

Back in the time of late Victorian Dunedin, death was a lot more visible and the value and visibility of the monument erected was considered of utmost importance. Elaborate and expensive monuments meant high social status. The angel carvings you will come across on this Angel Walk through Dunedin's Northern Cemetery are testimony to a set of values vastly different from those of today.

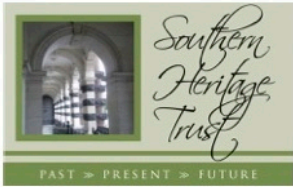
Most of the marble monuments you will see were carved by Italian masons and exported to New Zealand. Some would have an equivalent monetary value of around \$100, 000 today. This would lead one to believe that these all belonged to wealthy and prominent families. Some families are nevertheless very hard to trace.

Although popular belief had it that infants and young children turned into angels when they died because they were exempt from sin, most of the angels are dedicated to adults. In this case, the angels are the messengers of God and guardians of the soul. They inhabit the threshold between this world and the next and function as a guide of the spirit as it parts with the body and ascends to the next stage. The way that some of the carvings are rendered is very diverse and the iconography of some of the angels is very religious, while that of others is not.

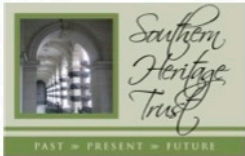


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Angel Walk



Walk with Angels through the Northern Cemetery and discover the hidden stories behind the gravestones of Victorian Dunedin.



Mary Ann Bardsley (died 1884, 58 years)

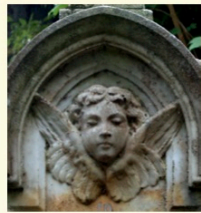


Walk up the path to William Larnach's tomb with its unmistakable spire. Turn left and pass the tomb.

The marble angel in front of you was carved in Italy and exported to New Zealand. Her hands are clasped together in a gesture of longing and loss as she looks skyward. The style of the carving is idealised, the features classical, yet simplified. This sculpture is dedicated to Mary Ann Bardsley, the wife of Moses Bardsley, who set up the first soap-manufacturing firm in New Zealand in Cumberland Street in 1859.

From small beginnings, the company soon grew into the largest and most complete of its kind. Messrs Bardsley and Son was also the first soap-manufacturing firm to turn their attention to the manufacture of toilet soaps on a large scale. Their 'Prize Pal' soap had a reputation all over New Zealand. The competition presented by the McLeod Bros, another soap-manufacturing factory that was also situated in Cumberland Street (next to the present-day Cadbury factory), may have proved too much for the survival of the company.

Isabella Smaill (died 1910, 73 years)



Go back to the steep grass path towards the gully. Turn left before the trees.

The next angel is a 'putto', the face of a child angel, its sleeping face framed by its wings. It was also carved by an Italian mason and probably imported, purchased as a ready-made and put on display at a local monumental masonry firm.

Child angels are usually dedicated to dead children, but Isabella Smaill was not a child when she died, so perhaps the imagery associated with a child angel held particular significance for her husband and family.

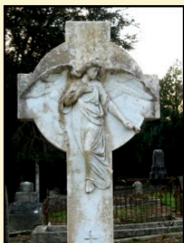
Isabella arrived with her parents on the *Strathallan* and settled in Tomahawk, Dunedin. Later she brought up a child as an unmarried mother on her own, not an easy path to take in those days. She married George Henry some time later.

Abby Cotter (died 1897, 49 years)

Walk up behind the Sproule angel and take the next right turn. Look out for a white marble cross.

This very white marble angel was made in the late 19th Century. You will notice that she is carved in a very fine manner and she looks as though she is hovering in front of a cross.

Abby's angel looks downwards, as if in direct communication with the dead and waiting for their resurrection and journey to the next world. In her left hand she holds a wreath, which is a symbol of mourning and respect.



Margaret Smith (died 1899, 34 years)



Turn left off the main path and look for two draped marble columns. The one on the right marks the grave of Margaret Smith (nee Gollar) and the one on the left is that of her parents.

Margaret's story is a tragic one as she died at the young age of 34 from complications following the death of her third still-born child. After the early death of her husband John Smith, their four children went to live with "Grandma Anne Gollar".

Beneath the column you will see a depiction of a winged globe. Although this is not strictly a depiction of an angel, it signifies a spirit with wings. This monument is devoid of Christian iconography and it employs the Freemason symbol taken from the Egyptian representation of the sun god Re.

Margaret was born in Otago, the daughter of well-known Dunedinites. Her father John Gollar (buried just across the way) was a Londoner who learnt the trade of baker in Australia, where he was sent as a convict in 1838. Along with his brother-in-law he made his fortune supplying baked goods to the workers at the Otago goldfields with a horse and cart. Subsequently he set up a shop in the Octagon, which was burnt down by the Octagon fire in 1865, and from then on he had a bakery and confectionery shop at the corner of Albany Street and Leith Street. Margaret's future husband John owned a bootmaker's shop, also in Albany Street.



Margaret Gollar

Albert Edwin Freeman (died 1881, 2 yrs 8 mths)



Retracing your steps to the main path, proceed up the hill and, at the "STEWART" grave on your left, turn left and proceed to the third opening on your right.

The winged angel face may commemorate Albert Edwin Freeman, child of Joseph and Janet Freeman.

There are ten people buried here, including four infants. The winged angel face signifies their fleetingly short lives. The gravestone is a four-sided tapered column, an obelisk, which is an Egyptian word meaning "protection". This is a symbol of everlasting life, representing in stone a ray of life-giving sunlight.

Christiana Ellis (died 1905, 66 years)

Follow the main path around the top of the gully and turn left.

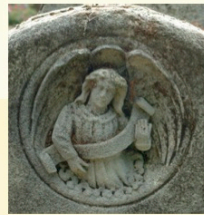
The angel depicted in flight is a symbol of resurrection and rebirth.

Although the carving of the mourning figure above her is definitely Italian in style, this relief angel could have been carved locally because the features are less Romanesque. It seems to have been carved by a hand that was not accustomed to working with this medium.

Christiana and her husband Ephraim Ellis came to New Zealand from Yorkshire, England, where they worked in the notorious textile mills, often working more than twelve hours a day, six days a week, barely to survive. With a strong desire to escape this grim existence and the hope of making a better life for themselves in a new land they set sail to New Zealand in 1873 with their four children. But disaster struck when on its way to Port Chalmers, the *Surat* was shipwrecked near the Catlins on New Year's Eve. Although no-one died as a result, it turned out to have dire consequences for the Ellis family. Due to an enforced three-week stay in the Catlins at Guthrie and Larnach's sawmill, the job of managing a ten-loom wool factory in Kaikorai Valley, that Ephraim had been promised, went to someone else. As a result, the family continued to experience much financial hardship. Ephraim managed to set up a small backyard textile mill in 1877 with his brother-in-law. He did not live to see the company he had set up blossom into the successful textile factory, Arthur Ellis and Co., led by his son Arthur.



Mary Norton Bonfield (died 1879, 28 years)



Look ten metres below Abby's angel and find the next angel beside the green railings.

This angel is the second-oldest angel grave in Otago, dating from 1879. The depiction is a medallion-like one, the angel framed in a circle on the gravestone.

She is holding a scroll, which is a symbol of life and time; the rolled-up ends indicate the mystery that surrounds the beginning and the end of life. This is the only angel grave where there is almost complete certainty that it was made by a local carver because it is carved from Oamaru stone. The style indicates that the carver was probably of British origin.

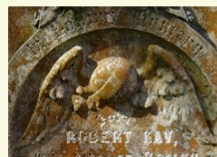
Matilda Eleanor Harvey (died 1923, 55 years)

Across the path from the Maori head memorial (commemorating the Taranaki Maori prisoners of war buried in the cemetery) is a huge tree. Follow the steep path behind it (beginning with steps) and turn left at the top of the path.

This angel holds a rolled-up scroll and a quill, which represent life and time. Angels are often shown holding scrolls and quills, as they are the recorders of peoples' lives. This angel was carved relatively late and is more stylised than the rest. Connection-points on either side of the sculpture show that it was once part of a larger headstone. This may have been altered upon the burial of her husband Arthur in 1954, when the grave seems to have been renovated.



Robert Kay (died 1905, 68 years)

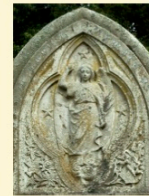


Retrace your steps up to the main path, turn right and take the next grassy path down to the right, turning right again at the end, where this next winged globe "angel" is to be seen a short distance away on the left. This is the second angel gravestone commemorating a man.

Another winged globe which also is a literal depiction of time flying. It represents the fleeting temporality of life, this life being short compared with the eternity that awaits. The drapery around the top of the column of the gravestone represents the pall (white cloth spread over the coffin during the funeral service) symbolising the deceased being clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

We have been unsuccessful in our search for information on the Kay family.

Beryl Irene Gillies (died 1906, thirteen years)



Retracing your steps to the main path, proceed straight across the path and begin the descent into the gully. Turn left after the first block of graves.

The angel is pointing heavenwards, signifying the pathway to heaven, and her eyes are half-closed, indicating the sleep of death. At her feet, on the left lies a cross (symbolising salvation) surrounded by poppies, which are a Victorian symbol of eternal sleep.

Beneath her other foot is an anchor surrounded by lilies. The lilies signify purity and resurrection, while the anchor symbolises hope and an object to cling to for safety. Although this is also a marble carving, her features and style are not classical and there is a possibility that she was carved in New Zealand.

Beryl Irene Gillies was the daughter of Octavia Yulu Gillies who arrived in New Zealand from England on board the ship *Auckland* in 1879, as a child of twelve years. She was one of eight children. Her future husband was on the ship with her and the two families became friends and remained in contact after the voyage.

Ellen Sproule (died 1903, 55 years)

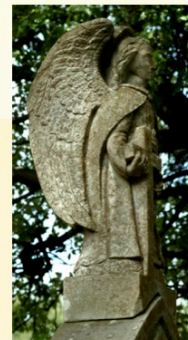
Rejoin the main path and look out for a free-standing marble angel.

This angel is again classical in style and austere in her appearance. She stands high above you on a pedestal and looks heavenwards, holding a cross, symbolising Christ's redemption of humanity from sin.

Like the first angel, her attire is simplified rather than fancy. The relative importance of the pedestal in relation to the angel is a sign of the times in which it was commissioned. Solidity, frugality and hard work were prized over romanticism and ornament by the Presbyterian Scottish sensibility of the early settlers of Dunedin.



Elizabeth Muir (died 1881, 24 years)



Close by, search beneath the large silver birch for the grave of Elizabeth Muir.

Again, this angel is definitely not of Italian origin and it may also have been carved locally. The angel has been added to the top of the gothic headstone, that may be of Scottish origin. The clasp on the cross and the rendering of the features indicates a naïve, pre-renaissance style.

Frank Elliott (died 1906, 37 years)

The next angel sculpture is another free-standing one. It can be seen downhill and across the main path. The first of two angel gravestones commemorating the death of a man, this one is dedicated to Frank Elliott.

This Italian carved angel stands upright, holding a lily that symbolises purity, chastity and virginity, but also death. The hands are clasped in a gesture of wholeness. Compared to the other free-standing carvings of Italian origin, this angel is altogether more peaceful. Her eyes are cast down to the ground and her attire is more elaborate than that of previous angels.



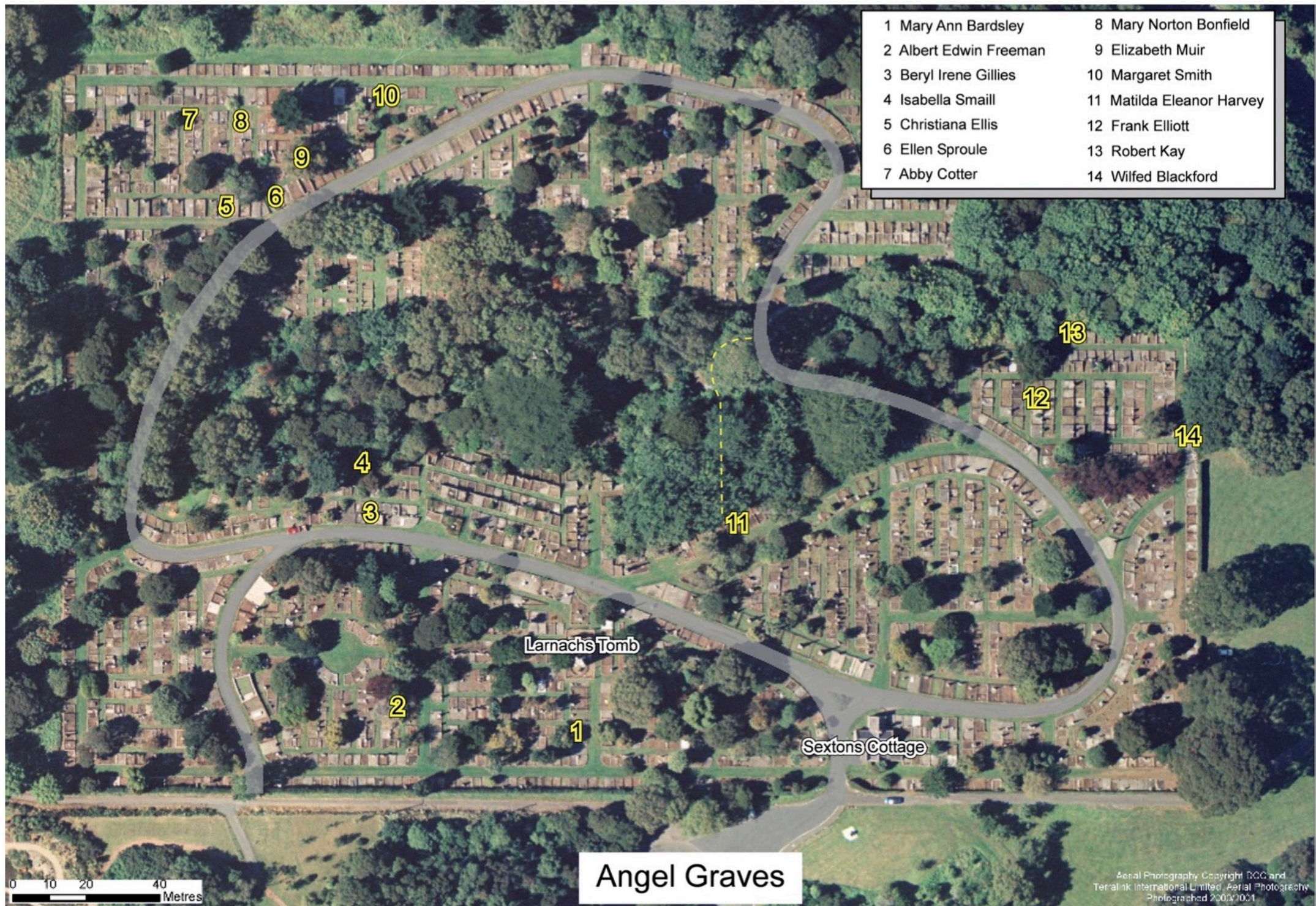
Wilfred Blackford (died 1902, six years)

The last angel you come to, after continuing downhill to the lowest corner of the cemetery then turning right and going uphill a short distance, is a child angel.

Its cherubic appearance signifies innocence and suggests that it is dedicated to the child, Wilfred Blackford, who was six years old at the time of his death in 1902. According to the popular beliefs of the time, children turned into angels when they died. Strangely, there is no last name engraved to give a clear indication exactly who he was. The angel holds a small bunch of flowers, symbolising the frailty of life.



The identity of the boy and his connection to 'Martha Crust' and 'George', who also rest here, is shrouded in mystery.



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|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Mary Ann Bardsley | 8 Mary Norton Bonfield |
| 2 Albert Edwin Freeman | 9 Elizabeth Muir |
| 3 Beryl Irene Gillies | 10 Margaret Smith |
| 4 Isabella Smail | 11 Matilda Eleanor Harvey |
| 5 Christiana Ellis | 12 Frank Elliott |
| 6 Ellen Sproule | 13 Robert Kay |
| 7 Abby Cotter | 14 Wilfed Blackford |

Angel Graves