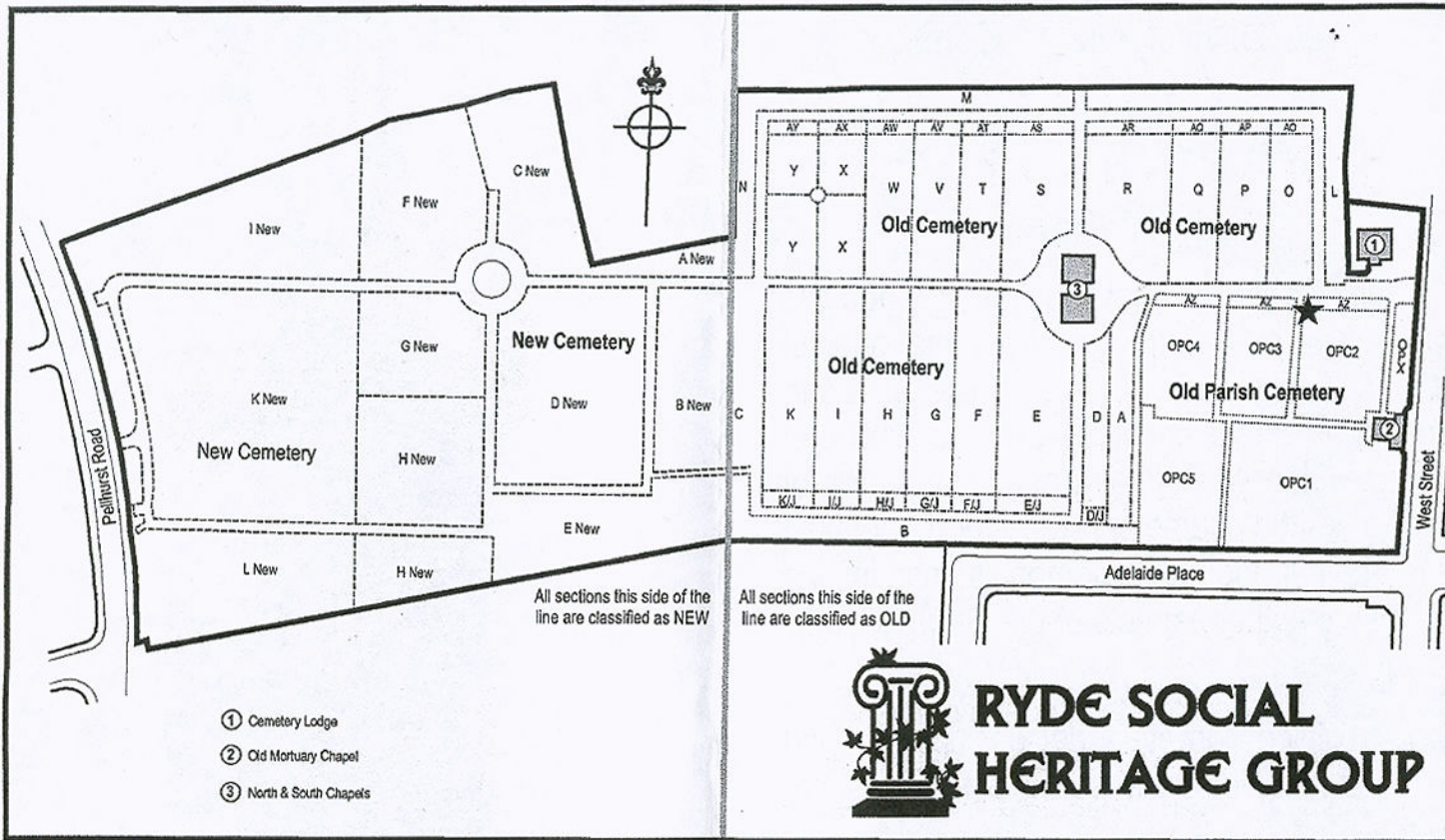


DEVELOPMENT OF THE CEMETERY



The Map above shows the whole of the Cemetery as it is today with the various Sections and Sub-Sections marked. The Ryde Social Heritage Group have produced Maps of the whole Cemetery with the position of individual graves indicated. The Maps and the Alpha Indexes will be available in the Learning Centre in the North Chapel to facilitate the location of individual graves.

THE OLD PARISH CEMETERY

By the early 1840s the graveyards of St. Thomas' Church and Holy Trinity Church were filling up and more space was needed for burials. In 1840 Thomas Player, who was Lord of the Manor of Ryde, offered one acre of ground as a gift to the people of Ryde for that purpose and this became known as the Old Parish Cemetery.

The Chapel of St. Paul was built at this time but later became the Town Mortuary and is now known as the Old Mortuary Chapel. The grave of Lawrence Brown, where there is a black star, is the oldest grave identified by the RSHG on which the whole inscription can now be read.

THE OLD CEMETERY

By 1861 further land was required and the Cemetery was extended by the purchase of a further four acres from the Player estate. This area became known as the Old Cemetery and is clearly marked on the map. The area to the north-east of the Main Carriageway covering Old Sections O to R shows quite a large depression and is known as the Sandpit Area. In 1863

the Lodge by the West Street gate was built for the Cemetery Superintendent. The Lodge is now privately owned and is occupied by the Chairperson of the Ryde Social Heritage Group.

The Central Chapels were built at this time with the southern Chapel being Church of England and the northern Chapel Non-Conformist. The southern Chapel was used for some time by the small congregation of the Church of St. Boniface. The Restoration Project has refurbished the southern Chapel, including the stained glass windows, and converted the northern Chapel into a Learning Centre with modern facilities. A Sexton has been appointed and will be based in the Learning Centre.

The two Chapels are linked by a wooden structure with a slate roof which used to support a Belfry with a low toned bell which was tolled at funerals. This practice ceased in 1872 when local residents complained about the noise. The Chapel of St. Paul was closed when the Central Chapels were built. Areas of the extended Cemetery were set aside for the burial of Roman Catholics and Non-Conformists.

THE NEW CEMETERY

By 1881 a further extension was needed and more land was purchased from the Player estate to extend the Cemetery westwards to its present boundary with Pellhurst Road. This area is known as the New Cemetery and is at a slight angle to the earlier part of the Cemetery. There is a section cut out of the northern boundary where there was a Market Garden whose owner asked too high a price for it. The Council refused to pay and so the northern boundary excludes that area.

The Cemetery was developed on farmland and meadows and is rich in flora and fauna as it had not been extensively cultivated. In Spring the carpet of primroses is wonderful and there are some quite rare orchids to be seen including the Green Winged Orchid.