

Death of Wm Irvine

Death of William Irvine

March 9, 1947 in Jerusalem

Revised November 2, 2025

Book: Preserving the Truth: The Church without a name and Its Founder, William Irvine

Death, Burial

Irvine's Will

Newspaper Announcements

Living Descendants

Son: Archibald (Archie) G. Irvine

Collection of Letters by William Irvine

Letters about Irvine's Death

Mills, Orris – March 17, 1947

Mills, Orris – April 22, 1947

Mrs. Westlund – May 28, 1947

Mills, Orris – July 11, 1947

List of Addresses of Returned Letters

J. S. Ritchie to Mr. Meachen, June 8, 1947

Testimony of Edward Cooney, 1947, Upon Death of William Irvine, March 9, 1947

Burial Location of William Irvine

William Irvine's Grave: For many years, his grave location was unknown and had no marker. However, there is now a fairly new tombstone on his grave which reads:

**In Loving Memory of William Irvine
January 1863 Kilsyth, Scotland
March 1947 Jerusalem
Awaiting the Second Coming**

His grave is located in the Protestant Cemetery of **Jerusalem University College (JUC)**, located on Mount Zion, adjacent to the southern boundary of the old city wall, founded in 1848.

Access requires the permission of (and a key)

from St George's Anglican Cathedral Office, Nablus Street, Jerusalem, Tel: +972 (0)2 672 1670.

View map at Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

CWGC Regional Office at: +972 (0)8 922 1220 between 8:30 am and 1:30 pm M-F.

Email: inquiries@cwgc.org

Photos of grave:

Grave of William Irvine, with Elizabeth Coleman

Grave of William Irvine

**Letters from Thomas Coussins of
Jerusalem, Palestine Police Headquarters
Regarding the Death of William Irvine.**

Living Descendant of William Irvine

Living Grand-nephew of William Irvine:

Mr. Daniel Bruce, born October 1923

14 Islay, Petersburg, Scotland ML6 8EA

Tel: Airdrie 768-221 (Born 10/25/1923)

Mr. Bruce' Parents: James Mathieson and Elizabeth G.I. (Clelland) Bruce

Mr. Bruce is a Grandson of William Irvine's sister Helen (Nellie) Irvine Clelland

Archibald (Archie) Gressom Irvine
Son of William Irvine
Additional Information

J. R. Elder

***The History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand**

Presbyterian Bookroom, Christchurch, NZ, 1940;

Heading: Archie Irvine, Page 435

The Press, Christchurch, NZ

RE: Death of William Irvine's Son (June 14, 1952) June 16, 1952

Obituary for Rev. Archibald G. Irvine, Dec 20, 1982

Obituary for Mary J. Irvine, wife of Archibald G. Irvine, Dec. 19, 1982

Archibald G. Irvine and his wife, Mary are buried in Bromley Cemetery, Keighleys Rd, Christchurch, NZ. Their tombstone reads:

. In
Loving Memory of
Rev. Archibald Grassam Irvine
Dearly Loved Husband of
Mary J. Irvine
Died 14th June 1952 Aged 66 Years.
Also Mary Jamieson Irvine
Loved Wife of Above
Died 19th Dec. 1982 Aged 93 years.
With the Lord.

Photo of Tombstone

**Letters from Thomas Coussins,
 Jerusalem, Palestine Police Department
 Regarding William Irvine's Death**

Thos. Coussin

C/O Police Headquarters

Jerusalem

March 17, 1947

Dear Mr. Mills:

I am indeed sorry to have to convey to you the sad news that Mr. William Irvine passed away on Sunday, 9th March, 1947.

You were no doubt aware that he had been ailing for the past six years. He had nevertheless been able to get about in the ordinary way and it was only in recent months that his condition worsened and he was not able to leave his hotel. He took to his bed towards the end of February, where he remained until he left us peacefully, at approximately 11:50 hours a week ago yesterday.

To introduce myself, I would say that I am a civil servant employed at Police Headquarters here in Jerusalem, and that I have known Mr. Irvine on and off for the past twenty years. At the beginning of November, when he began to feel really ill he sent for me, since when I had been with him almost every day, until he passed away.

William was loved by all who came in contact with him, and I felt it a privilege to help him over his last difficult days. I enclose a cutting from the Palestine Post of 10th March, 1947, which in itself shows the respect all and sundry here in Jerusalem held for Mr. Irvine. He was indeed a well known figure ambling along with a smile for everybody between his hotel, adjacent to the City Walls and the Post Office, where he collected his mail.

The funeral took place at 2 P.M. on the 10th March, 1947, on a bright warm Sunday afternoon. He now lies at peace on Mount Zion from where the view across the Jordan Valley to the mountains of Moab frames his resting place and seems befitting with his faith in a better heaven and better earth.

During the last two or three weeks Mr. Irvine had been unable to deal with his mail, which steadily accumulated. All unopened letters have consequently been returned to senders. As I am, however, unable to write to all his correspondents, I am enclosing a list of the addresses of letters to the U.S.A. that have so far been returned and I would ask you Mr. Mills to pass the news around. I chose you Mr. Mills merely for the fact that you appear to have corresponded with him regularly in recent times and apparently quite interested.

Mr. C.C. Darrow who figures in the list and who used to send Mr. Irvine many newspaper cuttings may be able to help you considerably in advising those concerned.

Wishing you my deepest condolences in the loss of our dear mutual friend.

I am, Yours very sincerely,

Thos. Coussin.

**THE LATE MR. WILLIAM IRVINE
LIST OF ADDRESSES OF RETURNED LETTERS**

O.W. Mills 796 N. El Molino Ave., Pasadena 6, CA U.S.A.
 A.J. Dunbar Box 265, Placentia, California, U.S.A.
 C.C. Darrow 3448 Broadway, Sacramento 17, CA, U.S.A.
 Mr. William I. Loitz 223 N. Clementine St., Anaheim, CA, U.S.A.
 Mrs. Laurel Wood 148 Summit Ave., Apt. 507, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.
 Mr. Charles Colling Gen. Del., Sonora, CA, U.S.A.
 Mr. Louis Alarez 1405 W. 4th St., Santa Ana, CA, U.S.A.
 J.J. Fladung 3385 Utah Ave., San Francisco, CA, U.S.A.
 Mr. Bert M. Young Colfax, CA, U.S.A.
 A. Carrigan 701 Sunnyvale Ave., San Francisco, CA, U.S.A.
 Mrs. Evelyn Gertie Martin 3357 Lemon St., Riverside, CA, U.S.A.
 Olive Jordan 78 E. 13th St., Saint Paul 2, Minn., U.S.A.
 Rideout 11518 S. Watkins, Chicago 43, Ill., U.S.A.
 Mr. James H. Grey 6428 Orchard Ave., Bell, CA, U.S.A.
 E.L. Ackerson 160 Scenic Way, Vallejo, CA, U.S.A.
 W.H. Kinder 425 Piper ST., Helsburg, CA, U.S.A.
 Mr. Bill McCann Rt. 1 Box 966, Santa Clara, CA, U.S.A.
 Frank Fountain 2336 Wall ST., Vancouver, B.C., Canada
 Mr. & Mrs. W.J. Lee 3462 Avocado Ave., Riverside, CA, U.S.A.
 Mrs. Ida Newby 223 S. Lincoln St., Spokane, WA, U.S.A.
 Miss F. Webster 1212 3rd ST., Eureka, CA, U.S.A.
 Mr. & Mrs. W.M. Breneman Gen. Del., Auburn, CA, U.S.A.
 D.W. McDougall 227 Orange St., Santa Rosa, CA, U.S.A.
 Mrs. J.P. Ferbroche Box 84, Hunters, WA, U.S.A.
 Mr. Daniel Bailey 917 M St., Eureka, CA, U.S.A.
 Mr. Ed F. Wilder 2360 A St., Eureka, CA, U.S.A.
 912 W. 2nd St., Santa Ana, CA, U.S.A.
 2334 West Viem St., Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A

**EDITORS NOTE: Of the above 28 addresses,
 22 contained California Addresses
 2 contained Washington
 2 from Minnesota
 1 from Chicago
 1 from B.C. Canada**

A telegram has been sent on March 29th, 1947 to Police Headquarters, Jerusalem, to verify the above.

Orris Mills
 Gen. Del.
 Sacramento, California

MR. WILLIAM IRVINE.

A correspondent writes:

A well known figure in Jerusalem passed away with the death yesterday, after a long illness, of Mr. William Irvine of Kilsyth, Scotland. Mr. Irvine died in his 84th year after having resided in Palestine since 1919, where he came in pursuit of his beliefs. He will be remembered by many who knew him as the kindly old white-haired gentleman seen on his daily walk between the Post Office and the Old City Walls.

He died with the full faith of better things to come.

The interment will take place at the Zion Cemetery at 2:30 P.M. today..

Thos. Coussin
C/O Police Headquarters
Jerusalem, Palestine
April 22, 1947

Dear Mr. Mills:

It was most gratifying to have your letter of 1st April, and to read all you have had to say about my care for William. Somehow or other the days and, mostly, evenings seem to have gone by as if in a dream. He had so much charm and grace of manner that I shall always see him before me as the epitome of gentleness. He was courageous and had infinite faith in his ideas right until the end. The doctor thought him marvelous, and although he must have had pain he never showed it.

Many of the people you notified have since written to me, and so have his two surviving sisters, one in Scotland and the other in Wales. Actually I met some of William's people on one of my visits to the old country. I myself am from Glasgow originally. It is really a pleasure to hear from so many and the little one could have done in a case like this gives pleasure when you know it is appreciated so much.

William left a properly drawn up will in which, after making a few personal bequests, willed some LP 2,000 to named hospitals and charities and the residue, which will be in the region of approximately LP 1,000 to the poor. His personal effects and chattels, etc., he also left to the poor, and as we had to give up his room. These articles have been distributed as required, via the Department of Social Welfare. He left no writings, but it is curious that you should mention his bibles, magnifying glasses and a filigree cigarette holder.

They are of no intrinsic value, and I had arranged with the Executor to take them with me to Scotland, to offer to his sisters or perhaps his niece when I go on leave about the end of June D.V. I shall be writing to the older sister again soon and shall mention your wishes in respect of these articles of sentimental value. I have no doubt she will agree to let you have them.

William entrusted me with the last rites, and I am moved when I think of the complete serenity in which every one made it possible for me to arrange these solemn matters. I did not mention, and it may give you peace to learn that his coffin draped with the Union Jack was conveyed to Mount Zion in one of our Police tenders with six stalwart British

Constables acting as pall bearers. It was indeed an impressive cortege with all the honors he so richly deserved.

There is a snapshot of William that I can let you have, and there is also a composite photograph of him taken at about 20, 40, 60 and 80 years of age, which I am having copied at the office. If you wish it I can send one to you as well as the snap.

I agree, Mr. Mills, we have lost a friend, but we must bow to God's will and the irrevocable. I am,

Yours very sincerely,

T. Coussin.

Thos. Coussin
C/O Police Headquarters
Jerusalem
May 28, 1947

Dear Mrs. Westlund:

I have just received your letter of May 13th, which appears to have been badly sealed down and consequently reached me open with the one dollar missing. You should not have remitted any money, as I do not wish it, and did not ask for it. In the meantime I am making inquiries from the Postmaster, Jerusalem via attached copy of letter and should it turn up I shall pass it on to charity, as it is illegal to transmit dollars by Post.

It has been indeed lovely to receive so many letters from Mr. William's friends and I can assure you that such appreciation is most gratifying. It is, of course, physically impossible for me to carry on correspondence with all those who wrote.

Mr. Irvine had cancer of the mouth, which had been slowly working on him for about six years, and for which he took treatment at the Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem, where you no doubt know, they have some of the world's best specialist at the radium Institute.

Incidentally, they all loved him up there and did all they possibly could to help him. They even offered to take him and make him comfortable during his last days, but he steadfastly refused and told me that his trysting place was where he resided. His illness progressed rapidly in the last two or three weeks and this coupled with his venerable 84 years took him away from us on Sunday the 9th March, 1947.

I have written to William's sister with regard to the items of sentimental value and as soon as I have a reply from her I will inform Mr. Mills; to whom I would suggest you communicate with regard to any thing you want in this respect.

Again with my deepest condolences, I am

Yours very sincerely,

Thomas Coussin

T. Coussin
C/O Police Headquarters
Jerusalem
July 11, 1947

Dear Mr. Mills:

I must apologize to you for being so slow in replying to your letter of the 12th of May, 1947. It was simply a case of waiting to hear from William's sister as to whether she consented to sending on the small personal articles to you. I am very glad to inform you that she has agreed to let you have them, and I shall consequently dispatch them to you in three packages.

The main package will be enclosed in an old cigar box that William used to keep his unanswered letters in, as well as some snap shots. In the bottom you will find his own original list of correspondents and some photographs and snaps of himself and some of his friends. I don't know whether you will know the friends from the snaps, but I simply could not tear them up.

The contents of the box, apart from the snaps are:

- Cigarette holder (filigree)
- Magnifying glass, small (in case)
- Magnifying glass (composite handle)
- Fountain pens (2)
- Watch pocket (Genie metal)
- Whistle Blast
- Change Purse (old)
- Note Wallet (new)

The two other packages will comprise the bibles, one together with a book on "Life Chemistry." The latter has no particular value, but I am sending it just the same. I am dispatching the bibles separately, as they are on the heavy side. I trust they will all reach you in good order.

In the meantime I have received some more letters from William's friends and believe me, it has given me infinite pleasure to realize all the appreciation and thanks that is being bestowed upon me as a result of the little I was able to do during his last days. As a matter of fact, I must confess that I am missing him more and more every day.

I am enclosing a copy of a cutting of the "Sunday Post" dated 25th May, 1947, which his sister sent on to me, and you will agree that it confirms (as if confirmation was needed) that great respect and esteem held by all for our dear friend.

As you would like his sisters' addresses, I append them hereunder. The sisters are married to brothers, hence the same name.

<u>The older one</u>	<u>The younger one</u>
Mrs. Nellie Cleland	Mrs. Jennie Cleland
39 Eastside	Glan Ebbu House
Kirkintilloch	Victoria,
Scotland	Monmouthshire, S. Wales

As for myself, I am proceeding on leave to the United Kingdom next week, but as I am going over land, I shall not reach Scotland until the middle of August. Anyhow, here is my address, and I shall only be too pleased to find a letter from you on my arrival:

C/O A. S. Coussin
11 Minard Road
Glasgow, Scotland

My deepest respects, I am yours sincerely,

Thos. Coussin

**Letter from J. S. Ritchie
To Mr. Meachen, a Friend of Wm. Irvine in Jaffa
Regarding William Irvine's Death**

June 8, 1947

Dear Mr. Meachen:

Your letter was the first intimation I had that my letter on our mutual friend, Mr. Irvine, had been published in the Sunday Post. I thank you for the information contained in your letter as it adds something to my knowledge of this fine old Scot. You wish me to give you some details of William Irvine's life and work in Palestine. I wish I felt equal to the task, as I feel my effort much too moderate to do this truly Christian man justice.

Jerusalem was the center from which he carried out his work, but sometime after the great earthquake of 1927, he came to the coast to recuperate and rest. It was then, as near as I can judge, in his sixty-fifth year, a vigorous and active man of fine physique with a face noble and rugged, that could only have been molded in Scotland. In countenance, temperament, and manner of speech he was characteristically Scots. His needs was small; his tastes simple. When I knew him he seldom dressed in anything more than an open neck shirt, shorts and sandals and invariably carried a walking stick. His shock of white hair was always uncovered and blowing in the wind. It was thus I knew him, and in my many reflections of those days, it is thus I remember him.

His home was a single room rented from a Christian Arab in the Ajami Quarter of Jaffa. The Ajami is a little removed from the town and is built on a hill overlooking the sea. In the Ajami of those days, only a small community of Arabs, mostly Christian Arabs, lived there. It was here Mr. Irvine made his home in Jaffa and access to it was by way of a little paved garden that might have existed in Biblical times as appearances go. His room was clean and simply furnished, some of which furnishings he made with his own capable hands, and although it supplied the comfort he wished for, it was a humble little place in comparison to the home he could have had, had he not denied himself so much to give to the poor.

The mornings were usually taken up at his writing desk, and he would devote this time to writing to his many adherents all over the world. (These letters I have called "epistles" for in actual substance such they were). Often I would meet him at Campbell's Pool, a little place on the seashore not far from Simon the Tanner's house, where we would talk after swimming.

It was these talks that revealed to me the true nature of the man I had come to know as a friend. In these talks, he was himself the fountain head of Christian knowledge, and little by little he would unfold his message and stimulated a keen desire for more. Never once was I bored; boredom was impossible when listening to this highly educated man who told a simple message in a way one could not fail to understand, and more especially as one felt the warmth of intimate companionship and understanding and the infinite sincerity of his message. I was not the only one who benefited by these pleasant experiences, but I think for the 8 or 12 months which followed, I was his most intimate friend in Jaffa. As you say he seldom spoke of himself, and it was not from his own lips that I heard of his many kindnesses to people of all races in need, of his many donations to charities. At the time of which I write there was no Scottish mission in Jaffa or Jerusalem. There is now, of course, the Scottish Hospice in Jerusalem which was built about the time I left Palestine.

Mr. Irvine could have been described as a free-lance missionary. He worked alone. I know little of his work in Jerusalem, but I understand he had many adherents there. shall always remember him as a truly Christian gentleman.

Now let me strike a personal note; I thank you again for your letter and I should like to hear from you again. You were in these parts 45 years ago, you would see a vast difference in East Africa of today. I have now only space to give you my sincere good wishes

Yours very sincerely,

J. S. Ritchie

See also: Statement by Edward Cooney in 1947, at the time of Wm. Irvine's death.
in

The Life & Ministry of Edward Cooney

By Patricia Roberts

Pages 43-45

Information collected and compiled by Cherie Kropp-Ehrig
