

Castlereagh General cemetery

(Lot 281, Cnr Church Street and East Wilchard Road, Cranebrook)

Governor Lachlan Macquarie first visited the local area at the end of 1810. He proclaimed Castlereagh as one of his new towns. Geographically today, this Macquarie town is situated on the outer edge of the Penrith suburb of Cranebrook.

Although Castlereagh was surveyed with a town square, streets with lots allocated and a cemetery, it did not develop to any extent. The main difficulty was access to a guaranteed water supply. Even after the floods of 1811 and 1816 most settlers preferred to stay on their farms close to the river where they had a reliable water source and the land was fertile, cleared and cultivated.

A large parsonage with outbuildings and a garden was erected by William Cox on the south-eastern end of the grid of streets (near Vane Street and the intersection of Church Lane and Cranebrook Road). A church and schoolhouse were erected in Church Street (now the corner of Church Street and Church Lane). Reverend Henry Fulton was the first minister. The earliest monument still standing in the cemetery is that of Mary Ann Smith who died in 1814.

Records show that the first burial in the cemetery was in 1811 following Governor Macquarie's edict in May 1811:

"In future all settlers and others resident in those townships, or in their respective vicinities, shall cease to bury their dead as heretofore within their several farms, and shall in a decent and becoming manner inter them in the consecrated Grounds now assigned for that purpose in their respective townships".

The Castlereagh Cemetery listing below has been extracted from the 'Register Book for Burials at the Parish Church of Hawkesbury New South Wales' that was maintained by Reverend Robert Cartwright. This register is contained in Volume 1 of the St Matthews Church of England, Windsor NSW Parish Registers 1810 to 1856. A copy is available in the Local Studies section of Penrith Library.

Burial Date Death Date	Name Ship/Birth Detail	Age Abode or Death Place	Status, Profession or Employer/Entry No
9 October 1811 d. 6.10.1811 Buried Castlereagh	Francis HENGLEE Born in this colony	17 Neapon (sic)	Robt Cartwright 30
27 December 1811 d. 25.12.1811	Stephen SMITH 'Surprize' 1790	52 Castlereagh	Came prisoner Robt Cartwright 40
3 September 1812 d. 1.9.1812 Buried Castlereagh	William FITZGERALD 'Duke of Portland' 1807	32 Castlereagh	Came prisoner Robt Cartwright 70
30 January 1814 29.1.1814 Buried Castlereagh	Dennis BRADRICK 'Atlas' (2) 1802	70	Prisoner, came as prisoner Robt Cartwright 109
19 February 1814 17.2.1814 Buried Castlereagh	Bridget MULLIN 'Providence' 1811	30 Died South Creek Cause of death Drowned	Prisoner, came a prisoner Robt. Cartwright 112
2 March 1814 1.3.1814 Buried Castlereagh	William REARDON 'Queen' 1791	50 Cause of death Speared by natives	Free, came a prisoner Robt Cartwright 113

25 March 1814 24.3.1814 Buried Castlereagh	Caroline HANSELL Born in this colony	10 months	Daughter of Joseph & Elizabeth Hansell Robt. Cartwright 115
22 May 1814 20.5.1814 Buried Castlereagh	Mary Ann RAND 'Brittania' 1798	34 years Castlereagh Cause of death Died suddenly	Free, came a prisoner Robt Cartwright 122
17 June 1814 16.6.1814 Buried Castlereagh	Thomas LAMBLY 'Sugarcane' 1793	69 years Died Castlereagh	Private NSW Corp Robt Cartwright 127

Mary Ann Smith's headstone records her date of death as 20 May 1814, aged 34 years, the Reverend Cartwright's record shows Mary Ann Rand, aged 34 years, died on 20 May 1814 and buried on 22 May 1814 at Castlereagh.

The Reverend Henry Fulton became resident chaplain in charge of Castlereagh and Richmond. It was reported in the Sydney Gazette on 18 June 1814 that

"The new Glebe house for the residence of the Chaplain of the township and district of Castlereagh now being complete, the Governor is pleased to announce the appointment of the Reverend Henry Fulton to be Resident. He will preach at Castlereagh and Richmond every Sunday when his health and the weather permit."

The Mitchell Library holds two volumes entitled "Register kept at Castlereagh" by Reverend Henry Fulton, 1817-1825 (C 98) and 1815-1857(C 99). These two volumes are available on microfilm (CY 627).

The 0.8 hectare cemetery (Portion 281) contains approximately 64 monuments, and some monument fragments. There is also evidence of unmarked graves. Many of the monuments predate civil registration. The early monuments are fine examples of early colonial monumental masonry. Burials took place in family groups across the cemetery. Some family names represented are MacHenry, Fraser, Single, Hadley, Field, Herbert and Rope.

Reverend Henry Fulton

Henry Fulton was a well-educated ordained minister of the Anglican Church of Ireland. He was implicated in the Irish Rebellion of 1799, convicted of sedition and transported for life to Australia. On arrival in Australia, Fulton was able to resume his profession and was posted to Norfolk Island in 1801. A full pardon was granted to him in 1806. In 1808 Henry Fulton's

loyalty to Governor Bligh caused him to be suspended from the ministry but he was reinstated by Governor Macquarie soon after his arrival in the colony. In 1811, when in England to give evidence at the court martial of Lieutenant Colonel George Johnston, Henry Fulton secured a regular Crown chaplaincy. Following a stint in Sydney he was appointed resident chaplain in charge of Castlereagh and Richmond (1814).

Reverend Fulton opened a school in the new parsonage, the Castlereagh Classical Academy. The Academy has the distinction of being the first secondary school in Australia. The Academy was responsible for the education of some early important colonists including our first native born poet, Charles Tompson. In 1820 the school was expanded to include primary students and they were accommodated in the new schoolhouse and chapel constructed in Church Lane. The secondary Academy continued to operate until about 1825.

Fulton's wife Ann came to Australia with Henry when he was sentenced. They had seven children. Ann died in 1836 and was buried at Castlereagh. In 1838 Henry became the first minister of the new St Stephen the Martyr church in Penrith. He died in 1840 and was also buried at Castlereagh. It is believed that both Henry and his wife Ann were laid to rest in the tomb of their grandson, Francis MacHenry (1831) and son-in-law John MacHenry (1832) whose names are the only ones inscribed on the tomb. Their daughter Sarah, the widow of John MacHenry, died and was buried at sea in 1853.

MacHenry Vault

The MacHenry altar monument is the largest and most substantial monument presently standing in the cemetery. Constructed in sandstone it comprises an underground vault with an above ground altar tomb set on sandstone flagging.

In 1994 the monument was in a very sad state. Clive Fulton, a direct descendant of Henry Fulton commissioned its reconstruction. Following an extensive archaeological study by Dr Siobhan Lavelle, historical archaeologist and heritage consultant, Gordon Brown, a master monumental letter-cutter, rebuilt the monument. In 2009 a further repair was carried out on behalf of Penrith City Council when the slab on top of the tomb started to break up.

Friends of Castlereagh Cemetery

In April 1993 a dedicated group, descendants and other interested people formed the Friends of Castlereagh Cemetery. From 1993 to 2009 the 'Friends' worked tirelessly, maintaining the cemetery, lobbying, applying for grants and raising the profile of the site. The cemetery is now maintained by Penrith City Council.

Penrith City Council – Trustee

For many years and until recently, it was understood by the local Anglican Church and Penrith City Council that the Anglican Church was trustee of this cemetery. In 2009, Penrith City Council was advised by the NSW government (the Land and Property Management Authority) that this is not the case and that Council is the Trustee of this cemetery and responsible for its care and maintenance.

The Church's initial trusteeship of the cemetery was formalised when it was granted in trust to the now long deceased, Joseph Dangar Single, Edwin Wilshire, William Landers, William Greenhalgh and Robert Hartley in 1883. It is now apparent that Penrith City Council's

responsibility commenced when the Local Government (Control of Cemeteries) Amendment Act of 1966 was enacted and cemeteries (with some exceptions) were placed under the trusteeship of local councils. A public cemetery being defined as

“Public cemetery means Crown land or other land of the Crown reserved, dedicated or acquired for the interment of the dead but does not include any such land reserved, dedicated or acquired for exclusive use by a particular religious denomination unless it adjoins or is adjacent to Crown land or other land of the Crown reserved, dedicated or acquired for use by another religious denomination, or by the public generally, for the interment of the dead.”
{Local Government (Control of Cemeteries) Amendment Act 1966, Division 2, 452B(2)}

Consequently Castlereagh Anglican Cemetery devolved to Penrith City Council because it was considered a portion of a larger general cemetery. Lot 245 which adjoins the cemetery (Lot 281) was set aside for cemetery purposes in 1903. Council applied for and was granted trusteeship of Lot 245 in 1995.

Fence

For many years the cemetery has been subjected to vandalism. Because of its isolation and accessibility, the cemetery was also visited at night. The vandalism and night visitation has had considerable impact on the local community and the amenity of the cemetery. To protect the site, a security fence has been built around the perimeter of the cemetery. Access to the cemetery is still available during the day.

An interpretive sign indicating the uniqueness and significance of the cemetery is situated near the entrance gate.

Future Plans

A conservation strategy is being prepared that takes into consideration the nature of site, indigenous plant life and the existing monuments. Heritage grants will be actively pursued to ensure the conservation and restoration of the endangered and fragile monuments in the cemetery.

For more historical information

- Please visit Penrith City Council’s Local Studies Library, 601 High Street, Penrith, open 2-5 pm or phone (02)4732 7899.
- Penrith City Council’s Cemeteries Office, (02)4732 7640.

Sources:

- Dr Siobhan Lavelle, *Heritage* NSW, Winter 2010, Vol 18, No 1
- Australian Dictionary of Biography – Online Edition, Henry Fulton (1761-1840)
- Siobhan Lavelle, Don Godden and Associates Pty Ltd, *Penrith Cemeteries*, (1989)
- Siobhan Lavelle, Archaeological Monitoring MacHenry Vault, Castlereagh Cemetery, (1994)
- Robert Murray, Kate White, Dharug & Dungaree, *The History of Penrith and St Marys to 1860* (1988)