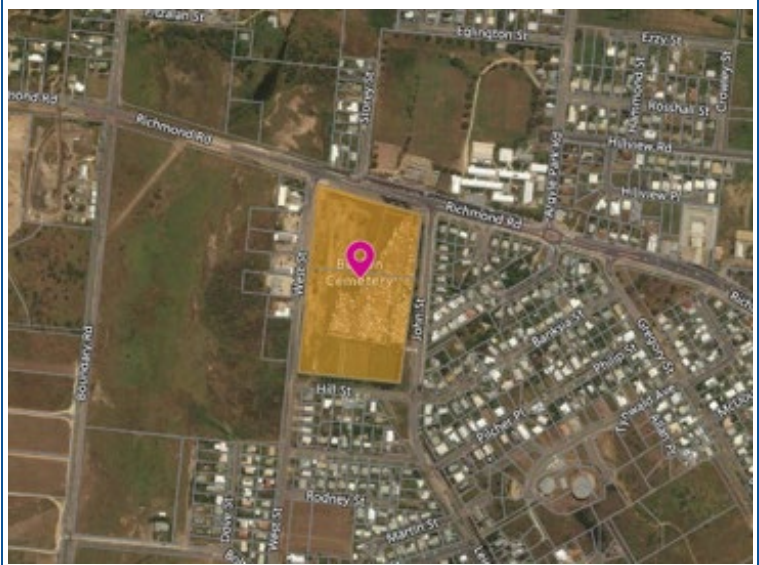


**BOWEN GENERAL CEMETERY**

<b>Address</b>	John Street, Bowen
<b>Lot Plan</b>	309HR991, 315HR991
<b>Coordinates</b>	(E: 629022 N: 7788004)
<b>Integrity</b>	Fair
<b>Condition</b>	Fair
<b>Statutory Listings</b>	Nil
<b>Non-Statutory Listings</b>	Nil
<b>References</b>	Flemington Road Cemetery, Queensland Heritage Register Entry Place ID 601487 Australian Dictionary of Biography Website: James Morrill, <a href="http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/morrill-james-2484">http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/morrill-james-2484</a>

**Street View**

**Location Map**

**Physical Description**

Bowen General Cemetery is located on the rise of the hill in Bowen and is bounded by the Richmond Road to the north, John Street to the east, Hill Street to the south & West Street to the west. The cemetery is accessible via John Street and from Richmond Road.

Bowen cemetery comprises an old monumental cemetery, that is divided into rather indeterminate portions, and a lawn cemetery. In the north-east corner of the cemetery are two red brick columbaria. The lawn cemetery sections are located to the south of the site.

The lawn cemetery comprises two sections, the eastern section has only flat headstones and grass-top graves. The western section has low rise, kerbed headstones and grass-top graves. The rows of graves in the lawn cemetery alternate between facing east and west.

The monumental grave area is comprised of three sections which run north to south. All the graves in the monumental sections face east, however where adjacent to the pathway, some headstones face west. The sections of the monumental grave area are divided by cement pathways which connect to the footpath along Richmond Road to the north.

Approximately, the oldest graves are located to the north of the centre of the monumental grave area. There are several fenced family sections with uniform headstones. Headstone types and styles are varied.

Within the central monumental section, towards the southern end is a group of children/infant graves. It is noted that this is not the only location of infant graves within the cemetery.

An obelisk to James Morrill is located in the centre of the cemetery.

A toilet block is in the centre of the John Street frontage, amongst the monumental section.

Landscaped gardens border the monumental section to the east along John Street, around the south-east portion of the lawn cemetery and along the Hill Street frontage of the site. A white brick entranceway is located at the centre of the John Street frontage. A small grove of trees is located within the central monumental section to the north. Borders of trees is planted along the north and west boundaries of the site.

There are no mausoleums in this cemetery.

## Historical Context

Bowen was the first port established in North Queensland. The settlement was officially proclaimed on 11 April 1861 and named Bowen after Queensland's first Governor, Sir George Ferguson Bowen. The township of Bowen quickly grew to support the northern pastoral industry as a strategically placed supply centre.

Over the course of several decades, it developed into a thriving commercial port and community. Bowen soon became a major administrative and commercial centre and was declared a municipality on 17 March 1863. As with other towns in Queensland, a cemetery reserve was created when the town was surveyed.

Located on John Street, the cemetery was the first of two cemeteries established in the town (the other being on Flemington Road). The Flemington Road Cemetery was used alternatively with the cemetery on John Street between 1878 and 1954. Following 1954, all burials were allocated to John Street.

According to local newspapers, the cemetery on John Street had a history of neglect that was much lamented by the locals of the time. In response to this problem, a board of trustees was appointed, and on 13th July 1867 the Port Denison Times printed rules and regulations of the cemetery in the hope of improving its condition. By the 22 February 1868, these rules had been found ineffective in improving the condition of the site. Shortly after this period, public and governmental dissatisfaction arose not only in response to the poor state of the existing graves, but also for the cemetery's inappropriate location for future burials. It had been found that graves were filling with water at a shallow depth, and grave diggers were finding it increasingly difficult to keep coffins out of the water. As noted above, both cemeteries were operational between 1878 and 1954.

The Flemington Road Cemetery closed in 1952 when an area of approximately two acres was surveyed around the existing graves and classed as Portion Number 95, Reserve 54. The rest of the land was sold to a Mr Nicol whose father had allegedly leased the land previously. The John Street cemetery contains the graves of numerous early Bowen settlers. It also contains the memorial obelisk to James Morrill, an English-born sailor who was shipwrecked on Horseshoe Reef off the Great Barrier Reef in 1846. Morrill lived for seventeen years with an Aboriginal group around Mount Elliot and ranging between the Black and Burdekin Rivers. When Europeans came to Bowen in the early 1860s, Morrill returned to live among them. He was appointed to the Department of Customs at Bowen, and in January 1864 accompanied George Dalrymple on the expedition to open the port of Cardwell. He died in 1865.

## Historical Significance

**Criteria A** - *the place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history*

Bowen General Cemetery demonstrates the early phase of settlement in Bowen. The gravestones of various early settlers provide an accurate representation of the notable residents in the district and demonstrate the families who have made a major contribution to the district.

**Criteria I** - *The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons important to the region*

The cemetery is significant for its spiritual and symbolic value to the Bowen community and because of its continuity of use as a burial place for the region.



