



**FRIENDS of
BOLTON STREET
MEMORIAL PARK INCORPORATED**
PO BOX 2336, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND
<http://www.boltoncemetery.org.nz>

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NEW WEBSITE WITH BURIAL LIST

In August 2006 the Friends launched its new website: www.boltoncemetery.org.nz . It has been designed to support and promote the aims and objectives of the Friends, and will be a key tool in raising awareness of Bolton Street Memorial Park to special interest groups and the public. It contains park history; burial list and gravestones information; maps and details relating to tours; useful links to relevant websites; and contacts for the Friends.

**FRIENDS OF
BOLTON STREET MEMORIAL PARK**

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Bolton Street Memorial Park in central Wellington, New Zealand, contains the city's original burial ground commonly known previously as Bolton Street Cemetery. It commemorates many early pioneers and important historical figures from the 19th Century. **The Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park** is a voluntary society which works closely with the Wellington City Council to preserve, protect and develop the heritage aspects of this cemetery park.

Bolton Street Memorial Park, newly named in 1978, is an excellent example of a colonial cemetery, using imported and local stone, iron and wood. Its iron memorials, wooden tablets, picket fences and wrought iron surrounds are particularly significant and comparatively rare in New Zealand.

The Chapel information centre on Bolton Street, open from 10 am to 4 pm daily (see [Location Map](#)), contains exhibits and has a full burial list of the 8,500 people interred in the cemetery. Situated alongside is the Sexton's Cottage (not open to the public) which is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Wellington.

It is a peaceful sanctuary of cultivated and forested open space. Over 1,300 carved and worn monuments are distributed throughout the Park that straddles the motorway. A nationally important collection of heritage roses, some dating from the colonial era, inter-twine with other early plantings amongst picket fences and wrought iron surrounds. Walkways offer a unique stroll between the city centre and the formal Rose Garden of the Botanic Gardens. Memorial Trail pamphlets at each entrance enable visitors to learn of the notable people who are remembered within the Park.

For more information about the Park see [History](#). For information about locating or maintaining

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Continued from page 1: The full burial listing of 8,679 detailed entries is now searchable on the new website. It contains those known to be buried within the Park and a small number of other family members buried elsewhere who are referred to on gravestone inscriptions. Each entry includes the related family name, original cemetery of interment, grid reference for gravestone location and whether the latter has been relocated from its original position. Compilation of this burial list was coordinated over many years by Margaret Alington and then Nick Perrin who has since continued to maintain and update it with new information as it comes to hand from descendants and other researchers.

Meantime, the Friends' original website developed and maintained by Nick Perrin, still holds additional material particularly on selected burial sites and people. The committee wishes to thank Nick for all his innovative work in relation to the original pioneering website: <http://groups.msn.com/BoltonStCemetery/> .

The new website was designed and is being maintained by budding young design student, Jamie Ferguson.

Diana Marsh

THE SEXTON'S COTTAGE

At 26 Bolton Street is the only remaining original building from the three former cemeteries. This is the Sexton's cottage for the Church of England cemetery. It is important not just because of its place within the Memorial Park but because it is one of the oldest houses still extant in Wellington. For many years it has been rented commercially. Recently the City Council responded positively to a suggestion from the Friends that it might have a wider, more community-based use. This is an exciting development, the details of which are still being worked out.

In the meantime one change already in evidence is for the cottage garden to come within the direct responsibility of the Botanic Gardens staff. The grounds have been cleared of overgrowth and a planting scheme will be developed in keeping with the cottage's architecture. Some conservation work was done on the cottage following a conservation plan prepared in 2000. Remaining aspects of this work are now being completed. We hope that there will soon be a sign on the northern side near the chapel, outlining the history and significance of the building.

Built in 1857 as a simple four-roomed structure with a shingle roof and one bedroom, the cottage was slightly enlarged in 1885 by an additional bedroom. Some interior details have been altered over the years in order to make it acceptable for modern living. Although the shingle roof has now been replaced by corrugated iron, the exterior is still much as it appeared in the Nineteenth Century, although no longer part of a row of similar cottages. Wellingtonians can be grateful that this building narrowly escaped demolition during the motorway construction and now is a valuable part of our historical landscape in the centre of the city.

Priscilla Williams

STEWART HARVEY'S ADDRESS TO THE AGM

Stewart Harvey, Chairman of The Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand, addressed our AGM in July 2006. His very interesting talk outlined the work of the Trust and commented on the role of voluntary societies in preserving local cemeteries. He expressed amazement at the excellent work being done by the



Friends and envied the close relationship that our committee has with the WCC.

Stewart said that headstones in historic cemeteries are of utmost importance as they are stories in stone. It is important to preserve headstones and other grave markers in a manner that does not damage or over-clean them, so that their historical ambience and context is not lost. Many of the graves in Bolton Street Memorial Park have had their stories disturbed by the motorway construction.

The Park is a unique example of a colonial cemetery and a site of National importance. It contains a unique collection of colonial history and architecture. It is the only 'cemetery' in NZ which has graves in bush clad areas and over such varied terrain.

Problems that cemeteries face, the Memorial Park included, are damage from vandalism, tree roots, poor construction and redevelopment, e.g. the Wellington motorway. Roses which sucker can also damage graves. Stewart noted that care should be taken in the positioning of heritage rose plantings in the Park in order to prevent graves from being obscured and damaged.

The wrought iron work in the Park provides excellent examples of its type and needs preservation work done. Likewise for the wooden



grave markers and surrounds of which

very few examples are left in New Zealand. The cast iron grave markers are a very unusual feature of the Park.

For graves in urgent need of repair, Stewart mentioned that there are funds available from many trusts for restoration work. He encouraged those involved to think of the Park as an outdoor museum of Victorian and Edwardian times, the likes of which we will never see again.

Judy Bale



MANAGER'S ANNUAL REPORT (JUNE 2006) TO THE FRIENDS

It has been an interesting year for the Park with significant progress in some areas and not so significant in others. However between the Friends and the Botanic Gardens team I believe we have undertaken some positive moves this year.

The preparation of the Maintenance and Repair Guidelines (*refer to Conservation article page 6 - Ed*) has meant that we have not been able to do 'on the ground' repairs this year but it will provide a solid foundation for work in following years. I feel confident that we will now have good results especially when combined with the priority lists developed by the Friends.

Track upgrades this year were successful and we will continue to gradually improve the tracks over the coming years to ensure they are accessible and safe.

Unfortunately this year we have had to remove major trees from the Park and there are three still to be removed. A highlight has been the revealing of the remaining pine at the top of Robertson way which is a very nicely formed and proportioned tree. Despite earlier misgivings the feedback I have received from staff has been positive.

I have had some early discussions with staff about the replacement plantings which may consist of some of the historic pines from the Botanic Garden which have been tissue propagated. Appropriately sited, these trees have a definite place in the Park.

We are also reviewing the future of the Leyland cypresses on Bowen Street with regard to planting trees which allow better views into the Park.

The bush areas remain under close scrutiny as the team works to remove invasive and/or aggressive trees as the first priority. Work will continue on the releasing of the graves over the next year building on the start that has been made this year.

We have had a number of staff changes this year the most notable of which has been the departure of Duane Novis after 18 years. His replacement Duane Murphy is fitting in well. Phillipa Garratt, who completed the Parks & Gardens apprentice programme, has been appointed as the Gardener in the Rose Gardens. As Phillipa becomes more established in her position, Rachel will be looking to focussing more of her time on the heritage roses and maintenance in the Park.

In correspondence with Mrs Angela Clark, a Turnbull descendent, we have received agreement and encouragement to relocate the Turnbull headstone from its present obscure location to a more public site adjacent to the lower end of Dennis McGrath Bridge. While we have also received informal agreement from the Friends of Alexander Turnbull Library, I will now formalise the process with the Friends and discuss with our own heritage advisor and the Historic Places Trust in order to get the project rolling. Mr Robert Haldane, who is also related, has asked that he be kept advised of progress.

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VISIT BY HCCTNZ CHAIRMAN

In July the Friends of the Bolton Street Memorial Park facilitated a visit to Wellington by Stewart Harvey, Chairman of the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of NZ. Our organisation is a member of and supports the work of this Trust since we believe that there are mutual gains to be made through the relationship. Information about HCCTNZ is available from its website: www.cemeteries.org.nz .

The primary reason for Stewart's visit was his address to the Friends and a further look at developments in the Bolton Street Memorial Park which he regards as one of the most important historic cemeteries in New Zealand. While here, Stewart took the opportunity to see some other old cemeteries in the Wellington area, such as St Mary's, Karori (first burial 1863); Te Puni Maori cemetery, Petone (1870); Christ Church, Taita (1861); St John's, Trentham (1864); and Pauatahanui (1860). Christ Church is a particularly interesting example of a recently restored and well interpreted graveyard.

His overriding concern in Wellington is the historically important but neglected Mount Street Cemetery. This was established in effect as a complementary adjunct to the first town cemetery in order to cater for the Roman Catholic population and thus it is a small scale version of the Memorial Park but not within the City Council portfolio. After his visit, Stewart provided the following letter on the Mount Street Cemetery for the Wellington Historic Places Trust newsletter.

"Consisting of one acre on a knoll in front of Victoria University, this cemetery dates back to the beginning of European settlement in Wellington. The first burial was in 1851, and the last in 1954. Set aside by the New Zealand Company in 1839 as a Catholic cemetery, the land was granted by the Government in 1853 to be held in trust by the Catholic archbishop of Wellington for use as a burial ground.

About 800 early settlers were buried in the cemetery, including Father J.P. O'Reilly, Wellington's first resident Catholic priest. Two of the original three acres were subdivided in 1927 for Wai-te-ata Road houses and university use. All the known burials are thought to be within the remaining acre.

This historic cemetery is now languishing for want of appropriate care. The previous Friends group has disintegrated so, in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Wellington, we are looking for someone prepared to champion and progress the conservation of the cemetery.

This person would need to be enthusiastic and energetic, and be passionate about conservation of Wellington's history, and also be able to attract a group of like-minded individuals to the cause. Guidance and help will be provided by this Trust.

If you live in Wellington and have such an interest, and the time to devote, please contact us."

Stewart Harvey may be contacted direct about any points raised:

Stewart Harvey, Chairman, Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of NZ
65 Every Street, Dunedin
Telephone: 03 454 5384 Fax: 03 454 5364
Email: alloway@xtra.co.nz

Priscilla Williams

CONSERVATION

The Committee has been working with the Botanic Gardens staff and Four Decades consultants Chris Cochran and Neil Aitken on preparing maintenance and repair guidelines for graves and memorials within the Park. These guidelines are designed to give practical guidance to all involved - gardens staff, families and repair contractors. They will include a system for prioritising repairs which has been developed by the Friends. Practical repair work in the Park has been on hold until the guidelines are produced.

Two working bees in the Park have been held since our last newsletter. These were again centred in the Trustees Path area, to clear vegetation from graves and clean headstones. The committee is most grateful to the member volunteers who assisted on each occasion.

John Daniels

FRIENDS COMMITTEE 2006/07

The following are the committee members' contact details and major responsibilities. All committee members assist with a range of work including answering queries, guiding walks and helping with working bees.

Name	Tel	Responsibilities	E-mail
Priscilla Williams	977 4667	Chair Policy & Strategies Historical research Written material	priscilla.williams@paradise.net.nz
David Dunsheath	471 2407 (w) 472 8405 (h)	Deputy Chair Work Programme Working Bees Newsletter co-editor	symbian@xtra.co.nz
Diana Marsh	499 8860	Minutes Secretary Website & publicity	francis.diana@xtra.co.nz
John Daniels	938 7971	Conservation	jr.daniels@xtra.co.nz
Kate Fortune	970 0024	Treasurer Membership	kate.fortune@paradise.net.nz
Judy Bale	499 8588	Tour coordination Publicity	Sommerfields@paradise.net.nz
Anne Brosnahan	472 1333 or (04) 904 3464	Bulk mailings	-
Nick Perrin	472 3767 025 616 7554	Biographical research Burial lists Newsletter co-editor	n.perrin@xtra.co.nz
Terry Brandon	471 1483	Legal & constitutional issues	terrybrandon@xtra.co.nz

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCES

At the end of October 2006 our membership numbers (at 108) were 10% up on the previous year. With the increase in subscription fees this year our finances are looking very healthy. On behalf of the committee, I want to explain why we felt it was important to raise the subscriptions.

For several years subscription income alone did not cover all our costs but fortunately thanks to donations, we did not have to cut back on our activities. However, we were not in a position to develop new projects. Since the decision to raise subscriptions, expenditure has been substantially increased. Purchases have included a new memorial seat for the Morva Williams park extension; shelving in the Gardener's Shed for storage of loose artefacts retrieved from gravesites; a filing cabinet where we are amassing biographical information about those buried in the Park; and cleaning materials and long hose for working bees. In this financial year we have funded the initial establishment and maintenance of our website (nearly \$900 so far) and recently, the addition of the burial list on this website.

The committee is grateful for the ongoing support of our members as we make real progress in our planned activities.

Kate Fortune

MANAGER'S ANNUAL REPORT

Continued from page 4: I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Friends for their work on classifying the graves and headstones and also for their working bees. Feedback from the staff has been very complimentary. The voluntary contribution you make is very much appreciated by the Council and of course by me and my staff.

I look forward to the coming year with much anticipation.

David Sole
Manager- Botanic Gardens of Wellington

BAD NEWS AND GOOD NEWS

Continued from page 8: The City Council has responded very positively to our concerns about the growing list of repairs. From next financial year, the annual provision from the Early Settlers Trust will be spent solely on grave and headstone restoration. It will no longer be allocated also to path maintenance which will be funded in future from a separate budget. There has also been an undertaking to look at the possibility of increasing the available budget by a further \$10,000 in the 2007/08 financial year. We very much hope this will happen and in the meantime are delighted that the Council is so supportive of the need to preserve this important but fragile part of Wellington's history.

Path restoration this year has included a set of steps up to the Goat Track, which was previously reached by a precarious scramble up a muddy bank. If you have not seen this area, try exploring it as the gravestones there have been cleared and cleaned. Worth seeing especially is the headstone to two twin girls.

Priscilla Williams

BAD NEWS AND GOOD NEWS

On the night of 7 November a large stem of a multi-stemmed elm tree fell over onto a group of graves and headstones, landing partly across the motorway. The damage is in an area just below the Easdale entrance to the Memorial Park. Until the fallen stem is removed it is difficult to see how many memorials have been damaged, but probably about six have been broken or torn from their settings, including one of the few wooden fences surrounding a grave. The whole elm tree may have to be removed. This photograph shows part of the destruction.



During October a gravestone which had already been noted as unsafe was toppled by a tree branch and broken. This was a large three-coloured granite memorial near the main path. Because there are many trees near to the old graves further damage can be expected during high winds, even with a more selective tree pruning policy. This continuing destruction is of serious concern, especially given the number of historic gravestones already needing urgent repair due to previous storm damage, vandalism or simply the ravages of time.

On the good news side, there will be some repairs undertaken this financial year and an experienced restorer has already examined a number of the gravestones in most immediate need of attention. Using a ranking system devised in consultation with Chris Cochran, a leading conservation architect, the Committee has identified those memorials that rate the highest priority of attention. By the time of the next newsletter, we hope to be able to report on the progress of this work.

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