A photo-story/fact sheet resource set that introduces students to some of the objects such as torches, wreaths and scrolls we see in heritage cemeteries and the meanings they held for Victorians that are often hidden from us today.
WREATHS

- The circle is a pre-Christian symbol for eternity and never-ending life and circles can be seen often as part of the decoration on a gravestone.

- Wreaths symbolise memory and evoke classical Greek culture.

- The wreath of olive leaves symbolise victory in the ancient Olympic Games.

- Laurel wreaths are often used as a symbol on Roll of Honour boards commemorating those who died in the Great War.
Inverted Bouquets

- Inverted bouquets are a symbol of death and mean life is extinguished.

- The flowers within the bouquet shown here represent different attributes many of which can be found elsewhere in this booklet.
  - Roses symbolise the shortness of life
  - Wheat symbolises a long and fruitful life, immortality, resurrection.
  - Daisies are symbolic of the Virgin Mary (simplicity and purity).
  - Primrose symbolises love, memory, youth, hope.
  - Pansies or violas symbolise thoughts.
Broken flowers usually denote a life cut short and were often used as a symbol for the death of a child.

The broken lily (right) is the symbol used on the Fogo memorial in the Northern Cemetery in Dunedin. The Fogo family had two lives cut short. The Fogo’s young son died in 1875 aged 11 months. Twenty-five years later Sarah Fogo was convicted of killing her abusive husband and spent 11 years in gaol for the crime. She died at age 70 and was interred in this plot with her husband and baby son. The headstone probably dates from around 1875.
Books represent the Book of Life, which according to the bible is opened on judgement day. The dead are judged by what is recorded in the book.

Books and scrolls often appear held by a hand or laid over a plinth. Scrolls unroll downwards and are never completely unfurled. They represent a life record traditionally being kept by the angels with the future and past both hidden in the top and bottom.

 Scrolls are also used for honour and commemoration.
The Anchor

 Anchors are often found on the graves of seafarers or where the deceased may have been lost at sea or in a shipwreck. However the anchor does not always mean the person had any connection in life or death with the sea.

 An anchor is symbolic of holding a ship steady and in position despite stormy weather conditions so faith in the resurrection of Christ holds a person steady through the storms of life.

 Often the anchor will be shown with a cross symbolising both the promise of resurrection and the faith based upon it.

 In the lower image the anchors form part of the fence for the plot.
Torches & Lighthouses

- Flames, because of their colour and movement, symbolise life. An inverted torch represents the flame of life being extinguished.
- In the case of the picture on the left two inverted torches are shown clasped by the dove and the olive branch indicating the deceased are at peace.
- Lighthouses symbolise a lighting of the pathway for the deceased towards the day of judgement and resurrection.
Curtains & Veils

- The veil which often looks more like a stage curtain symbolises the journey or passage from life to death.

- Veils are meant to protect as well as conceal.
Draped Urns

- Today urns are the containers for ashes after a cremation. However, cremation was abhorrent to Victorian Christians who believed burial was a preparation for the afterlife. Instead, urns for Victorians were symbolic of fate or the lottery of life.

- Urns were often draped with a veil and garlanded with flowers.

- For many centuries urns have shown flames emerging from the top, which are symbolic of life, like the torch, and suggest new life associated with death.
Many headstones are partly covered with a large tasselled cloth. The cloth sometimes covers an urn, the top of a pedestal or an obelisk.

- The cloth is called the pall and is symbolic of the large cloth that covers the coffin during the funeral service.

- Each church parish once had a pall, which was hired out for funerals. The pall was usually white representing the purity of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary and decorated with symbols such as the Cross, or the Greek letters alpha \( \alpha \) and omega \( \Omega \).

- The pallbearer, a word still used today, originally meant the person who held the corners of the pall during the funeral.
**Clasped Hands**

- Clasped hands symbolise the hands of the deceased and the living clasped in farewell.
- The hands are usually placed horizontally with the index finger of the male pointing down. The hands shown are always the right hand of a female on the left and that of a male on the right. The female hand is shown with a lace cuff and the male hand with a shirt cuff.
- Clasped hands were also symbolic of immigrants being parted from their homeland and loved ones as in the old piece of Scottish jewellery shown.