



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

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Editor: David Dunsheath

HERITAGE CONSERVATION BY INCREMENTS

Regular visitors to the Park will notice a gradual, steady change in the appearance of graves in the wilderness area between the Easdale St entrance and the lower reaches of Observatory Path. This has been achieved in a programme of about 8 working bees resumed in 2005 after a long break.

These two-hour sessions have provided members with the opportunity to reduce the impact of damaging and unattractive vegetation on many original grave sites. More recently we have focussed on gentle surface treatments of monuments to remove growths and improve the readability of inscriptions.

We aim to comply with the conservation best practice principle of: *To do as much as necessary but as little as possible*. This requires our grave by grave judgement of what, if any, treatment is appropriate to lessen the chances of unintended acceleration of decay over the longer term.

Four working bees are scheduled this summer, the first of which was completed on 13 October. For your diary, the remainder will be 9.30–11.30 am on Sunday 18 November, Saturday 16 February 08 and Sunday 16 March. Details of the assembly location and what to bring will be emailed to members in the preceding two weeks of each date.

For further details please contact David Dunsheath or other committee (see page 2)



Photo Priscilla Williams

DUNEDIN'S NORTHERN CEMETERY

Rodney Read, a former supervisor of the Heritage Rose Collection at Bolton Street Memorial Park, spoke following our AGM on 2 July 2007. He described Dunedin's Northern Cemetery, noting that there were a few interesting ideas, particularly in respect to heritage roses, which could be learnt. The Cemetery first opened in 1872 and ceased selling plots in 1937. It covers a 20-acre site on a ridge with good drainage in Opoho. About 18,000 people (or ashes) have been interred there.

The Cemetery has scattered clumps of trees, some of them over 2 metres in height, as well as a central valley which is wooded. The management plan limits trees to 4 metres in height and gardeners remove vigorous side-roots. Cypress trees are tipped and climbers are restricted. Rodney said it was kept very tidy, with mown grass, barked areas for roses, and kerbed edgings. All memorial roses were named – digging or spraying has killed some, but there are about 12 heritage species left. Pruning of the roses is carried out to ensure statuary and inscriptions are left clear, and to make weeding, raking and spraying possible.

Rodney said there had never been any religious differentiation of graves, but class and status had governed the choice of sites in the early years. Prosperous families bought plots with excellent access and erected ornate tombstones. Poorer people had ended up in the gully; and paupers and sometimes children were buried in areas with no headstones at all.

Visitors to the Northern Cemetery are able to collect site maps from the Sexton's house near the entrance; the area is divided into 11 map segments (A4 size) showing the layout of plots, and numbered disks on pathways make it quite easy to locate graves.

Kate Fortune

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TREES AND TOMBSTONES

As in the adjacent Botanic Gardens, and indeed elsewhere in Wellington, large exotic coniferous trees provide much of the structural framework in the Memorial Park. These trees date back to the plantings in the last quarter of the 19th century fostered by Sir James Hector, first Manager of the Botanic Garden, in order to find suitable timber for forest plantations. Among the oldest exotic pines in New Zealand and sourced originally from California, they now sadly appear to be coming towards the end of their life span.

The 2006 Maintenance Guidelines for the Memorial Park, which were commissioned by the City Council, address landscape issues, including the signature trees. They note that “most of the conifers, comprising Monterey Cypress (*macrocarpas*) and Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) and, to a lesser extent, the upright Lawson Cypress, have had their lower spreading branches removed. The former two species, in particular, are all now ‘over mature’ with a characteristic wide, spreading crown and ‘hunched shoulders’. Therefore they are in slow decline and their condition will have to be monitored and the appropriate measures taken at some time in the future.”

As that report was being finalised, a decision was taken to remove a group of over-mature Monterey Pines from the vicinity of the Seddon entrance. One, in better condition, was left and now shows its fine shape to good advantage. This year a more difficult decision was taken to remove three large macrocarpas from the Hort Lawn area. The Manager of the Botanic Gardens consulted the Friends’ Committee as well as other stake holders. In a letter to us, David Sole said that he had sought independent advice, not only from the city arborist but also from a private firm. The decision to remove the trees was, he said, based on



Photo Kate Fortune

- The potential for structural failure of the trees during a storm event
- The potential for damage to irreplaceable crypts, graves and headstones
- Pruning of the trees leaves them vulnerable to structural failure as the wind patterns through the trees is altered
- Removal of a single tree places new stresses on the remaining trees with a high likelihood of failure
- Removal of a single or two (of the three) trees poses an unacceptable risk to users of the park

Our response to this letter noted we were prepared to support the decision, given the state of the trees but that this had not been an easy conclusion for us to reach, given that our aims are to “preserve, protect and develop” both the “wooded” and the “historic” aspects of the Park. Because of the very significant damage already done to the historic graves, and the urgent need to preserve those which still remain, we

considered the position of the trees to the graves and the potential to damage the latter. The two lower trees were of special concern since they overhung one of the largest groups of undisturbed graves in the Park. This group contains the only vault (the Morris grave which has already suffered significant damage from vandalism). It is worth noting that although over 8,500 people were buried in the cemetery, only 1,334 gravestones are now visible and fewer than 600 of these are still in their original position, many of which are along the paths below the two trees and are in extremely fragile condition. Our obligation to preserve this rare segment of Wellington's early history requires a high threshold of risk avoidance. While the third tree seemed less likely to cause such extensive damage to memorials, we noted the professional advice about the need to deal with all three trees as a group and that pruning only heightened the risk factor.



Photo Kate Fortune

The three trees were removed in July, using a helicopter in order to minimise gravestone damage. Wilding plants and trees, mainly kawakawa, were also removed from that area revealing a variety of tombstones including an angel statue.

More clearance of wilding trees, including two large laurels, has taken place along Observatory Path and Powles Path under the supervision of James Jones who heads the tree team at the Botanic

Garden. Working bees by the Friends have concentrated in that area and many more gravestones can now be seen by people passing through and be accessed by descendants.

The remaining old conifers in the Park are under close observation, especially two which are disintegrating. A replacement conifer, a small weeping macrocarpa, has already been planted on the slope between two of the tree stumps. Further replacement trees will be planted next winter, taking into account a recommendation of the Maintenance Guidelines that large-scale deciduous species of European, Asian and North American origin should be seriously considered. It will be necessary to avoid planting large trees close to graves so that future generations will not have the same problems that we are now encountering.

These clearances have revealed further gravestone damage which means we have reordered our priorities. A list of urgent repairs awaits action and will quickly absorb this year's allocation of funds. The first of these repairs should be done by the end of the year.

Priscilla Williams

PARK TOURS

There have been three recent tours through the Park guided by the Friends.

On Saturday, 28 July, Kate conducted a tour for the Moxham Family group who were holding a family reunion over that weekend. In spite of less than ideal weather (with some heavy drizzle), about 15 people turned up. The photograph shows a group of cousins around the headstone of William Moxham. They are all great-great-grandchildren of William Moxham.



Photo Bill Webb

During Spring Festival, co-ordinated by the Wellington City Council, the Friends ran two tours. On Monday, 1 October during gale force winds, John and Nick guided 14 people through the Park; and on an equally windy Saturday, 6 October, John and Judy guided tours of 26 participants. Sadly, the advertised tour of the sexton's cottage was cancelled because reconstruction work was still in progress. The Friends are looking forward to running tours of the cottage at a later date.

The committee would like to invite any members who are interested in becoming a tour guide to contact any committee member. Guiding is a great way to learn about the Park and training will be arranged. As tours are only usually one hour long, the time commitment is not onerous.

Tours are available to all interested groups and have been very successfully run for Probus groups, school groups, small family groups and genealogical and historical societies. Please contact Judy Bale if you would like an organised tour.

Judy Bale

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCES

At the end of October 2007, our membership is the same as last year at a total of 108 individuals, families and corporate members. We have had several new members join us this year, but we've lost a few as well. Our finances continue to look very healthy, and it is gratifying to be able to report that we have received more than \$1900 in donations so far this year. The committee is pleased to acknowledge the ongoing support of our members as we make real progress in our planned activities.

Maintaining and updating the website remains one of our main items of expenditure (about \$600 in the past year), and recent purchases include more cleaning materials (\$175) for use in our working bees.

Kate Fortune

HENRY PRESTON MEMORIAL REDISCOVERED (PART 2)

In our previous newsletter (No. 63) we introduced Donald Mackay's long quest to find the 133 year old, distinctive heart totora headboard from his great grandfather's grave. The overall story, reported in the Dominion Post (19 June 07), was personally recounted by Donald at our recent AGM when he formally 'handed back' the Henry Preston headboard for future display in the Bolton Street chapel.

After nearly twenty years of searching, Donald set himself a deadline before abandoning his quest. A remarkable series of communications and coincidences led to success within days of this deadline. In his final attempts he contacted distant family member, Preston Craig, who thought "*Henry*" had gone to a timber museum in Rotorua. After many further calls and emails, the Tokoroa Timber museum suggested he contact the Dept of Conservation Head Office. The person who answered his call (a still-unidentified chance passer-by) suggested Phil Ally who had worked for the NZ Forest Service. Subsequent enquires amongst Head Office staff indicate no other staff in the general area of the answered phone would have known how to help.

Phil then forwarded Donald's information and photos to Pauline Siegfried at SCION (NZ Forest Research Institute). She in turn sent an all-staff email with one photo attached. This was recognised instantly by Marilyn Jamieson, a then custodian of "*Henry*", just before departing from her temping half day. The timing was crucial as this was her only few hours work in several weeks and with no forecast of when she might next be called in. If Donald's call to SCION the previous day had been answered, or had he called any other days, Pauline's subsequent initiatives would have been mistimed and in vain.

Recently Donald learned that *Henry's* 1969 destination was the NZ Forest Service Information Centre in Rotorua. Subsequent changes of ownership led to its closure following which *Henry* was stored at Waipa Mill until 1993 when declared to be rubbish for dumping. Bruce Jamieson, twice within hours, rescued this slab from the rubbish truck after recognising its importance. Then earlier this year, Marilyn and Bruce were planning to move home. This somehow gave them an insight that *Henry* would shortly be claimed back!

David Dunsheath - from Donald Mackay

HISTORY FOR SALE

During motorway construction through the middle of the old cemetery, a study was commissioned by the Ministry of Works to document the history of Wellington's first burial ground. This research became a detailed and authoritative publication written by historian Margaret Alington, entitled "Unquiet Earth". Published by the Wellington City Council and the Ministry of Works and Development in 1978, it is now out of print, although second-hand copies can be found in bookstores.

The Friends' Committee has copies of this book for sale for \$20 which is well below the usual price. If you would like to purchase a copy, please contact a member of the

committee. We strongly recommend it to anyone interested in the history of early Wellington or who has ancestors buried in the cemetery.

Priscilla Williams

WCC REPORT TO JULY 07 AGM

Sexton's Cottage: Refurbishment work this year included:

- the removal of old lead based paint before repainting could proceed.
- installation of a sprinkler system
- the water main upgrade
- a chimney assessment and re-fixing to the Cottage where it had come away
- a pest sprayer to treat borer

Tracks: The Goat Track has been timber edged re-metalled and steps have been installed on the steeper slopes. All the tracks off Reserves path have had the same treatment.

General: The vandalised sign at the lower cemetery, beside the Chapel was replaced and insurance covered the cost. It seems of late that there's an increasing amount of graffiti (tagging) happening – it's mainly occurring on the signage

Seddon Memorial has been re-planted. The species dahlia is flowering well at the moment and the heritage roses are being dead-wooded and mulched

Visitor Services: A new Grave Locator Pamphlet was produced and appears to be steadily leaving the brochure holders. Interpretive text writer commissioned for BG, TK and BSMP signs

A range of new postcards was designed for Botanic Garden, Rose Garden, Bolton Street, Truby King, and two for Otari. Justine Hall WCC photographer has taken promotional photos of all 4 gardens.

Restoration Programme: Headstone World gravestone repairs: A wooden cross down at Easdale Street has been renovated and reinstated – this area's renovations of headstone etc is looking particularly good.

Trees: After consultation with the Kinross Street residents the removal of the bucket tree has been deferred. Due to health & safety reasons plans are to trial a fence around the lower section of the tree to deter potential tree-climbers.

A large section of Elm tree blew down in wind, issues with the remaining portion of the tree and the motorway below meant the entire tree was removed.

Three old Macrocarpas in the vicinity and opposite the Gardeners Green shed were removed last week. The helicopter budget was spent in one day and the remaining stumps are probably going to be removed by crane. Some damage was done to iron work on two graves this has been recorded and will be fixed through Treescape's insurance.

Thanks: David Sole asked to relay his thanks to the committee and Friends members for the years work. The year has been a most productive one.

Leanne Killalea (in David Sole's absence)

BOLTON STREET MEMORIAL PARK – ART WORKS

Wellington artist Judi Jenkins, pictured below, is currently exhibiting a series of paintings at Emerge Gallery, Wakefield Street, based on her visits to the BSMP. They depict her impressions of the history and influences which make up the Park as it is today.

Judi was inspired by the green peaceful space divided by the motorway and traffic, which she discovered while walking around Wellington. Old maps and newspaper articles written at the time of the burials feature in her work.

Some of the influences represented in her paintings are:

- The motorway which runs through the Park is depicted by white flashes through a green space,
- Scarlet fever is represented by the colour red, a common cause of death among the early settlers,



Photo: Judy Bale



Photo: Judy Bale

- The mass grave, where remains were buried after the graves were relocated for the Motorway, is shown as a large dark space.
- Houses represent the hard lonely lives of early settler women who emptied the slops and fed the stock, and
- Crooked roads represent the damage and destruction to the Park caused by the Motorway construction.

Judi is currently working and studying at The Learning Connexion and uses various mediums and techniques including collage, stitching and cutting with fabrics.

She was recently among the ten finalists in the Halifax Emerging Artist Awards. Judi's work can be viewed at www.judijenkinsart.freesever.com.