



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.

