

Glenside burial site blessed in 1842

Research on its location



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Cover photo showing likely burial site in vicinity of Lawson trees. Dated 13 November 2023.
Photo: Claire Bibby

Research undertaken and compiled by
Claire Bibby
1 Westchester Drive, Glenside.
M 022 186 5714
E cbibby426@gmail.com
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Introduction

This report is a compilation of research undertaken by Claire Bibby of Glenside of the location of the burial site blessed in 1842 by Bishop Selwyn on the land commonly known over the years as Section 24, Glenugie, Pender Pig Farm, the Reedy block, Waitakaro and now referred to as 28 Westchester Drive.

Recollections of people spoken to suggest there may be two different gravesites in the same vicinity, one up by a bench cut, and another further down the hill slope.

- Bench cut: No one recalled seeing a gravesite on the bench cut. It was a story passed around the locality.
- Hill slope: The gravesite on the hill slope was seen by people, including the May family who lived on the site from 1886 and the Hodge family who rediscovered it after they bought the farm on 1913. People visited it and placed flowers on it. It was still within its picket fence when the Hodge family sold the farm in 1953 to the Pender family.

Location of burial site.

Archaeologist Kevin Jones believes the area on the flat in and near the grove of Lawsonia trees is where the burial site is. His 2011 report is on the Glenside website and includes photographs and a sketch map. <https://www.glenside.org.nz/heritage-archaeology.html>



Probable burial site identified by Jones. Photographed in 2023: Claire Bibby.

Background and timeline

The 1842 blessing of the burial site

There is a burial site of a woman on Section 24. The burial was blessed by Bishop Selwyn in the presence of the woman's husband on 10th October 1842. At the time, the Bishop was passing by on his journey north from Wellington, accompanied by a group of 30 Māori.

The burial and blessing was written about by Susannah Wall in a letter to her sister in 1842 and the date of the blessing was established by the Bishop Selwyn's journal entry. The transcripts of the original letter and the journal are on the Glenside Progressive Association website under the heading Blessing 167 Years Later. <https://www.glenside.org.nz/blessing-167-years-later.html>

30th July 1886 - 29th September 1900

The May family bought 65 acres of Section 24 and named it Glenugie. Descendant Murray Henderson said family passed down the story of the gravesite through the generations. He saw the grave. His recollections are on the Glenside website <https://www.glenside.org.nz/gravesite-memories-westchesterlink-123.html> and in this report (pp 20-21).

The May family history is written in two books *From Glen to Glen The Story of John and Janet May, Their ancestors and descendants* and *Captain John Henderson 1852-1924 His ancestors and descendants*. Their story is also summarised on the Glenside website.

1913-1953

In 1913 the Hodge family bought the farm and lived in the Glenugie homestead. A burial site was discovered by Mr Hodge when he was fencing. He planted Lawson trees around it and people visited it until the Pender family bought the farm in 1953.

This era remembered by Gwen Silvester, Len Stebbings, the Hodge family, Murray Henderson and the Hughes sisters. See Historical Accounts and Recollections in this report and Gravesite Memories on the Glenside website <https://www.glenside.org.nz/gravesite-memories-westchesterlink-123.html>

Between 1953-1963 Pender family concrete over site

In 1953 when the Pender family came to live on the farm, the burial site was still outlined with a picket fence although it was in derelict condition. Ron Pender said that his father concreted over the site. This was likely done sometime between 1953, when the Penders bought the farm, and 1963 as Mrs Christine Pender (wife of Ron Pender) recalled no sign of the picket fence in 1963 when she married Ron and came to live on the property. She did recall the location, as it was marked by a concrete slab.

Sometime after 1979, the burial site concrete removed

Ron Pender says that after their farm was sold in 1976 to Wrightsons, it was left undisturbed for several years. A new owner cleared the surface but the burial site itself was not excavated. A corrugated iron shed/house was later constructed north of the burial site and at the time of writing this report (16 November 2023) remains in situ.

2008 and 2011 Westchester Drive link road archaeology

In 2008 the Wellington City Council employed an archaeologist, Mary O’Keeffe to investigate the area of the pathway of the Westchester Link Road, which was likely to pass through or near the burial site. Gwen Silvester, Murray Henderson, and Ron Pender, who had seen the gravesite were present, along with Glenside residents, Claire Bibby and Ted Neylon. O’Keeffe identified three sites of interest (Figure 13).

In 2011, construction of Westchester Drive began. Kevin Jones was the monitoring archaeologist on site. No evidence was found of the burial site. He felt it was in an area to the south of the existing shed, where Lawsonia trees had been planted. This is the same area where Gwen Silvester, Murray Henderson and Christine and Ron Pender believe the burial site is.

2023 Stebbings Farmland wastewater pipes for future development

In 2023 Wellington Water applied for a consent for wastewater line upgrade involving extension of a new section of sewerage pipe from a point within Westchester Drive outside houses at 98 Westchester Drive extending to the public main at the Westchester Drive and Middleton Road roundabout. The maps supplied show that earthworks will take place near the burial site, 28 Westchester Drive.

See next page

Archaeological reports

There are two archaeological reports relating to the burial site. These were completed when Wellington City Council was preparing to construct Westchester Drive. The O’Keeffe (2009) report and the Jones (2011) reports are on the Glenside Progressive Association website under the heading Westchester Drive West <https://www.glenside.org.nz/heritage-archaeology.html>

O’Keeffe (2009) Archaeological assessment report

In the O’Keeffe report, three areas of archaeological interest were identified and drawn up. See Figure 13 below. A recommendation with four conditions were made (O’Keeffe, p.21):

It is recommended that Wellington City Council apply to the Historic Places Trust for an authority under Section 11 of the Historic Places Act 1993 to modify, damage or destroy archaeological sites within and beside the Porirua Stream, at Glenside.



Figure 13: Areas of archaeological interest

- 1: Glenugie house site and surrounds
- 2: Potential grave site
- 3: Possible bench cut on ridge

The following conditions for the authority are recommended:

1. That an archaeologist monitors all surface clearing, trenching, construction or other invasive subsurface groundwork within the three areas of potential archaeological

sites, as defined in section 2.5 of this report, being the Glenugie house site, the potential grave site, and the potential bench cut site. The archaeologist should be given the opportunity to examine any archaeological deposits disturbed by the development work, and to make recommendations for further detailed examination of these deposits where appropriate.

- 2. Artefacts and material uncovered and recorded during site clearing work will be lodged with an appropriate repository. The developer will pay for the cost of any conservation required for artefacts or material.*
- 3. Artefacts and material recovered will be given to the Glenside Residents Association, to incorporate into an historical display on the history of the area.*
- 4. If the burial is located, the bones will be disinterred and reinterred in an appropriate location, to be decided by WCC, the Historic Places Trust and the Glenside Residents Association.*

Jones (2011) Archaeological Monitoring report

Kevin Jones was employed to monitor the site. He did not find the burial site on the route of Westchester Drive, however he did determine an area where it is most likely to be.

This is the area identified during site visits by locals Murray Henderson in 2008 and Gwen Silvester in 2002 and 2008. In 2023, Christine Pender when looking at aerial maps placed it in this area also. Ron Pender supported his wife's memory, as it matched with what he was told by Gwen Silvester's husband, Jim Silvester.

Jones (2011) recommended:

The area on the flat in and near the grove of Lawsonia trees is now a possibility for the grave site and should be marked off with tape to avoid any disturbance from roading operations.

He supplied images and maps with his report indicating the probable area of the burial site.

See next page.

Note the power pole and elm tree to the right of the photographs, which are reference points for people recollecting the site location.

Probable grave area by Lawson trees. Jones (2011, p.11).



Fig. 2. The unmodified road route looking north-east with Lawsonia grove and probable grave area at left. Compare with Figure 8.

Probable grave area by Lawson trees. Jones (2011, p.17)



Fig. 8. Looking north-east along the road route with the yellow-brown subsoil surface exposed. No grave outline visible. Possible grave area in grass at upper left.

Showing probable area for burial site. Jones (2011, p 12)

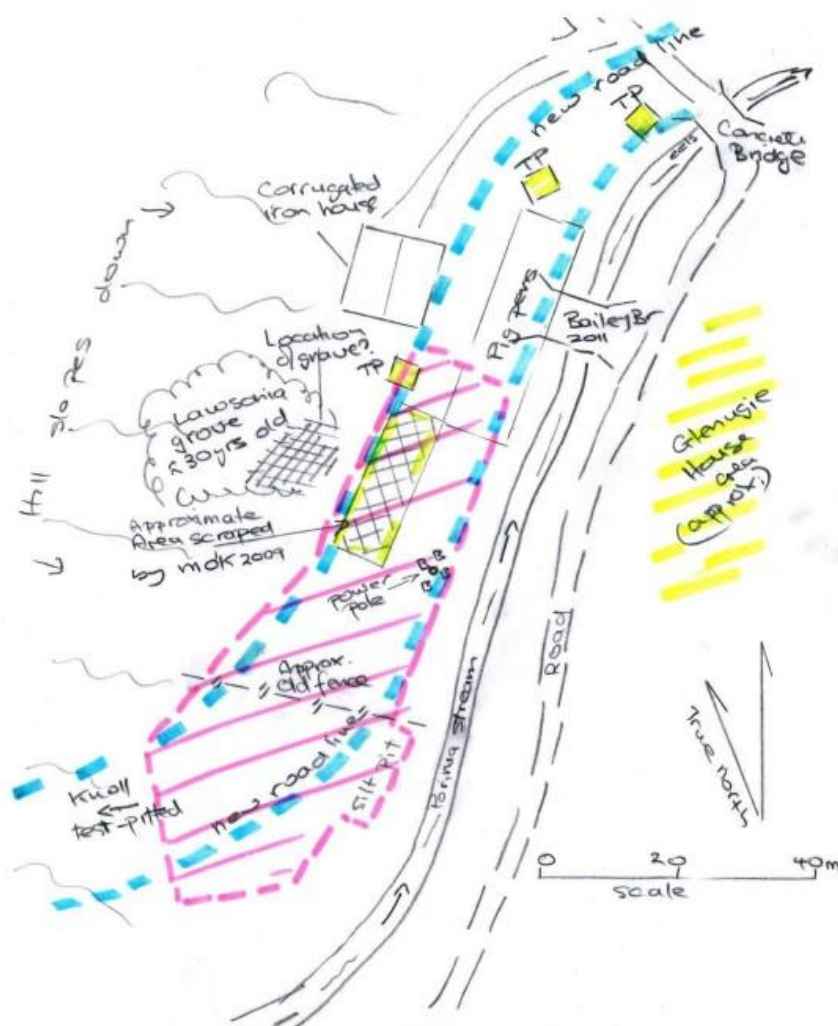


Fig. 3. Area stripped of topsoil marked in pink. New road alignment marked in blue highlighter.

Aerial photographs

Aerial photography was not made available for the community to look at in 2008 when the site visit was made with the archaeologist. The following series of photographs from Retrolens online, is overlaid with sites of interest identified by the community.

Glenugie 17 February 1941



Glenugie 1944



Glenugie 28 September 1945



Glenugie 15 August 1959



Glenugie 16 November 1970

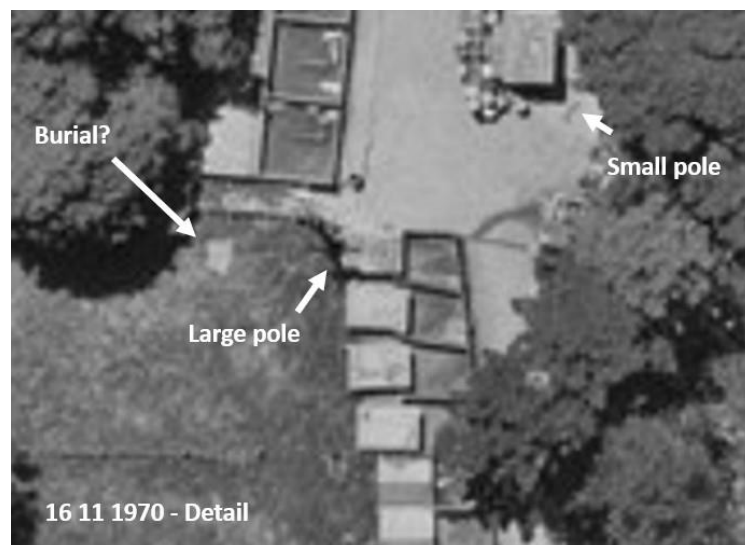
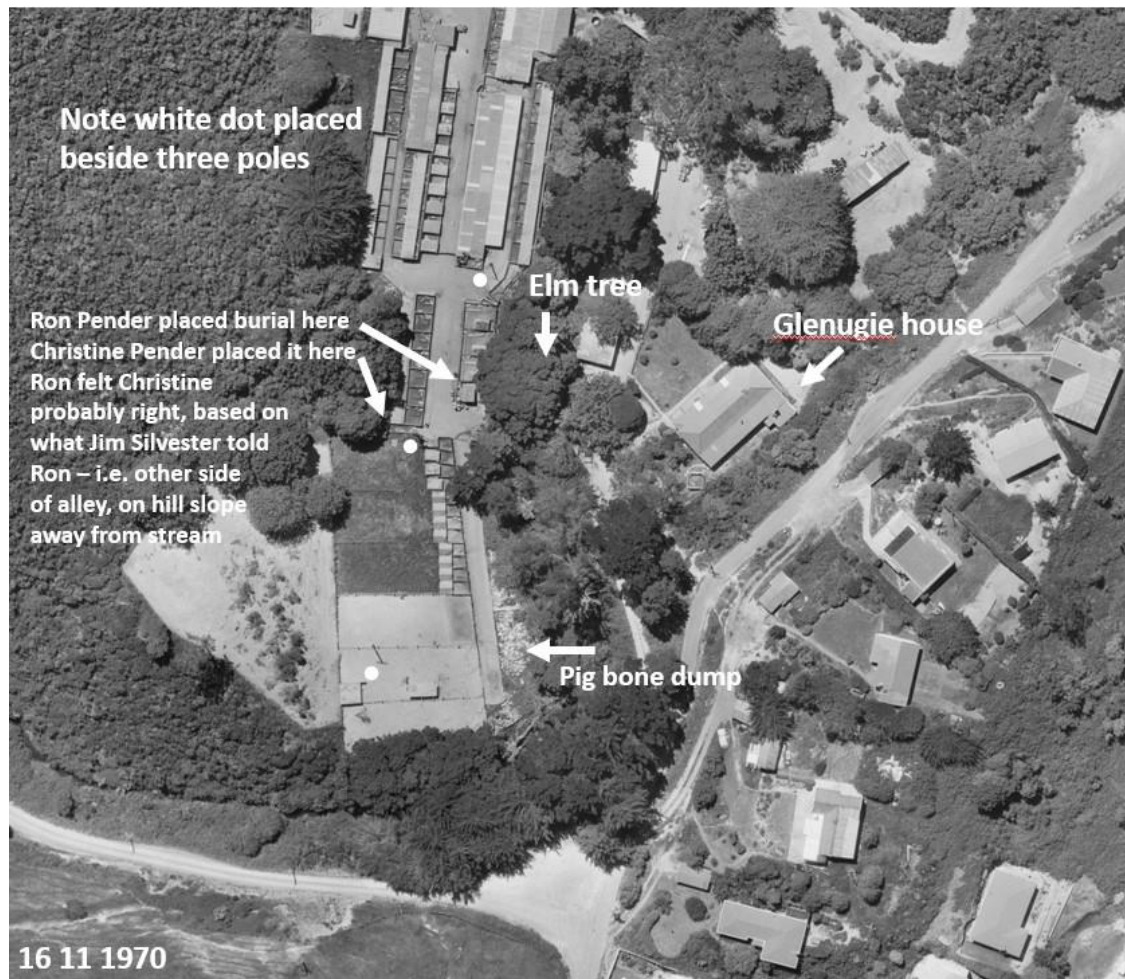
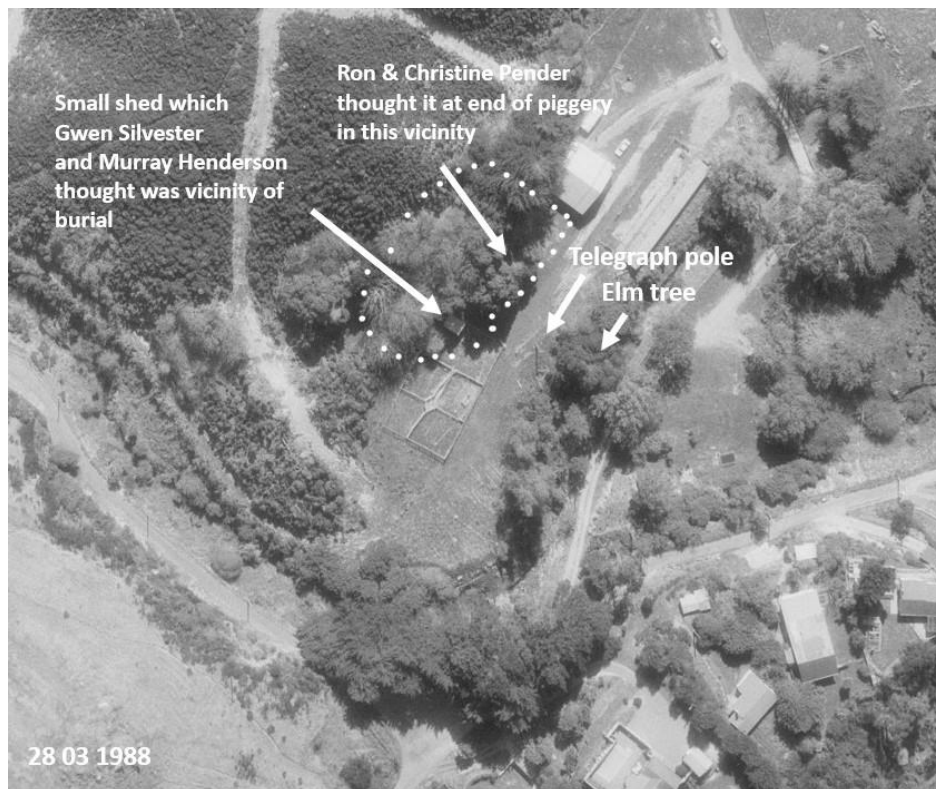


Image shows poles referred to by Ron Pender in his recollections. He had not seen these aerial pictures when he first discussed his memory of the burial site to Claire Bibby.

Glenugie, 10 November 1979



Glenugie 28 March 1988



The pole appears to be in a different location to earlier photographs.

Glenugie 28 February 2022



Glenugie 13 November 2023, probable burial site in vicinity of lawson trees.



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Historical accounts and recollections

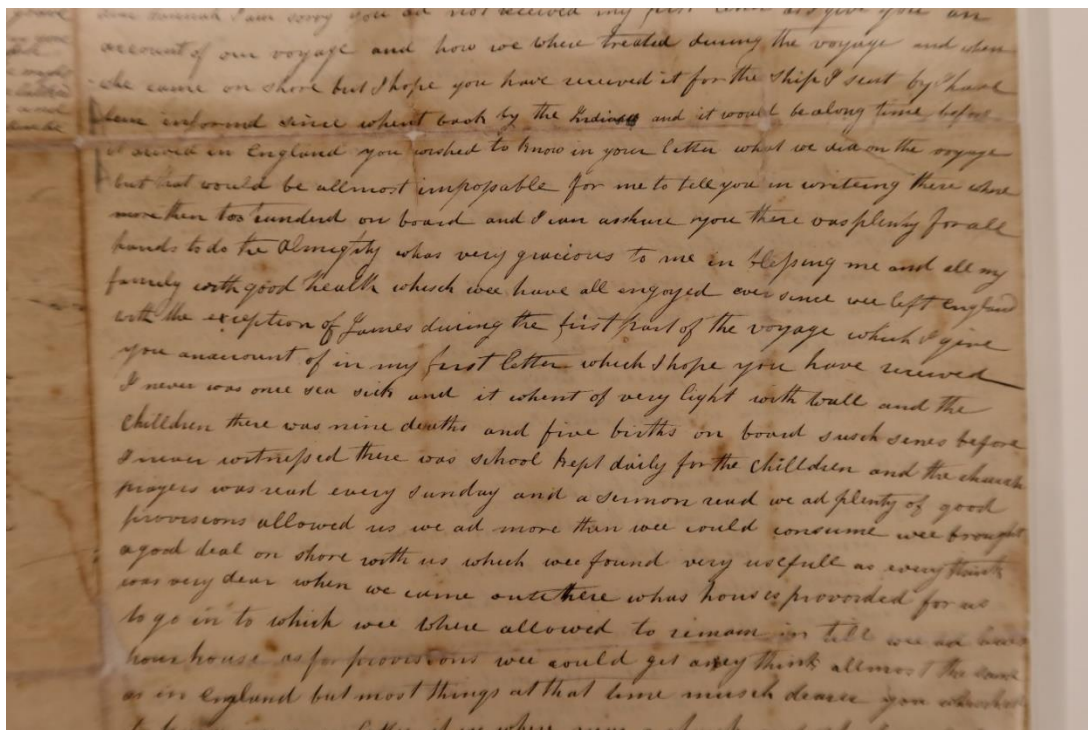
Susannah Wall's letter describing first record of the gravesite in 1842

The gravesite (or gravesites) is located on the Section 24. Section 24 is the name of the original 100-acre lot sold for settlement. Early settler Frank Johnson sub-divided Section 24.

In 1841, settlers Susannah and Anthony Wall agreed to purchase an eight-acre block of land sub-divided from Section 24. Their friend John Whitehouse bought an adjacent eight-acre block. It appears that the Wall's moved onto their block in the spring of 1841.

Mrs Wall wrote a letter in 1842 describing Bishop Selwyn's visit to the burial site. The original letter is held in Alexander Turnbull library.

Wall 1842 Letter



Extract from the letter about the burial and the 1842 blessing by Bishop Selwyn.

In her letter, Mrs Wall writes of the burial site of a woman at the neighbouring house, and Bishop Selwyn visiting the gravesite with the woman's husband and blessing it on his first visit to Wellington. He travelled to Wellington by ship from Auckland and returned on foot, passing the Walls home on his journey north.

The following extract is from a letter written by Susannah Wall to her sisters on December 18, 1842. The spelling is as it appears in the text when it was published in Barbara and Robin Kay's book *Anthony Wall, Settler of Porirua: The Papakowhai Story*.

"My dear Sisters I cannot omit tell you aboute the time as I received your letter the Bishop and several church ministers came in one is stationed at Wellington and the others at different plases in the countrey the Bishop as given the Teustiment

and comonprayer bok printed in there own tongue the Bishop walked through the country to see the natives at different plases and he called at my house it was aboute 4 oclock in the afternoon there was aboute 30 of the natives with him carry his tent and provisions and different things that he needed there is not houses for travellers to call at and accomadation as in england when night comes they must lie down rapt in there blankit and kindle a fire a poor woman at the neighbouring house ad died in the winter and the rodes was so bad at that time she could not be carried down to the burying ground in Wellington and she was burred with oute the buriel servise I told the Bishop and he whent with me and the poor womans husband to the grave and read the burial services I cant tell you my dear sister how I felt at that time but I daresay you can tell my feelings better than I can express my self he hoped if susch a case should happen again that the minister might be sent for and like wise if aney children should be born that he might be sent for to baptise them it happened before we whent to live there I don't think that I ever talked to such a spiritual minded man to all appearance in my life he shook hands with me and hoped that God would bless and propser me and rember the sabath day and keep it holy and when he come that way again he hoped he should have more time to stay and talk with me and he would give me some books for the childldren"

A transcript of the Suzannah Wall letter is also published in *Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road 1840-1982* (1st ed 1956. 3rd ed 1982, pp 33-37.) by Arthur H. Carman.

Janet and Adam Reid

The burial may be Janet Reid (b1787) wife of Adam Reid. The couple came to New Zealand in 1840 on the *Bengal Merchant* with their daughter Margaret Easson Reid (b1832) and bought 80 acres of land on Section 24 at The Halfway. Janet was 46 of 'delicate constitution' and died from 'decline' within months of their arrival in New Zealand.

Refer *History of the Locker Family in New Zealand* (2018, pp 15-24) by Joyce Brown.

Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road 1840-1982 by Arthur Carman

According to Carman (1982, pp 73-74) Adam Reid sold his section in 1844. Subsequent sales of his land and adjacent land were sold to George Brown, who by 1854 had bought 87 acres. Brown later sold to Macdonald, who sold to Charles Pichoir de Launay, who sold to the May family in 1886. In 1900 it was sold to John Collings Moxham. In 1913 Moxham sold to John Oswald and William Hodge. Carman's research did not support a local view that the burial was Macdonald's wife (1982, p. 38).

"The unknown grave is on a hill near Hodge's house."

Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road 1840-1982 (1st Ed 1956. 3rd Ed 1982, p. 74.) by Arthur H. Carman.

The recollections of Len Stebbings (refer pp 21-23 in this report) are that Mr Hodge found the grave when fencing and planted Lawson trees around it.

Recollection of Gwen Silvester nee Rowell, 25th March 2002

Visit to the old Glenugie farm, by Mrs Gwen Silvester, with Claire Bibby, and with Seamus and Rachel Acton, nee Reedy, the landowners on Monday, 25th March 2002.

The Rowell family lived in Glenside (The Halfway) from 1901 – 1911 farming the land adjacent to Stebbings. In 1919 the family returned to the area buying Ivy Bank Farm aka Nott Homestead, and lived there until 1949. Rowell's have lived in the Glenside area ever since. Gwen Rowell married Jim Silvester and lived at 12 Glenside Road, previously named Stebbings Road, on her marriage before retiring to Johnsonville.



Gwen Silvester in skirt. Rachel Acton nee Reedy in trousers on 25 March 2002. Photos: Claire Bibby.

During the visit, Gwen thought the burial site was near the centre of the yards or under/adjacent to the small shed. The yards were investigated by the archaeologist Kevin Jones in 2011. The shed was removed for Westchester Drive construction however the area around the shed and trees were not disturbed as it was not part of the Westchester Drive construction.

On the site visit, Gwen and Claire parked at the top of the driveway, the corner of Glenside Road and Stebbings Road, and walked on down to the bridge [on the Reedy property, to cross the stream]. The purpose of the visit was for Gwen to point out the old grave site. From the top of the [Reedy] drive, looking across to the yards, she thought it was in the centre yard.

Gwen: There were three yards, one two three, and I'm sure it was in the centre one. Is that what Murray [Henderson] said? *CB declined to answer.*

Gwen: (Looking across at the Glenugie homestead site). "I remember visiting there when I was a little girl. I used to walk down. It was a fine house. It had six bedrooms. I used to take flowers along to that grave.

Gwen: (Walking onto the bridge). This isn't the original bridge. The first one got washed away in a flood and Stewie Pender had to replace it.

Gwen: (Pausing by the bridge, looking over it to the left, to an old tree). "That's where Mrs Hodges did her washing. There was a copper there.

Greetings made to the Acton family.

A slow walk past the corrugated iron shed [Acton house].

Gwen: Could a water diviner find it, or something like that?

Claire: I've heard of bone diviners.

Rachel: If we look on the internet we'll find something. It's just a matter of finding the right place.

Gwen: Do you want to find the gravesite?

Rachel & Seamus: Oh Yes. We should have it marked. She was the first white women buried here, not just one of the first immigrants to live here.

Gwen: I suppose I've gone past where Murray said it was.

Claire: No, you're OK.

Gwen: Where did he say it was.

Claire: You're on the right track.

Gwen: (Halting suddenly). Now that tree. How old do you think that is? What is it? It's not a native is it?

Claire: No.

Gwen. It's older than those lawsons, and I think it might have been here. It's an adult sapling of the old tree that was here before, I'm sure.

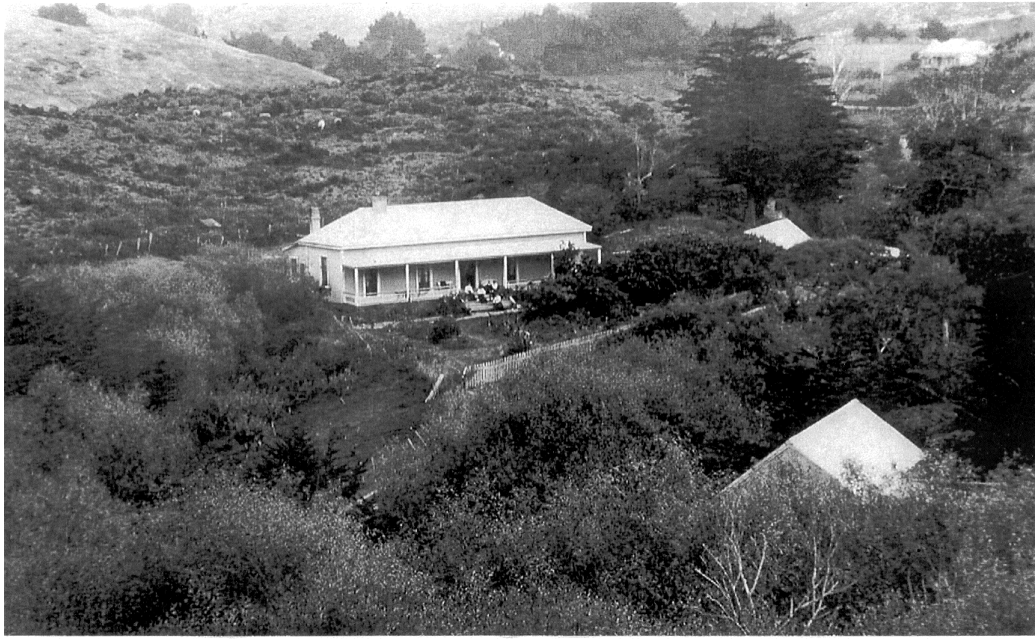
Claire: Do you think it was here?

Gwen: I know that the grave was on the slope of the hill.

Rachel: Do you remember walking up a hill?

Gwen: No. It was on the slope of the hill, and it had a white picket fence around it. Mr Hodge used to keep it really neat and tidy. He would have been heart broken when he saw what Stewie Pender did with it. He bulldozed the site flat.

Recollection of Murray Henderson (1928-2008) in 2008



Glenugie, 1886. Photo source: Murray Henderson.

Murray Henderson is a descendant of John and Janet May. The May family purchased their part of the original Section 24 on 30 July 1886 from Charles Pichoir de Launay who had recently built a house there. The May family named their farm Glenugie. They sold on 29 September 1900 and moved to Johnsonville.

Murray grew up in Johnsonville, spent his youth wandering the hills of Glenside, and continued to walk in the area in his elder years. He was present when the archaeologist conducted her first site visit on 9 April 2008.

"I saw that gravesite when I was a lad. It had white picket fences around it and a white wooden cross. That's what I remember."

"I do believe that whether they find it or not, there should be recognition in the form of a tablet, stone or plinth. It can't be totally ignored."

"Even if it isn't established where the site is, the fact it was there on that property is not a myth. Some of us still living remember it. We know it was there. My ancestors, the May family, lived at Glenugie from 1886 to 1900 and they looked across at it from the front porch of the house there. This fact was passed onto us by the family when we were growing up."

"They looked across at it every day. It was there with a little picket fence, just as there were many little picket fences around graves, and wooden crosses and wooden

compounds around gravesites. Many of them have fallen down now and they are only there if the family repair and strengthen them."

Recollection of Gwen Silvester (1920-2011) nee Rowell on 9 April 2008

Gwen recalled visiting the grave as a child and in her later years. She said that at one time it was acceptable for the public to walk to the grave and the Hodge family, who owned the farm at the time, enabled it to occur.

"We were allowed to walk to visit the grave then. We walked down the driveway through the gateway and cut back along a path here beside the stream. There was a bridge, an old log, across the creek and some steps cut into the bank. You walked up them and onto the flat. The grave was along there."

"It had a picket fence around it, a white picket fence. I used to paint it. Mr Hodge had it all looking nice. I would bring down fresh flowers to put on that grave. I remember walking up from the creek along the flat there to visit it."

Recollection of Len Stebbings (1909-2009) on 2001, 2002 and 2004

Conversations held at Olive Tree Apartments in Palmerston North.

Len Stebbings was born in 1909 and the Stebbings lived on the Stebbings Valley farm from 1863. The Stebbings farm boundaries was adjacent to Section 24 and the families lived within a short walking distance of the gravesite.

Bill Hodge married Mina Oswald, whose family had bought the farm on which the grave was located. Len Stebbings recalls that Mr Hodge was fencing and disturbed the grave.

"He hit wooden boards. When he realised what it was, he planted lawsonia trees around it."

The bench cut and the Maori track

Len Stebbings also recollected a bench-cut into a hill above the stream where a lone pine grew. He produced a photograph that showed the cut and shared his thoughts about it.

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Stebbings Road, left. The Accommodation Road can be seen going up the hill left, beside an old fenceline. Also visible is Stebbings gate on Stebbings Road. On the right is the pine on the hill, for which the Stebbings farm, Pine Hill was named. Photo source: Len Stebbings.



Pine on the hill, right, for which the Stebbings farm, Pine Hill was named with the bench cut referred to by Len Stebbings. In 2012 this bench cut was partially sliced away for the construction of Westchester Link Road. Photo source: Len Stebbings.

Recollection of Len Stebbings on 30 June 2002

“Now something that puzzles me is this photo. I wondered what this excavation was. Do you think the woman was buried up here? In the old days we used to see a lot of Māoris walking from Makara, over a track from Ohariu, through our property. This track wound around by the bush and came around the hill down the northern side of the stream. They followed around the stream to the old Porirua Road and headed into Porirua that way. I don’t know if this excavation is an old Maori track or not. It could be a grave site. It could be a house site. Mr Johnson was originally the owner of the farm and it may have been his wife who died. He got rid of the farm early and went to live in Johnsonville.”

Note: The burial site is not Frank Johnsons wife. Johnson family descendant, Sylvia Irwin, who lives in Canada and visited Johnsonville in 2010, said Frank and his wife Ann migrated to New Zealand on the ship Adelaide on 7 March, 1840. Two sons were born in New Zealand. After some years in New Zealand, the family returned to England and later settled in Canada.

Pine Hill, 2012



*Cutting into the pine hill bench cut in 2012 for construction of Westchester Drive link road.
Viewed from Glenside Road. Photo: Barry Blackett.*

Recollection of Mrs Elizabeth Blackmore, on 14th April 2003

Relative of the Hodge family. Conversation with Mrs Elizabeth Blackmore of Newlands.



Glenugie. Undated. Photo source: Elizabeth Blackmore.

Elizabeth Blackmore in 2003. "I remember the grave. If you were standing on the front porch of the house [Glenugie] it was across the creek and to the left."

"We lived at Newlands and the Pender's lived at Newlands as well. Ron Pender's Dad was the local carrier and that's how we knew them, being on the farm and all. My Uncle [Hodge] lived down at Glenside and of course, they sold the farm to Penders."

"As a girl I used to go down and visit my Uncle at Glenside. I remember the grave. If you were standing on the front porch of the house [Glenugie] it was across the creek and to the left. There were some orchard trees and a fowl house and the grave was fenced off there. We never went near it, it was sort of spooky I suppose. There were trees along the stream and a few were apple trees. I remember those because we would get the blackberries and then the apples."

Recollection of Mrs Joyce Hodge, in August 2002

Joyce married Jim Hodge, son of Bill and Mina Hodge. Conversation with Mrs Joyce Hodge of Mana held in August 2002.

"I cannot tell you where the grave was. Jimmy always said he would take me and show me, however the site was overgrown and there was blackberry so we didn't ever get there."

"I was a Johnsonville girl when I met Jimmy. I used to go down to the house often. It was a grand home. You went in the front door and it was like a reception hall. It had a big, long sweeping front porch with doors opening onto it. There weren't many houses around Glenside in those days."

Recollection of Mrs Jean Pender, on 20 November 2005

Jean and Stewart Pender bought the Hodge property in 1953. Conversation held with Mrs Jean Pender of Levin on 20th November 2005 when Mrs Pender was 85.

"In those days we had a Sports Post. It came out on Saturday night. The Sports Post interviewed us at the farm about the grave. They took photographs and everything. Myself, I remember the big iron fence around the grave. It was a fancy iron fence. We never used that part of the farm, where the grave was. It was over by Stebbings Creek as it went around Stebbings Road. Gorse grew up around it. There were a few trees there and it was a bit hilly. We knew that he had permission to bury his wife there. He got special permission."

When pressed, Mrs Pender could not recall who "he " was but said the Sports Post had the story.

Telephone conversation with Ron Pender, 15 November 2023 at 09:20 am

Ron is the son of Jean and Stewart Pender.

"The photographs were taken by Arthur Carman or Ross Gore. Ross Gore did a cartoon series on the history of New Zealand which was published in the Sports Post. That's his cartoon in the Tawa Flat book about the gravesite."



Refer *Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road 1840-1982* (3rd ed 1982, p.38).

Recollection of Ronnie Pender, on 9 April 2008

"I was a little boy growing up here. I always remember the site as flat. I used to sit in my dad's truck as he drove past the grave. I would sit on the steps of the old house and look across at it. There was an elm tree by the creek. This elm here is the same one. [He indicates the tree]. I would look past the trunk, through the leaves at it. I do remember it was at the end of the piggery. Half the piggery has been pulled down now, so I have to estimate where it would be based on my memory of where the piggery ended. There was also a telegraph pole that I used to mark the site in my memory."

Recollection of David van Weede, on 10 April 2008

David spent his childhood growing up in Glenside. His mother was van Weede nee Fitt and came to live in Glenside as a married woman in 1938. In his response to an e-mail question about whether he recalled a grave in Glenside and where it might be located, he first suggests the same location as Mr Len Stebbings. He also recalls a grave on the flat land across the creek. It's possible there are two gravesites.

"Now the only one I'm aware of and I have to admit that it was a 'fable' is the site on the hill west of the farmhouse where there is an excavated flat area. It was thought that a family was buried here and I think there is/was a Maori track running through this part. You will see it on our old Glenside movie where a couple of trees come into view followed by a lone pine tree."

"I can't remember who told me about the grave site, it was just one of those things that as kids you 'pick up'. The pine tree site was supposed to have hoops of wire buried there to mark the spot. No one to my knowledge saw any evidence of it. If I remember correctly there is an old Maori road/track that commences from that pine-tree site heading in the direction of the Stebbings farm."

To a suggestion there may have been a gravesite opposite the homestead, across the creek, Mr van Weede responded further....

"You have touched a memory cord. Yes I vaguely remember the site. It's not where I thought it was but as you described opposite the old homestead. I can just remember a few palings (what were white a long time ago) fence in bad condition even in the 40's."

Recollection of Diana Flatman nee Broderick on 27 April 2008

The Broderick family first settled at The Halfway (Glenside) in 1845 and remained in the glen until 1965. Diana spent her first 18 years living here.

"I seem to remember there was a grave on top of the hill. There was a tree at the top of the hill. It's a matter of separating what is gossip and what is fact. I can't recall who told me this. I wish my Dad were alive because he would know. I know there was a woman buried there for a fact."

Murray Henderson and Ted Neylon on 19th May 2007

Conversation with Ted Neylon and Murray Henderson at Glenside. Murray was visiting Claire Bibby and Ted called in.

Ted: "I was doing some work on Wrightsons (formerly Penders) and came across a picket fence and old bedsteads. Jim Silvester wandered down and said, "Don't knock that down, that's the graves."

"His wife Gwen used to take flowers to them. I cleared around it, and sprayed and brushed it."

Both agree the site is above the stream on the Stebbings/Glenside Road stream bend, west side [of the stream].

Ted Neylon, on 12 April 2008

Visit from Ted Neylon. Ted called by to see whether there was any news on the gravesite being located, following the site visit with the archaeologist Mary O’Keeffe.

“I’ve got a bet on with that lass [archaeologist]. I think them others have got it wrong. It’s further down in that blackberry there beside the creek. I know that because I saw it there and I spoke to Jim Silvester about it. I was listening closely to Gwen [during the community walk with the archaeologist Mary O’Keeffe].

“She said how they used to walk down through the gate to the drive and cross the log. Now that gateway was further down the drive than it is today. She said she walked back [toward the corner of the creek] to cross the log. I remember that log. She said that after crossing the log, she went up some steps cut into the creek bank and walked up onto a flat bit to the grave. That would place where I said it is.”

“Now I saw that gravesite. What I saw was a fenced off area. The posts were driven in, not dug in. There was old picket and bedsteads around it and it was about seven foot square. I asked Jim Silvester about it and he said it was a grave site and told me there was a Maori woman, who worked down there on the land buried there. There were two burials. One was a lady and a baby and one was the other woman.”

“I think if Gwen was on her own she would have walked down past the cattle yards. Those cattle yards were built by Best when he had [leased] the land. I was with a guy from Wrightsons when he took lots of photographs down there after they bought the land off Penders.”

Ted was advised by Claire Bibby that Gwen had visited the site some years earlier and did not place the burial site close to the creek, she placed it on a hill slope in the same area that Murray Henderson had.

Ronnie Pender, on 12 April 2008

Conversation with Ronnie Pender over telephone at his home in Masterton on 12 April 2008 following the site visit to Glenugie/Waitakaro with archaeologist Mary O'Keeffe.

"That grave was concreted by my Dad. He didn't feel good about doing it, but it was the only way to save it."

"We sold to Wrightsons in about 1976. They only had the place for about three years and then they sold to someone else. John Coulter grazed it. He worked for Wrightsons, and he grazed the block as well as grazing Stebbings farm. Basically Wrightsons left everything as it was. They did nothing with it. Then they sold it to someone. Was that when Gunn (Dunn?) had it? It was when he had it I went down and saw that the gravesite had been bulldozed. It was the surface, not down below. They had bulldozed everything off alongside the creek. That's what Ted remembers."

"You know when we left the place last week, and I went over and stood about where the front steps of the old house [Glenugie] was. I looked through the trees there across the creek to where I remembered the grave. It's possible it's where Murray said it was, but I remembered it to the right of that old Elm tree, not to the left."

"I think it was sad but that grave seemed like it was gone and forgotten after we left the property."

[Christine Pender, Ronnie's wife calls out] "You bought me to the farm in 1963 and pointed out to me where the grave was, but it wasn't there. There was nothing to show for it."

Claire:

"You mentioned an elm tree."

Ronnie:

"Yes. Along the creek there. It had been there all my life. It's hardly grown at all."

Claire:

"Len Stebbings told me one of his ancestors, either his father or the Riddicks, was a Cartwright and planted elms along the creek for his business."

Ronnie:

"Is that right? That would be right. Elms are used for the spokes of cartwheels."

Claire:

“I found some [of my] notes where Len said there was a grave up on the flat by the lone pine. I dismissed it because no one else said that, but then I heard from someone who lived here back in the thirties and they talked of a family being buried up there by the lone pine.”

Ronnie:

“Now that’s interesting. You know I talked to you of the old fort we played in up the hill above those trees where Gwen and Murray were, there used to be a totara tree there. To the south of that there was a pine on the edge of the ridge. It was there until the gorse crushing and burning when Gunn had the property. It was nice up there. It was a sheltered spot in the sun and it was flat.”

Claire:

“Len and this guy both said a Maori track ran around the side of the hill there.”

Ronnie:

“Is that right? Well that area hasn’t been disturbed at all. They might have to come back and look at that.”

Margaret Richardson nee Hughes and her sister Shirleen Hughes on 9th August 2008

Interview on 9 August 2008, Luckie Street, Tawa. The Hughes lived on the present-day site of Twigland Gardeners World.

Margaret: “We came to Glenside as a family in 1926 and lived there until Dad retired at the age of 65 in 1967.”

Shirleen: “The grave was at Hodges, which was the name of the family who farmed the land it was on. When we read your Onslow book we were surprised to know that a woman was buried there. We only knew it as a baby’s burial site. It had a white picket fence around it. As you went around the Stebbings Road corner it was across the creek. We used to put flowers on it sometimes. They were just little bunches of wildflowers, but it was the thought and that’s what we did.”

Recollections of Ron and Christine Pender, 15 November 2023

Telephone conversation at their home in Dannevirke.

Ron states:

“When we went there it had a little wooden fence around it. It was falling into disrepair. When I was a little kid and went around the track south, on the back of my Dads truck, I remembered it on my left but that was wrong. Jim Silvester corrected me - it was on my right when going south. Dad concreted over it and a pig pen was built over it. He said that was the only way to save it. He later built more pig pens to the south of the gravesite. Wrightsons didn’t do much with the land. They were in their early stages of forming a development company. At a later time the area of the gravesite was covered over. When we were there with the Council guy and the archaeologist [2008] I felt that they were not really listening to what I had to say.”

I asked Ron if he could remember Ted Neylon doing the site visit with us, and what he thought of Ted Neylon’s memories.

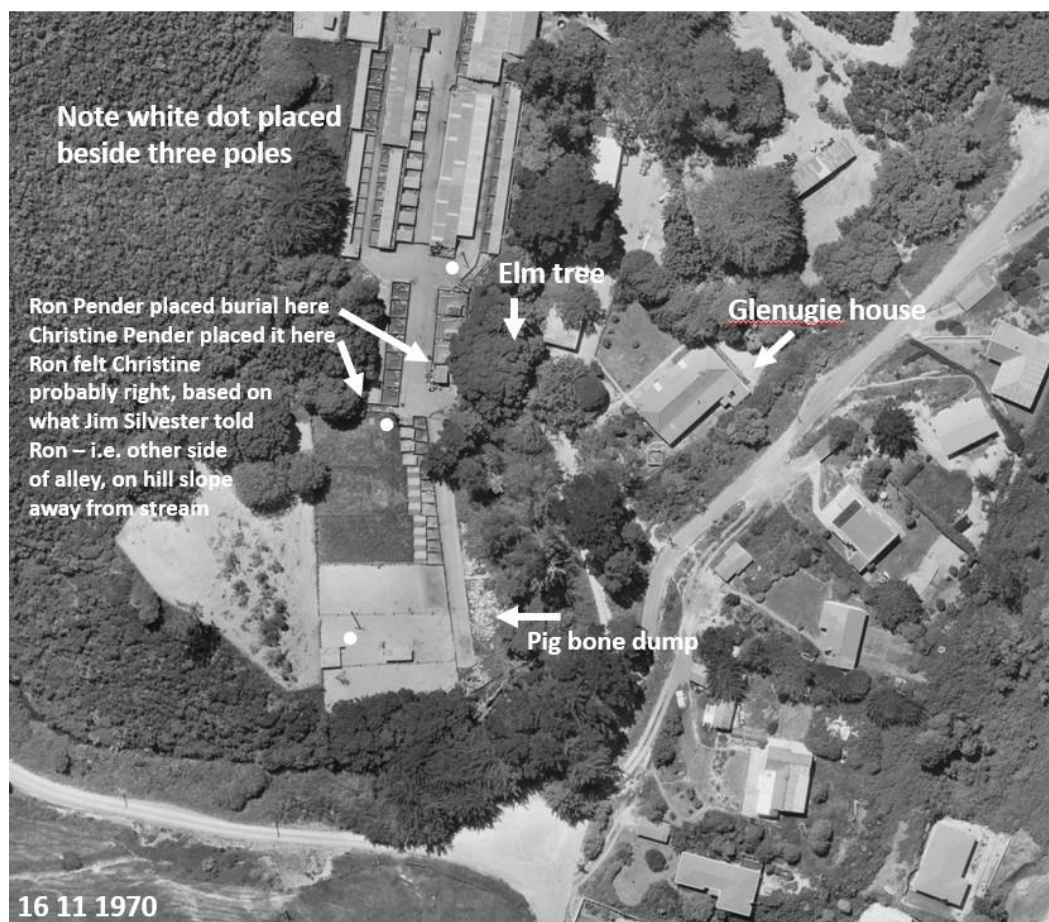
“Ted Neylon came to Glenside after the site had already been covered over by my father with the pig pen. Ted got things half right, but he was wrong about where the thought it was. He never saw it.”

“He was affected by the link road. So were we. I don’t think that Council took any notice of us because of that. I don’t think Council were really that interested in finding it.”

Aerial photograph e-mailed to Christine and Ron Pender to see if they could identify the site.

See next page.

Glenugie 16 November 1970



Ron Pender:

“If you sat or stood on the front steps of the old house, you could look to the left past the elm and that is where the gravesite was. If you see those four pig pens along by the stream, then pig pen three and four are about where I remember it. I thought it was here because I remember as a child, my father asking the men to put the telegraph pole further along to avoid the burial site. Christine remembers differently and she would be about right as Jim Silvester later told me it was further in, up the hill, not beside the stream.

Christine Pender:

“It was area off the end pig pen on the other side of the alley, to the west of those four that Ronnie identified. When I stood by the letterboxes on the Stebbings Road corner before going down the drive to the old house, I would look across the creek and see where it [once] was. Everyone would say it was in a different place, but we knew.”

“I did see the actual grave site, a corner of it falling to pieces. I remember that when I was very young. When I was married to Ron (1963) I remember driving along

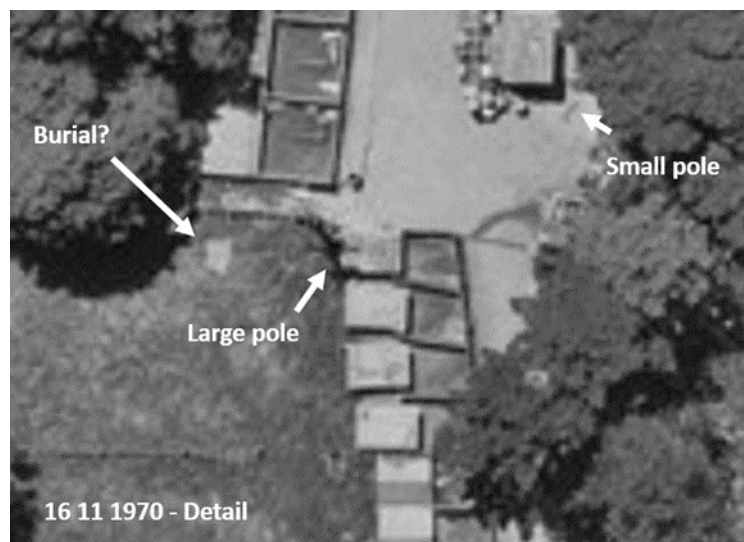
Stebbings Road to stop at the mailbox on the corner there. I would always look beneath the pine branches across to it. It was across the stream, slightly to the left in front of me. I knew the slab of concrete where it was. It always stayed in my mind as something dreadfully sad that poor woman buried there all alone. I also thought of it when we were doing the bones (i.e. throwing bones in a heap on the side of stream bank southeast of the burial site).”

“All those references, the elm tree, the telegraph pole, the house steps – they all point to the same area.”

Recollections of Ron and Christine Pender, 16 November 2023

Telephone conversation at their home in Dannevirke.

The image dated 16 11 1970 emailed to Penders and discussed, along with the enhanced image below of same date.



Claire:

There is a pole at the end of the four pig sties that you remember Ron, but I see there are also a row of poles through the centre of the photo. Which is the one that you remember being moved to avoid the grave?

Ron:

Maybe I had it wrong. Those poles were placed because we were using an enormous amount of power. We had a Mill to grind dried wheat into grain for the pigs. We also had sludge pumps that use a lot of power. At one time it was the biggest pig farm in New Zealand. It had 3000 to 4000 pigs. We used quite a lot of power. The line came down Stebbings Road and across the farm. It was when they were putting these poles in that they avoided the grave. They had to place them in a designated spacing so it was discussed when they avoided the grave.

Claire:

Looking at the image I have enlarged, what is that flat area in the grass next to the pole?

Ron:

I'm not sure.

Claire:

Christine what do you think it is?

Christine:

Well, it's in the area of the gravesite. It was the higher ground than all the ground around, it was on the high point.

Ron:

It fits with that line of the steps of the house and the elm and the pole. I was speaking to my brother Barry yesterday and he agreed with Chrissy where it was.

Claire:

Would he be interested in me emailing the aerial to him to look at?

Ron:

He doesn't really do email. It's better to go and see him.



Photograph showing relationship between elm and lawson trees. 11 May 2023.

Photo: Claire Bibby

Glenside Progressive Association website content

The Glenside Progressive Association website has information about the burial site on their community website.

<https://www.glenside.org.nz/gravesite-overview-westchesterlink-124.html>

GRAVESITE OVERVIEW

GRAVESITE MEMORIES

GRAVESITE ARCHAEOLOGY

LOCATING EVIDENCE

GRAVESITE LOCATION

MEETING 8 APR 08

MEETING 30 APR 08

BLESSING 167 YEARS LATER

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT

GRAVESITE MEMORIAL

2013 MEMORIAL UNVEILING

MEMORIAL HISTORY



Memorial to the woman buried near-by, designed by Charles Gordon and constructed by Wellington City Council. Unveiling in 2013. Photo: Claire Bibby

End