

# Official Opening of the Cemetery Extension



at

**St Joseph's Catholic Church,  
Willunga**

by Fr Charles Gauci

**Sunday, 8 June, 2008**



*Thank you to all who have helped to  
develop this cemetery extension*

*.... "I am the Resurrection and the Life", says the Lord ....*

## Thank you

At the time of the sesqui-centenary of St Joseph's Church in 2001, it was becoming clear that the existing cemetery was almost full. The Parish Pastoral Council had already declared that graves in the cemetery would not be re-used, so an extension was necessary.

A small subcommittee consisting of David Manders, curator of the cemetery, Mark Nalty and Eva Treen of A.L. Nalty Memorials, Patrick Simms, Bill Stevens, Terry Maloney and Fr Charles Gauci began a long process of consultation, survey, council applications and final approval for an extension of the cemetery towards St Mary Street.

Bill Stevens oversaw the development of the rose garden option; the St Anthony committee funded the building of the gazebo - erected by Terry Ford with the floor done by Don Rivers; the granite seats in the gazebo were donated by A.L.Nalty Memorials; Brumar Contractors was engaged to survey and construct the beam section and the vaults. David Treen and David Manders organised the cremated remains section. Roy Stone carried out extensive earthworks and parishioners planted trees and shrubs supplied by Maureen Gould.

The Saturday morning men's group - Alec Kelly, Mick Fitzpatrick, Alby Fabijan, Brian Sulda, Brian Crosbie, Terry Maloney and others - have continued the development of the area by regular maintenance and mowing.

The parish community is very appreciative of the advice and support provided by curator David Manders, and non-parishioners Eva Treen and Mark Nalty, whose knowledge and experience have been invaluable in the development of the cemetery.

## Early settler

In the early days of the settlement of Willunga, before the Church was built, an early settler was buried in open ground to the west of the Church site. No records confirm the identity of this person, and the location was forgotten for many years after the early slate tombstone was broken by a plough and dragged away from the grave in the 1940's or 50's.

During the 150th anniversary of the building of the Church, the University of Adelaide was invited to investigate the lost burial site. The grave was found using electrical sensitivity which detects anomalies in the density of the soil.

The coffin had disintegrated and the remains were embedded in clay. The remains were then exhumed and cleaned and taken to the University for examination, revealing that they were the remains of a male between 6' (182 cm) and 6'4" (192 cm) tall, who had been physically sound and of good health throughout his life. Before dying in his early 30's, he had suffered no broken bones while alive and his teeth were sound.

The cause of death is unknown. There was evidence of a small lesion on one shinbone, but this would not have been the cause of death, and he may have been unaware of its presence. There was evidence that he had suffered a dental abscess, which may have led to his death. Equally, he may have died of another infection that left no mark on his skeletal remains.

The research carried out contributed to new understandings of the detection of buried human remains of benefit to police and forensic science.

Mr Bill Lock from the Bangor Slate quarry donated the slate headstone for the grave, and A.L. Nalty Memorials engraved the inscription and installed the memorial.

Local lore suggests that this man may have been an Atkinson, but no confirmation is available. His remains were returned to Willunga in 2005 and reburied in consecrated ground.



..... *May he rest in peace* .....