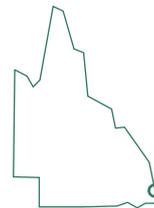


A salute to the cultural heritage of Redland Shire



Leon Beyleveld

Originally gazetted in 1890, Serpentine Creek Cemetery recently celebrated 115 years of service to the local community. To mark this event, a memorial ceremony was held during which Redlands Shire Mayor, Don Secombe, unveiled a commemorative plaque honouring the cemetery's original trustees.

But the cemetery would not look anything like it does now if it wasn't for the work of a dedicated community group and the Greening Main Roads Corridors Program.

Serving as a burial site for many of the first European families that settled Redland Bay, the cemetery – as well as the surrounding vegetation – was heritage-listed in 1999. However, during 1900s, it had fallen into disrepair and was largely forgotten. The burial register was mislaid, and many original grave sites were lost when much of the area was bulldozed in the mid-70s to make way for grazing land.

Enter Friends of Serpentine Creek Cemetery (FOSCC). Founded in 1997 and headed by avid historian Kath Hughes, FOSCC consists of local residents who aim to restore the cemetery and its heritage-listed vegetation, using the Bradley Method (see box).

One of Kath's goals over the past few years has been to locate and identify as many of the 'missing' grave sites as possible. After innumerable hours of intensive historical research and interviews with the extended families of the original settlers, FOSCC have been able to build up a picture of the original cemetery layout.

In addition, FOSCC used ground-penetrating radar scans of the cemetery grounds, aided by geophysicist Jan Francke, manager of the Canadian-based company GroundProbe, who donated the use of the firm's expertise and equipment.

Used primarily by the mining and construction industries, this system uses electro-magnetic waves which penetrate the ground in a vertical section, allowing the user to clearly see variations in the density of the underlying subsoil.

After numerous trips across the cemetery, enough data was collected to compose a three-dimensional model of what lay beneath our feet. The information is currently being collated and analysed. The results so far look promising, and should provide vital information on the history and rich cultural heritage of Redland Bay.



George Hickey and Jan Francke drag the ground probe behind them while being filmed by National Nine News

Revegetating with the Bradley Method

The Bradley Method was developed by Eileen and Joan Bradley while regenerating bushland areas around Sydney in the 1970s and 1980s. It has since been taught in Australia and abroad, and is the preferred method for many community projects. The Bradley Method is based on the following three primary principles.

Work from 'good' bush to 'bad':

Start from sites which have minor weed occurrences, and work toward more heavily-infested areas. In this way, further deterioration of 'good' areas is minimised.

Cause minimal disturbance to the environment:

The site – including soil, understorey, and canopy – should be left in as natural a state as possible, making it less susceptible to further weed invasion.

Do not overclear:

The rate of natural regeneration should dictate how quickly weeds are cleared; only relatively small areas should be cleared of weeds at a time. New areas should only be cleared once initial areas have regenerated and are more resistant to further weed invasion.

Further reading

Bringing back the bush – The Bradley Method of bush regeneration, Joan Bradley (Sydney: Lansdowne Press, 1988)



George Hickey (GroundProbe), Kath Hughes (Friends of Serpentine Creek Cemetery), and Jan Francke (Manager, GroundProbe) check for graves at the Serpentine Creek Cemetery site