear to be original to the 1850s fabric of the building.

In 1935 the front entrance was replanted and a contract to the cost of £23 let for renovating the office. The following year further works to the office were undertaken, notably to the roof and spouting. The year 1939 saw new concrete curbs constructed, 4 chains of concrete flood channel built, rockeries in front of the office replaced with more concrete kerbing, an old wooden bridge removed and replaced with concrete, the front fence repaired and repainted, and shelters and seats erected in the grounds. Throughout these years more old trees and shrubs were replaced.

By 1951 it was stated that repairs to the residence were long overdue. Funds were apparently unavailable, and by 1956 due to white ants, the residence was beyond repair and had to be condemned the following year by the Health Inspector. That year, 1957 the Apex Club and the Health Department funded the replacement of the timber front fence with a pipe and wire fence.

A major change occurred at the cemetery in 1961 when preparation for a lawn cemetery began. This activity unfortunately resulted in the removal of many monuments from the 'old ground' of the cemetery. Several

headstones are now stacked alongside the first section of 'range', and face the carriageway. By now there had been a total of 17,071 burials in the cemetery. In 1961 a new residence was completed at a cost of \$8000 with a loan from the Health Department. It was erected on a new site between the former residence and the sexton's office. Some of the footings and paths to the older building still survive. In the late 1970s repairs were required at the sexton's office. By 1981 renovations had commenced which continued on into the following year. Work must have progressed slowly as it was reported that the condition of the office was still 'poor' in 1984. **COMPARISON:** A large number of suburban, goldmining, provincial and rural cemeteries were established in Victoria in the 1850s. Among the new cemeteries from the 1850s were those at Ballarat, Benalla, Brighton, Heidelberg, Kilmore, Castlemaine, Warrnambool, Williamstown, Bendigo, Kyneton, Geelong, Terang, Traralgon, Maldon, White Hills and Bendigo. Some smaller communities such as the Germans in Thomastown established their own small cemeteries in the period. Another example of a goldfields cemetery is Pennyweight Flat located 1.5km east of Castlemaine. This particular cemetery is distinguished by the considerable number child burials, believed to be mainly Chinese and British. Most of the graves are unmarked, and there has been no attempt to landscape the cemetery. Other cemeteries with Chinese structures and memorials include White Hills at Bendigo, Bendigo Cemetery, Campbell's Creek (Castlemaine) and Beechworth Cemetery. Former Sexton's lodges survive at Bendigo Cemetery, Boroondara Cemetery (commenced 1860 and added to until the 1890s). The lodge at White Hills Cemetery, Bendigo was demolished in the 1950s. Built in 1869, the lodge at Melbourne Cemetery was removed to the College Crescent entrance in 1934-35, and demolished in 1955. The oldest known, surviving example of a sexton's lodge survives at Castlemaine Cemetery at Campbell's Creek. Built c.1859, it is in excellent condition, save for the concrete floor which recently replaced Oregon boards.

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 1776 is now described in the category as a Heritage Place and Heritage Object:

Castlemaine Public Cemetery (Campbell's Creek), Cemetery Road, Campbell's Creek, Mt Alexander Shire Council.

### EXTENT:

1. All the buildings and structures marked as follows on Diagram 607961 held by the Executive Director:

- B1 Sexton's Office and 1875 Cemetery Plan
- B2 Chinese Funerary Tower
- B3 War Memorial

2. All the gravel paths, roadways and concrete gutters marked as P-1 on Diagram held by the Executive Director.

All the denomination and section cast iron signs marked S1 to S5, and metal alloy signs marked S6 to S11 and identified as follows:

- S1 Church of Christ O
- S2 Baptist Ground NN
- S3 Methodist Ground FF
- S4 Presbyterian Ground G2
- S5 Roman Catholic CC
- S6 Presbyterian Ground G
- S7 Wesleyan Ground F
- S8 Baptist Ground N
- S9 Primitive Methodists Ground H
- S10 Church of England Ground EE
- S11 Wesleyan Ground FF

4. The trees marked as follows on Diagram Number 606264 held by the Executive Director:

- T1 *Arbutus x andrachnoides* x2
- T2 *Arbutus unedo* x2
- T3 *Cedrus atlantica* f. *glauca* x2
- T4 *Cedrus deodara* x2
- T5 *Chamaecyparis funebris* x 2

T6 *Cupressus lusitanica* var. *benthamii* x 2

T7 *Cupressus sempervirens* x 3

T8 *Pinus pinea* x 2

T9 *Quercus robur* x2

T10 *Sequoiadendron giganteum*

5. All of the Cemetery Reserve, Rs 4148, (P121251, P121252, P121253, P121254, P121255) and known as the Castlemaine (Campbell's Creek) Cemetery and marked L1 on Diagram 607961 held by the Executive Director.

Dated: 4 February 1999.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 7 18 February 1999 p.456]

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*