

Chief Constable Patrick KINSELA

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Horse & Cart Accident

Queanbeyan, NSW

23 February, 1841

On 23 February, 1841 Chief Constable Kinsela and Constable John Scott were travelling in a cart returning to Queanbeyan. While they were crossing a dry creek bed near the Elmsall Inn the cart overturned, killing Constable Kinsela. Scott luckily survived the accident and was later able to give coronial evidence. It is not known whether this accident occurred while the constable was on duty or not, however it is believed that he was, and research is continuing into this aspect of the incident. In those days police were considered to be always on duty.

Rumours were apparently circulated at the time that both Kinsela and Scott were drunk when the accident occurred, however this was soon discredited. The *Sydney Gazette* of 11 March, 1841 printed information from a correspondent who informed the readers that he had seen a person who has just come from Limestone; he reports that the Chief Constable and another man were killed by the upsetting of a dray in a creek in that neighbourhood; it is said the parties were drunk, but this is contradicted, as Kinsela was a sober man. (In other

words, Kinsela did not drink alcohol at all).

The *Australasian Chronicle* of 4 March, 1841 reported the following.

QUEANBEYAN, FEBRUARY 27- There was an inquest held here on the 24th instant, on the body of Mr. Patrick Kinsala [sic], chief constable, who came by his death by the upsetting of his cart in crossing a creek close to his own house. The night was very dark, and he was thrown with such force on his head that his neck was dislocated. Kinsala was a very active officer, a friend to the poor, and always ready to attend when called on. He had obtained a few enemies for himself by being zealous in the discharge of his duty. He has left a wife and two children to deplore his loss, the youngest only nine days old...

Patrick Kinsela was a native of Ireland and had arrived at Queanbeyan in 1836. On 1 January, 1838 he became the first Chief Constable of Queanbeyan and Limestone Plains (Canberra) on an annual salary of £75. His appointment as Chief Constable was published in the Colonial Secretary's Notice dated 7 February, 1838 which also listed ordinary constable appointments to Queanbeyan as James Pegg, Lockup Keeper, and Peter Connel and James Crossley. Captain Alured Tasker Faunce was also appointed as the Police Magistrate to Queanbeyan about the same time. Kinsela married Joanna Wigmore (nee Mehegan) on 6 February, 1838 and the couple had two children James and Mary. The constable is thought to have been buried in the Oaks Burial Grounds at Queanbeyan.

At the time of his death the constable was stationed at Queanbeyan and had been a police officer for a little over three years.

Source: Beyond Courage