



**SA Genealogy &
Heraldry
Society Inc**

**Library
201 Unley Road
Unley SA**

**FACT
SHEET**

Cemeteries

One of the first projects under taken by the Society was the transcription of South Australian headstone inscriptions. Despite the difficulties of collecting information from badly weathered headstones or those covered in flowers, a wealth of genealogical material has been collected since 1973.

Many headstones record more than just name and death date of the deceased. Some note the date and place of birth, others list the names of spouse, children and grandchildren, and a few give fascinating clues to the character of the deceased. The Society's Cemetery Index in its many forms (database, cards, folders, burial register and parish register microfiche) offers a valuable tool to aid family history researchers.

Memorial Inscriptions and Burial Registers may be found in several places in the Society Library. The following may clarify the systems that have evolved.

Cemetery cards

Originally the information was recorded on cards. These are stored in alphabetical order by surname in drawers in several steel cupboards. Within each surname the cards are sorted in alphabetical order of cemetery, with firstly West Terrace (ie Adelaide), followed by Alawoona, Alberton, Aldinga, Ashbourne, Barmera, etc. If there are burial records these are filed in front of the corresponding headstone cards.

Cemetery folders

The same information on the cards has been typed on to sheets that are stored in green folders on the north wall of the Reading Room. These are recorded in alphabetical order by cemetery. Mostly the names have been typed with a line or space between groups of names. This indicates that the grouping is on the same headstone. Again if burial register transcripts are available they have been placed in front of the headstone transcripts. Some cemetery plans and maps to indicate the cemetery location are included. Large plans are stored in the map rack.

Microfiche

A few years ago the Society commenced filming burial registers and these records are now available on microfiche. Generally these are not indexed and thus are not available on cards or in the folders. West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide, is an exception.

Library Computer

The Society's Cemetery Index database has been in production for six years. In time all cemeteries will be included making the above resources outdated and at this time they will be removed from the collection. The library user should always treat this collection as the most up to date and use it in preference to the cards and folders

The database uses *MS Access* and has been designed so that in *Form View* there is a button to find other names and associated information on the same headstone. Try entering surname, *Robinson* and given names **James** or **Jim**. The resultant search includes an entry for James Leo Robinson. Clicking the appropriate button reveals that his wife and several of the Walsh family are recorded on the same headstone.

Searches may be made on any field. All entries for a requested surname may be selected. Another search could be for a particular given name that can be a very useful feature.

Given names on headstones and in burial registers may be nicknames, abbreviations or misspellings. In the *Datasheet View*, after selecting a surname, researchers can sort on the given name and scan the listing to find likely entries.

The Centennial Park database of burials and cremations is also available with searches for surname, given name and last place of abode. The database is current to early 1999.

Lone and Station Graves

A lone grave may be a private cemetery or an unofficial burial place. A station grave is a burial place on a station property. Often these are unmarked graves and locals who may be unaware of the interest of family historians only know the information. It is only with these graves that the Society collects undocumented information. This collection has been superseded by Graham Jaunay's CD, *Lonely Graves in South Australia* which can be purchased from our bookshop and/or viewed on the Library Computers.

Burial Registers

Burial registers have been photocopied and transcribed to complement the headstone inscriptions, as many graves remain unmarked or time or vandals have destroyed the headstone. Where there are burial registers and headstone inscriptions for the same cemetery, the Society's policy is to record each separately. If there are discrepancies between the two records, then the researcher may attempt a resolution.

There are two kinds of registers. The usual is the burial register; however there are also church burial registers that record those funerals held at that church or those performed by that minister. Many of these will be found on the parish register microfiche. Burials recorded in church burial registers may be at various cemeteries. The Centennial Park database records cremations of those who are interred elsewhere or whose ashes were scattered.

Burial Places

A supplement to the Cemetery Index is the database of Burial Places in South Australia. This is an update of the folders in the library and the booklet published in 1989. The database attempts to document the location and brief history of each cemetery, together with information such as the location of the burial register and the date of the latest transcription.

Adapted from an article by Maureen M Leadbeater originally published in *The Genealogist* May 2000