

Manly Cemetery History

Manly Cemetery is thought to be the fourth oldest cemetery still in use in Sydney. It is one of only two major burial grounds from the 19th century on Sydney's North Shore – the other is Gore Hill Cemetery at St Leonards.

The earliest burial marked by a monument at Manly Cemetery is **Jane McLean** in 1863.

An inscribed tablet in the old Church of England portion reads:

“Balgowlah (Manly) Church of England Burial Ground – the Right Revd. Frederick Barker D.D., Bishop of Sydney, consecrated this cemetery, 5th April 1865.”

In 1891, Manly Cemetery was described as being in Manly Vale, about 1½ miles from the village of Manly, and some distance off the Sydney Road:

“It is divided by a fence into two parts, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic, and the former portion is divided by a creek into the Church of England and Presbyterian grounds.”

At this time, most of the burials had taken place in the Protestant portion, with only a few in the Roman Catholic cemetery:

“This cemetery, unlike the Protestant one, has not yet been cleared of stumps and scrub. The spaces round the graves, and the graves themselves, are in good order. The Protestant portion is well cared for. The paths are clean, and the tombs are a credit to the district. The oldest date appears on the tomb of Jane McLean, who died on February 4, 1863, but some thirty years ago a gentleman who had made his camp on the Burnt Bridge Creek, while out shooting gill birds, paraquets &c, suddenly in one of his rambles, stumbled on the grave of an infant. It was marked with a rough cross of wood, and it appears that the parents when they went to bury it had to guess where the cemetery was. The ground was fenced in shortly afterwards.”

(Sydney Morning Herald, 22 Jan 1891, from research by Shelagh Champion OAM).

Now, burials can only take place in the few vacant plots purchased many years ago. Ashes may be placed in the Columbarium (see No. 23 below).



Historic Manly Cemetery



“Sweet Nell” (Mrs Nell Sullivan), Ocean Beach, Manly, late 1920s. Buried in Manly Cemetery 1933

Adults’
Cemetery Walk + Map

history

Adults' Cemetery Walk

1. **The oldest grave** for which there is a monument is that of **Jane McLean**, born in Nova Scotia in 1851, who died in Manly aged 11½ in 1863 [Plot S217]. Until recently the oldest grave was thought to be that of William Aberdeen who died in 1845 and was buried in Sydney's Devonshire Street Cemetery. William's remains were moved to Manly Cemetery around 1899 when Central Railway Station was built on the site of the old Devonshire Street Cemetery [Plot B283].



2. **'Trinity Bay', an Aboriginal**, aged 17, buried in 1891, is the only known aboriginal burial. He was named after Trinity Bay near Cairns where, allegedly abandoned, he was found by Dr Sachs of Manly. Trinity became a popular local cricketer, footballer and cornet player in the Manly Band [Plot B281].

3. **Early Mayor of Manly, Charles Hayes** (died 1924), was an Alderman on the first Manly Council (1877) and later Mayor (1882-1884). Several other Mayors and Members of Parliament are buried in Manly Cemetery. Mayor Hayes was one of the founders of the Sydney [Stock] Exchange. He was claimed to be "The Father of Manly", a title that really belongs to Henry Gilbert Smith [Plot A46].



4. **Founder of Manly**, H G Smith's second wife, **Anne Margaret Smith**, died at Fairlight House, Fairlight, of tuberculosis in 1866 [Plot B351].



5. **Leading temperance advocate** and founder of Manly's Temperance Hotel c1859/60, **John Trenchard Smith** (d.1880) sold cordials in competition with Manly's first publicans at the Pier and Steyne Hotels. He was a Trustee of Manly National School, established in 1858. His son, also Frederick Trenchard Smith, became a leading local architect [Plot B406].

6. **Country people**, like **Augustus Morris**, often had second homes in Manly, or took holidays by the sea. Morris was a prominent grazier. He was a member of the NSW Parliament's Legislative Council (Upper House) for northern NSW in the 1850s, and of the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) for southern NSW in the 1860s. [Plot B424] See also the memorial to Johanna, beloved wife of Edward McCarthy of Narrabri [Plot Q42].

7. **Manly Pioneers – Benjamin Skinner** (1826-1893), famous Manly and Sydney Harbour boatman and pioneer of water transport services from the first Manly Pier in 1855 [Plot B513].

8. **Manly Pioneers – George and Martha Pickering** are claimed to be the first white people to settle in Manly. However the 1814 date on the headstone is incorrect. They were living at North Harbour by 1849. They died at North Harbour [Plot B562].

9. **One of the Founders of the Australian Constitution** in 1901 and leading Federalist, **Frederick William Webb CMG** (1837-1919) was a committee member at the National Australasian Federal Convention in Sydney (1891) and the Adelaide Convention (1897). A distinguished public servant, Webb was Clerk of the NSW Legislative Assembly, 1888-1904 [Plot B490].

10. **Cemetery Consecration.** The inscribed tablet on the pathway in the Church of England section commemorates the Anglican consecration of Manly Cemetery on 5 April 1865.

11. **The Child with the Cross**, is a marble sculpture of a young girl praying with the cross behind her. It is "in loving memory" of **Florence Delmont [Dell] Ingvorsen**, "beloved only child", who was accidentally killed on 23 November 1938, aged 14 years. "God gave a bud and took a flower" is inscribed. Dell's aunt, Lillian Orr, who is buried with her also "died suddenly" in 1931, aged 23. A tender monument to two family tragedies [Plot S295].

12. **World War One and Two** soldiers sometimes had their army badge and enlistment number inscribed on their headstone. One example is **Private Robert Thomson** 2950A, 31st Battalion. [Plot S293] Also see Bombardier J C Smart: "Killed in action in France" in 1917. Joshua is buried in a War Cemetery in France. He is commemorated with his father, William, who was born in Scotland and died in Manly in 1895. [Plot S78] Also Lieutenant Alan Clark



NX5376, 2/3 Battalion, 6th Division AIF. Killed in action at Bardia [North Africa] in 1942 [Plot U301], and Private W. Davis [Plot S474].

13. Manly Pioneers - William Mildwater, early Manly builder, boat-builder and grocer, buried in 1887, with Mrs Jane Mildwater (died 1891). Descendants still live in Manly municipality [Plot S270].

14. Transported to Australia. Peter Stoneman (1816-1883), “outback pioneer, transported [as a convict] 1835.” He is buried with his grandson Charles Kindred who died in 1883 aged 3 months [Plot S169].

15. Manly Pioneers – Peter and Susannah Ellery, pioneers of Seaforth are buried in an unmarked grave. Peter Ellery was the first owner of the Spit punt that plied across Middle Harbour before 1850 [Plot S211].

16. Buried at Sea. Eliza Miles, wife of Manly pioneer Thomas Miles, “died aboard the SS Afric, 8th July 1905, buried at sea” [Plot S86].

17. “Sweet Nell” was a notable Manly character, whose real name was **Mrs Ellen Jane Sullivan**. “Sweet Nell” sold sweets and fruit on the Ocean Beach, Corso and at Manly Wharf in the 1920s and early 1930s and was renowned for her eccentric dress and behaviour (see cover photo). A much-loved local identity, she died aged 60 in 1933 [Plot Z843].



18. The oldest person buried in Manly Cemetery was **Richard Weatherstone**, aged 103, who died in 1938 [Plot Z853].

19. Official war artist with the AIF in World War One, **Charles David Jones Bryant** was an important landscape and marine artist in the interwar period. Held in many Australian public collections, his work is also in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, and the Imperial War Museum, London. Bryant was one of the founders of the Manly Art Gallery which opened in 1930 [Plot Z425].



20. Australian Sporting Heroes – Rugby Union Test player, **Tom “Rusty” Richards** (1887-1935) is the only player ever to represent both Australia (3 Tests) and England (British Isles, 3 Tests). In World War One he served at Gallipoli and won the Military Cross for bravery in France. He also won a gold medal at the 1908 Olympics as a member of Australia’s all-conquering Rugby Union team. [Plot Z373]. Buried with him is his brother **Bill Richards**, who played 5 times for Australia in Rugby Tests. Also in Manly Cemetery is **Frank “Banger” Row** (1877-1950) who captained Australia in the first Rugby Union Test against the British Isles in 1899 [Plot B11].

21. The one-winged angel is a marble angel memorial on the grave of **Mrs Elsie Keohane**, who died suddenly in 1928. Mrs Keohane’s son, Keith, is shown at his mother’s grave on the front cover [Plot K58].



22. Masons’ names. Stonemasons who built the cemetery monuments and carved the headstones often carved their names or signs on their work. **George Watters’** monumental mason’s yard operated on the corner of Griffiths and Hill Streets opposite the Cemetery from around 1920: his name is carved on several headstones, e.g. Harry Henrikson (whose headstone also bears the sign of the Masonic Order) [Plot K288]. The Pickworths had their masons’ yard in Harland Street from the 1930s. Can you find any other masons’ names or signs?

23. Manly Columbarium. A columbarium is a building built to hold the ashes of dead people in small niches or holes in its walls. Manly’s Columbarium was opened in 2000.

24. Pioneer female mountain climber, and first woman to climb Mt. Cook, New Zealand in 1910, **Emmeline Du Faur** (1882-1935) defied Edwardian conventions. She holds records for the first five ascents of summits in the New Zealand Alps, including the first grand traverse of the three peaks of Mt. Cook in 1913. She has a mountain named in her honour. Her father, Frederick du Faur, was one of the founders of the Kuring-gai National Park [Plot H654].

25. First woman to gain a pilot’s license in Australia, **Mrs Millicent Bryant** in March 1927. She was drowned tragically the same year in the “Greycliffe” ferry disaster. Her Manly Cemetery funeral featured a fly-past by five aircraft. Her grave has no headstone [Plot H389].



26. Famous swimming coach and manager of the Australian Olympic team at the 1924 Paris Games, **Oswald “Ossie” Merrett** was also Secretary of the Australian Olympic Federation. At the 1924 Paris Games, all three Olympic gold medallists came from Manly: Andrew “Boy” Charlton – 1500m freestyle swimming; Dick Eve – high diving; Anthony “Nick” Winter – hop, step and jump. Merrett was a business man who imported clothing accessories from Japan. He is honoured by the OGH Merrett Memorial Gateway at Manly Oval [Plot H288].

27. The Largest Angel, “sacred to the memory of my dear husband William Albert Simpson” died 1918, aged 56 [Plot N32].

28. Manly Pioneers – **George Sly** (died 1927), renowned Manly fisherman who provided the first life-saving surfboat service at Manly Beach, c1903, and is buried in an unmarked grave. Descendants still live in Manly municipality [Plot P126].



29. Cycle of Life memorial to **Sheila Wickert** (1948-94), a sandstone column ornately carved with the figures of a woman, the sun, moon and native animals, fish and flora, and topped by a bird-bath where birds can drink [Plot P140].

30. Prominent parliamentarian and rural representative **William Charles Browne** (1841-1916) was Member for Patrick’s Plains (Singleton area) in the NSW Legislative Assembly, 1872-1880. His sister, Mary-Jane Browne married John McElhone. McElhone was also a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the same period as Browne [Plot P191].

31. NSW Government Printer and Inspector of Stamps (1859-86), and Registrar of Copyright from 1879, **Thomas Richards** introduced new printing technology, some of his own invention. His grave is unmarked [Plot B126].

More information about Manly Cemetery and people buried there is available from **Manly Library’s Wellings Local Studies Collection**. Phone (02) 9976 1741, or email: john.macritchie@manly.nsw.gov.au

Compiled by Terry Metherell
with additional research by
Shelagh and George Champion.
September 2004.

