

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: MOUNT KOROITE CEMETERY

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Heffernan Lane off Cavendish-Coleraine Rd COLERAINE

STUDY NUMBER: 021

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF COLERAINE

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 430 near D8; VicRoads 72 D3; located on the top and south side of the hill between Heffernan's Lane and the Cavendish-Coleraine Road, about 4.0kms east of the township of Coleraine

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Mount Koroite Cemetery, Coleraine, obelisk and trees.

Image Date: 15/08/2002

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the gravestones, memorials, fences etc., all the plantings and an area of 10,000 square metres centred on the obelisk.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The cemetery, off the Cavendish-Coleraine Road, is associated with the Mount Koroite Homestead, being located across a valley on a hillside about 1km north-east of the present homestead. It is immediately above the site of the original homestead, which is located nearby in Heffernan Lane.

The cemetery consists of a group of several graves and, at some distance, an obelisk. More graves, now unidentified, possibly of workers may be located lower down closer to a creek. The obelisk is sited very prominently at the top of a bare hill. The memorial is set on a concrete slab with four iron posts, topped with urn shaped finials and linked by a chain. The obelisk is made up from two pieces of smooth white marble, one the cubic base and the other the tapered shaft, which in turn sit on two dressed blocks of bluestone. The cubic base is inscribed on each of its faces. On the south face, which is seen from Mount Koroite Homestead, are carved the words "In memory of William Young born 21 March 1784 died 30 July 1865 also of Rachel his wife born 18 August 1792 died 29 January 1866". William Young held the run in partnership with Adam Turnbull from 1845. On the west face are carved the words "William Young born 25 May 1821 died 8 December 1865". On the north face are carved the words "Adam Young born 14 January 1825 died 10 August 1864". On the east face are carved the words "Charles Young born 17 March 1828 died October 1858 fifth son of William and Rachel". The three obvious gravestones, now fallen and broken, are some distance down the hill from the obelisk in a southerly direction, that is, towards the Mount Koroite Homestead. They were originally fenced. One, an arched white marble slab, reads "Sacred to the memory of George William third son of James Sinclair" followed by his Scottish origins, the date of his death [check] and a sentimental text. The Sinclair's connection with Mount Koroite is not known but presumably they were employees. One, a white marble shield with broken sections missing, on a slate background, reads "Sacred to the memory of Thomas Young, fifth son of William and Rachel Young, formerly of Edinburgh Scotland" followed by the dates of his birth and death. One, an arched white marble slab reads "Sacred to the memory of George James Beverly Young, born 20th February 1867 died 16th April 1870". Sections of cast iron fencing survive. The graves are shaded by several Funeral cypresses (*Cupressus funebris*) and one large pine, possibly a Black pine (*Pinus nigra*).

The relationship between the cemetery and the homestead is important aesthetically, especially if the former were sited picturesquely to provide a focus in the landscape or the termination of a point of view. There are some ten private cemeteries or lone graves known in the further Western District but very few examples of private homestead cemeteries with which this can be compared.

HISTORY:

The Koroite, Mount Koroite or Dundas run, Portland Bay District No. 306, was first taken up by the Whyte Brothers in March 1840 (B&K, 1974, 230). It soon passed to W. J. Purbrick and then to J. G. Robertson in November, 1843. In February 1845 it passed to William Young and Adam Turnbull after whom Adam Young, who is buried in the Mt Koroite cemetery, was possibly named. They also leased nearby Winninburn together (B&K, 151). In July 1858, the Mount Koroite lease passed to a W. Young, possibly William Young alone, or William Young Junior. The lease was cancelled in 1867. A later owner, Mr J. F. Kirby who owned Parisian, the winner of the Melbourne Cup in 1911, is said to have made extensive alterations to the homestead on the strength of his winnings.

The Mount Koroite Cemetery is a rare example of a private cemetery and is all the more unusual since it appears to date from the 1860s when the municipal cemetery at Coleraine was available for public burials. It may be that the site predates this time and had been used, as a matter of expediency, before the passing of the 1854 Act for the Establishment and Management of Cemeteries in the Colony of Victoria. The siting of the cemetery away from the house, but still visible, suggests not only an awareness of hygiene but also a Romantic disposition. This is reinforced by the conventional plantings of Funeral cypresses (*Cupressus funebris*). The siting of the memorial obelisk on top of the bald hill is particularly dramatic and may be without parallel in Victoria.

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The cemetery appears to be limited in its use to the 1860s and to the Young family and their relations.

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 cemetery is in very poor physical condition due, in particular, to the continuing grazing by stock. The shaft of the obelisk has been rotated. The fence has been broken with only one post still standing. Animals may have pushed over and broken the gravestones and fences rather than vandalism being the cause. The trees are also in poor condition. It is very likely that fragments of the gravestones and fences are still lying around on the ground.

INTEGRITY:

High degree of integrity.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

Mount Koroite Homestead cemetery, located off the Cavendish-Coleraine Road at Coleraine, dates from the 1860s, a time of consolidation for squatting interests generally and a time when many of the first generation squatters determined to remain on the land which they had pioneered. It is also well after the establishment of public cemeteries in townships. This rare private cemetery is sited across a valley about 1km to the north-east of the present homestead on the side of a hill. It is immediately above the site of the original homestead, which is located nearby in Heffernan Lane. The few graves, at least three of which survive in ruins, are sheltered by a single pine tree, possibly a Black pine (*Pinus nigra*), and several Funeral cypresses (*Cupressus funebris*). The graves are typical of the era having white marble headstones, loosely Gothic in style, surrounded by low fences. The ruinous condition of the cemetery might be said to enhance the picturesque quality of the setting. More dramatically sited is the white marble obelisk on top of the bald hill above the cemetery. It is intact and in good condition. There may have been an intention to create an aesthetic relationship between the original or later homestead and the cemetery and obelisk.

How is it significant?

The Mount Koroite Homestead cemetery is of historical and aesthetic significance to the community of Coleraine and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Mount Koroite Homestead cemetery is of historical significance for its commemoration of an important pioneering family on one of the more significant homesteads in the district, marking not only their dates of birth and death but also their interrelationship. It demonstrates a desire for permanence in a new land. It also demonstrates an aesthetic sensitivity to the landscape because of the sheltered siting of the graves, including the planting of symbolic trees, opposite the homestead and the dramatic siting of the obelisk on the bald hill-top above.

COMPARISON:

092 Blackwood Homestead Complex, Blackwood/Dunkeld Road, Peshurst
326 Bushy Creek Homestead Complex, Back Bushy Creek Road, Glenthompson
319 Victoria Lagoon Homestead (former), Mooralla
023 Murndal, Murndal Road, Wannon

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ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

04-Aug-01

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR **Include in RNE** **Include in Local Planning Scheme**

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Celestina Sagazio, ed.	Cemeteries, Our Heritage	1992	
R. V. Billis and A. S. Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	164, 230