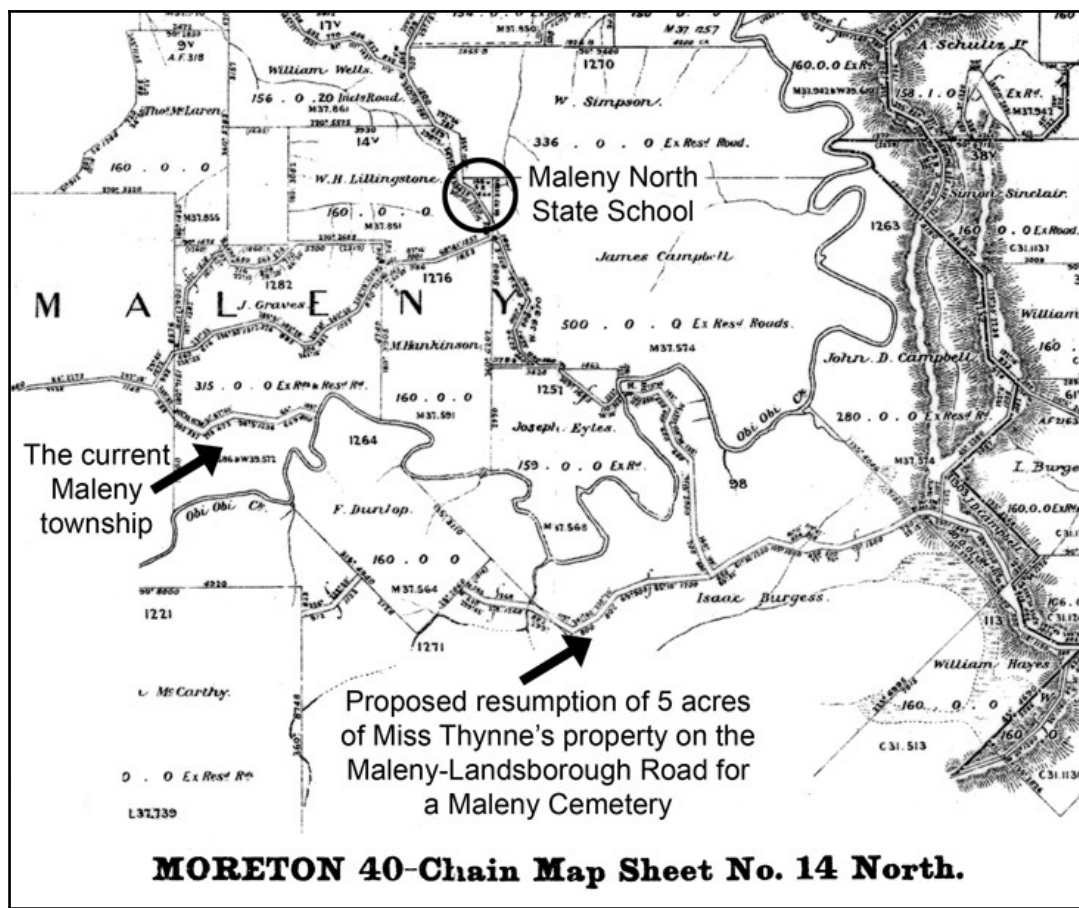


Plans for a Maleny Cemetery

Why does Witta have a cemetery when Maleny does not? The answer lies in the Maleny township being developed on progressive subdivisions of private land. Witta, on the other hand, was granted a 160-acre Reserve for Public Purposes in the centre of its original 1887 agricultural selections. In 1892, the local community successfully applied for a 5-acre Cemetery Reserve on this land, gazetted in 1893.

However, the fact that Maleny is without a cemetery should not imply that one wasn't wanted. A Maleny Cemetery was mentioned in 1909 when the Nambour newspaper reported that "The school and cemetery matters have not advanced much if at all. The secretary of both committees resigned, and I suppose they are looking for another."¹

Late in 1914, Alfred Cooke, Chairperson of the Landsborough Shire Council, described the lack of a cemetery. He reported that the "Maleny people are singularly unfortunate inasmuch as that there is no Government land or Reserves in the district. The land for the School of Arts, Doctor's Residence, and School have all [been] purchased by private subscription, and it is a great burden on the Ratepayers."



Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.

Hoping to acquire Crown land as a Cemetery Reserve, the Landsborough Shire Council asked the Queensland Lands Department for the Maleny North State School site. This newly-closed school had opened as the Maleny Provisional School in 1897, was renamed as the Maleny State School in 1909, and again as the Maleny North State School in 1913. It closed in January 1914. The Council thought that once the school building was removed, the land

1 *The Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 4 December 1909, p2.

would be suitable for a cemetery. At the same time the Council made their request, the Lands Department received an offer to buy the land from Herbert Stanley Pattemore of Maleny (whose property adjoined the school), as well as two petitions (both signed by Pattemore) from “residents and ratepayers of Maleny North” protesting against the proposed cemetery.

Objections ranged from the health hazard of a cemetery being so close to homes and dairies, endangerment of their water supplies, land too steep with a wide stone reef lying close to the surface and because “the present Cemetery on Teutoburg side is sufficient being quite accessible and within Reasonable distance of the Maleny Township.” The Lands Department investigated while the Public Works Department called for tenders for the purchase and removal of the Maleny North State School building. Early in 1915, John Skerman (manager of the Maleny Butter Factory) bought the small school building for £26.²

At a Landsborough Shire Council meeting in April 1915, the fate of the school site was back on the agenda. Alfred Cooke stated that “he had applied for it as a Cemetery Reserve, as a cemetery was wanted, and had suggested to Mr Walker, M.L.A. that if found too stony as alleged, it be sold and the money earmarked for another site”.³ In fact, the investigation by the Land Commissioner had concluded that the site was unsuitable for a cemetery. Only a small area was fairly level, a bar of stone traversed it making the sinking of graves difficult, it was too close to the Pattemore and Simpson homes, and:

“Further, it is the only point in the district from which a view can be obtained of the Pacific Ocean and other various points of interest. The nearest cemetery to Maleny is at Teutoburg, which is about 5 miles (8 kilometres) distant on a good and fairly level road. From opinions expressed by local residents it appears that Teutoburg Cemetery is ample for all requirements. I recommend that no further action be taken in regard to the proposal to reserve portion 415v, Maleny, for a cemetery.”⁴

A month later, Cooke presented the Council with a petition “from twelve ratepayers asking that the Maleny North State School reserve be sold, and the proceeds devoted to purchase a cemetery area”.⁵ The Lands Department agreed. Money from the sale of the Maleny North State School Reserve could be used to purchase “suitable” freehold land for a Maleny Cemetery. Two Councillors would “consult ratepayers with view to securing site.”⁶

No site had been secured by the Council's February 1916 meeting. A motion was then “Moved by Councillor Cooke, seconded by Councillor Warne, that the Chairman and Councillor Watson be authorised to obtain further information re. Cemetery site for report at the next General Meeting of the Council.”⁷ A year passed before Councillor Gay announced that “In connection with the proposal to secure a site for Cemetery purposes in or near Maleny, I regret that the proposal has not yet reached a concrete form.”⁸

At the next Council meeting, the Lands Office advised that the old Maleny North State School site had been sold.⁹ Meanwhile, a potential location for a Maleny Cemetery had been identified: 5 acres on the north-west corner of Miss Thynne's property (Subdivision 1 of

2 *The Brisbane Courier*, 20 February 1915, p14.

3 *The Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 2 April 1915, p4.

4 Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Reserve File No. 1897-107.

5 *The Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 28 May 1915, p3.

6 *Ibid*, 27 August 1915, p1.

7 Queensland State Archives, Item ID ITM893936.

8 *The Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 12 January 1917, p4.

9 A Mr Taylor bought it on a Perpetual Lease for £426 in February 1917 but surrendered the land in September 1918. It was re-offered for auction under similar terms in January 1920. Herbert Stanley Pattemore acquired this land in 1920.

Portion 98, Parish of Maleny). Fronting the main Landsborough-Maleny road on the top of Walkers Hill, the Council hoped the Lands Department would resume it. In suggesting this, the Council was disregarding the Department's request that they buy a piece of freehold land for a cemetery. Payment to come from the sale of the Maleny North School Reserve.

Correspondence went back and forth between Miss Thynne, Thynne & Macartney solicitors, the Landsborough Shire Council, the Land Commissioner and the Lands Department. With Miss Thynne "strongly" objecting to the resumption of her freehold land, the Lands Department advised the Council to find a different site. One not on a main road where it would depreciate the land value in the immediate vicinity, one "which the owner is willing to sell".

Yet no further progress was made. In November 1917, the Lands Department asked whether any action had been taken towards Maleny's cemetery. The Council replied that negotiations were in hand for purchasing a site.¹⁰ However, Maleny was still without a cemetery when a young woman named Lucy Plucknett drowned in the Obi Obi Creek in January 1919. She was interred in the Witta Cemetery:

*"At the cemetery gates the cortege was delayed for a time owing to the absence of the sexton, but fortunately two Justices of the Peace were present, one being the secretary of the cemetery committee, and both being satisfied that the undertaker's certificates were in order they gave him permission to proceed. Incidents such as this should cause the public to urge the Shire Council to procure a site for a cemetery in Maleny, for after a journey of 5 or 6 miles (8 or 9 kilometres) people are not prepared for unnecessary checks of such a kind."*¹¹

Negotiating for land for a Maleny Cemetery seems to have stalled by this point in time. In 1925, after land had been resumed along the Obi Obi Creek for the Maleny Showground, a request was made by the Landsborough Shire Council to the Lands Department. Would it "pay the council the proceeds of a certain cemetery reserve in Maleny to help defray the cost of resuming certain other lands for recreation and show ground purposes"? The Minister for Lands replied that the money from the Maleny North State School site had been granted to the Council for a cemetery. They had failed to make use of it, consequently, any proceeds would remain with the Crown.¹²

Here the story ends. More than 100 years ago, residents of the Maleny district took steps to acquire land for their own cemetery but planning ground to a halt when the Landsborough Shire Council could not secure a suitable site.

From *Lutherans on the Cow End of the Blackall Range*, Appendix B, p155.

Desley Malone
Maleny Historical Memories

10 *The Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 9 November 1917, p7.

11 *Ibid*, 10 January 1919, p4.

12 *The Brisbane Courier*, 24 February 1925, p5.