

Timeline of Kaitangata Cemeteries

- 25 May 1870 - *The first Cemetery Committee was formed.*
- 26 Nov 1874 - *Section 15, Block V, Kaitangata was gazetted for a Public Cemetery and was later named the Southern Cemetery situated on the south corner of Exmouth and Salcombe streets.*
- 21 Feb 1879 - *Thirty of the 34 men killed in the Kaitangata Mine Disaster were buried in two rows at the Southern Cemetery.*
- 1890 - *Kaitangata Borough Council assumes control of the Southern Cemetery.*
- 1897 - *This present cemetery was first proposed.*
- 1 June 1897 - *Mrs Jeannie Poole died and was the first person to be interred at this cemetery.*
- 1946 - *Lawn Cemetery proposed for Kaitangata*
- 1963 - *The disused Southern Cemetery was tidied up and those headstones in the best condition were relocated to one central location.*
- 1969 - *Council amendments were made to allow one grave to hold two bodies.*
- 2002 - *Redevelopment work begins.*



Welcome to the Kaitangata Cemetery

Welcome to the Kaitangata Cemetery, which was established in 1897. The map to the right is designed to assist you locate the burial plot of your loved ones.

Burial records are available for viewing at the Clutha District Council, 1 Rosebank Terrace, Balclutha, or at the Kaitangata and District Promotions office, 17 Eddystone Street, Kaitangata. If you have any difficulties, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Clutha District Council on 03 419 0200.

Until 1870, there was no official burial ground at Kaitangata and transport difficulties meant that 'home' burials were unavoidable in most cases.

At this time, the first Cemetery Committee was formed, and is the first local public body of any description in the area having had its first meeting on 25 May 1870. The Committee exercised control over all local cemetery matters for the next 20 years until the Kaitangata Borough Council assumed control of the Cemetery, and all books, records and titles in 1890.

On 26 November 1874, a section of land at the south corner of Exmouth and Salcombe streets was gazetted for a public cemetery. This was named the Southern Cemetery, and the earliest internments recorded were Maria Rolland (1861), Georgina Pettigrew (1868), and Jane Smith (1868).

In 1897, a new cemetery (this present one) was proposed. Mrs Jeannie Poole, wife of Mr F.T. Poole, a Mayor and Kaitangata businessman, died on 1 June 1897 and was the first person to be interred there.

In 1946, the matter of creating a lawn cemetery for the remainder of the cemetery was discussed at a Council meeting. This was to be along the same lines as the Balclutha Cemetery, with concrete strips where the headstones would be erected.

In 1963, the disused southern cemetery came under considerable discussion by the Kaitangata Borough Council. The Council decided to tidy the area up as the early pioneers and the miners killed in the explosion deserved a better appearance to their final resting place. All those headstones in the best condition were relocated to one central area.

In 1969, Council amendments were made so that one grave could now hold two bodies.

In 2002, redevelopment work got underway including the construction of a new car parking area, shelter trees and landscaping carried out, and a 'Memorial Beam' for cremation plaques was set aside.



Historical information on this panel kindly supplied by Irene Sutton and Bill Proctor



Block 33a

Block 33

Block 32a

Block 32

Block 31a

Block 31

Block 30a

Block 30

Block 29a

Block 29

Block 28a

Block 28

Block 27a

Block 27

Block 26a

Block 26

Block 25a

Block 25

Block 24a

Block 24

Block 23

Block 1a

Block 2a

Block 12

Block 22

Block 3a

Block 11

Block 21

Block 4a

Block 10

Block 20

Block 5a

Block 9

Block 19

Block 6a

Block 7a

Block 8

Block 18

Block 8a

Block 9a

Block 10a

Block 7

Block 17

Block 11a

Block 12a

Block 6

Block 16

Block 5

Block 15

Block 4

Block 14

Block 3

You Are Here

Ash Beam

Ash Beam

Memorial
Beams

LAKESIDE

ROAD

To Kalamazoo

Those Remembered

Coulter, Samuel
 Watson, William
 Jarvie, Andrew
 Jarvie, George
 Smith, Thomas
 McGee, Barnet
 Whinney, William
 Clinging, John
 Clark, John
 Ferguson, John
 McDonald, Charles
 Dunn, Edward
 Wilson, William
 Hay, William
 Frew, Thomas
 Lockhart, Daniel
 Moulton, Joseph
 Hodge, William
 Hodge, Archibald
 Hall, William
 Hall, James
 Beardsmore, James Snr
 Beardsmore, James Jnr
 Beardsmore, Edward
 Beardsmore, Joseph
 Beardsmore, Caleb
 Molloy, John Snr
 Molloy, John T Jnr
 Molloy, Edward
 Buchanan, David
 Spiers, James
 Black, Thomas
 Cage, John
 McMillan, John

Kaitangata Mine Disaster 1879

In the early morning of Friday 21 February 1879, 34 men and boys set off as usual for work in the Kaitangata mine, then only a few months old.

At nine o'clock that morning an explosion in the old workings caused the instant, or near instant, deaths of all of the 34 who were in the mine. Of those, 30 were buried at the Southern Cemetery.

This horrifying disaster must have had a devastating impact on the town, which was then only a few years old.

Andrew Jarvie's wife was left with a family of eight children and endured 41 years of widowhood. Jim Spiers, aged 40, also left eight children - the oldest was 10 at the time, the youngest just four months.

John Molloy, 36, and his two sons John (15) and Edward (13) all perished in the disaster. "Mrs Molloy ... has lost a husband and sons and has not a relation in New Zealand," reported the Clutha Leader.

Samuel Coulter (50) had recently arrived from Scotland and left five children, while another new arrival, David Buchanan (30), left a wife and two young children.

William Watson (36) left a widow with four young children, the eldest about nine years. One of them, Alex, as he grew older yearned to be a doctor. However, there were no pensions or grants in those days and there were many years of desperate struggle before he could attain his matriculation by his own efforts. In time, he turned to the healing of souls, and was a widely respected minister of the Presbyterian Church.

A century on from the Kaitangata Mine Disaster, on the weekend of 24-26 February 1979, dignitaries, descendants and relatives of those killed in the disaster, borough councillors, and members of the public gathered together to remember those who died in this tragic mine accident.



All those who attended the church service on the Sunday, assembled on Eddystone Street outside the frontage of the Presbyterian Church and to the music of the Balclutha Brass Band, walked the same route to the Southern Cemetery as 100 years earlier. A Memorial Commemorative Plaque was unveiled by Mr Robin Gray (later Sir Robin Gray), while Bert Forrester, a past President of the Otago Miner's Union, placed the first wreath (pictured above).

The Memorial Commemorative Plaque and graves of those who perished in the Kaitangata Mine Disaster are located at the old Southern Cemetery on the corner of Exmouth and Salcombe streets (see map).



Historical information on this panel kindly supplied by Irene Sutton and Bill Proctor