



FRIENDS of BOLTON STREET CEMETERY INCORPORATED

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<http://www.boltoncemetery.org.nz>

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Editors: David Dunsheath & Kate Fortune

THE ENDURING APPEAL OF 'MURDER & MAYHEM'

Our largest tour of the year to date took place on Friday October 2 at 5.30pm. This year we were grateful to have the help of the Botanic Gardens Tree House who took tour bookings for us. This meant we were able to cap bookings at 65 which was within our guiding capabilities. The evening was windy and overcast and we ended up with almost 60 participants. An interesting addition to the night was the attendance of the Capital Steampunk group who wore striking period costume and were led by Col. Sir Julius Hawthorne. They showed great interest in the tour and the Cemetery and we look forward to future association with them. Nick Perrin, Jenny Button, Jennifer Robinson and Judy Bale were the guides, assisted by David Dunsheath and Karl Bale. Stories of the shark attack in Wellington harbour, two murders with fascinating twists, and many accounts of sad and tragic events of the times made sure that all were enthralled and learnt more about the history of early Wellington.



Judy Bale

*Some of those who joined the tour on 2 October
Photos: David Dunsheath*

IN THIS ISSUE

A Lad That Never Came Home	2
Report from the Botanic Gardens Manager	2
Committee Contacts 2015-2016	3
Incoming President: Jenny Button	4
Cemetery Repairs Report	4
James Muir: Pioneer Printer	5
Community Volunteers' Working Bees	7
Enhancing the Cemetery: Tim Harkness	8



A LAD THAT NEVER CAME HOME

We continue our series of articles (appearing in newsletters #78 and #79) researched by committee member Ian Jolly, for use during the centenary of WWI.

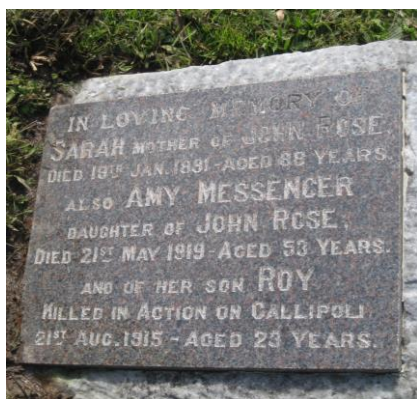
Lieutenant Henry Frederick Roy MESSENGER (known as Roy) of the 6th Yorkshire Regiment, was born on 21 December 1891 at Wellington. His parents were James Robert (shown on the electoral role as being a Government Inspector) and Amy Messenger.

Roy appears to have grown up in Masterton and attended Masterton District High School where he was noted passing Standard VII in 1904. He was a keen footballer and golfer as well as being one of the best known runners in the Wellington Province.

After leaving school Roy worked as a stock agent for Dalgety & Co in Masterton and later Napier, which was where he enlisted. At work he was said to be very popular owing to his bright and cheerful nature.

He embarked at Wellington with the NZ Expeditionary Force for Suez on 16 October 1914, arriving in early December.

At first Roy served in the Military Mounted Police as a clerk to the Assistant Director Veterinary Services with the rank of Trooper. He then became part of HQ Divisional Staff and was promoted to Sergeant.



On 19 April 1915 he transferred from the NZEF to the British Army 6th Yorkshire regiment with the rank of second Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Roy Messenger was killed at Gallipoli on 22 August 1915. He has no known grave, his name being recorded on the Helles Memorial in Turkey and on his mother's and maternal grandparents' headstone on Robertson Way at Bolton Street Cemetery.

Left: Memorial inscription (grid reference M11 01)

His mother Amy never recovered from the loss of her only son, having reportedly suffered a severe shock to the nervous system; she died on 21 May 1919.

On 25 April 2012 Lieutenant Messenger was remembered at the Masterton ANZAC Day service, as the subject of a speech by a Wairarapa College history student.

Ian Jolly

REPORT FROM THE BOTANIC GARDENS MANAGER

At the Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery AGM on 23 June 2015, **David Sole** presented his report on behalf of the Botanic Gardens Team. Achievements he listed included the repairs programme (see below), the new signage following the change of name from "Memorial Park" to "Cemetery", and progress made – with continuing help from Nick Perrin – on GIS plotting of the Cemetery gravesites, and on the

renewal of the burial register in the Chapel. Next year's programme will include the 'Unknowns Memorial' on the Memorial Lawn in the lower cemetery.

David noted that the Sexton's cottage fit-out was completed, and the picket fences have been re-painted. He thanked the Friends for their valuable working bees, which continue to complement the restoration work on graves and memorials, and for the guided walks that bring pleasure to many via heritage, architecture and novelty. He thanked the committee for their dedication to the Cemetery and for being its 'public voice', especially in making a strong contribution to the Management Plan, the name change and recognition of the need to work closely with Mount Street Cemetery.



David Sole, photo by Kate Fortune

He also acknowledged and thanked the Botanic Gardens team for their work in the cemetery and the progress they have accomplished with horticulture and especially the heritage rose collection. David's final thanks were a vote of acknowledgement, on behalf of Council and WCC staff, for Priscilla – “forthright, and delightfully undiplomatic” – for her long tenure and immense contribution as President. He particularly mentioned the significant progress made “in the discipline around the programming and restoration of the Bolton Street Cemetery memorials, vigilance over heritage matters and protection of the cemetery for future generations”.

Kate Fortune

COMMITTEE CONTACTS 2015-16

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INCOMING PRESIDENT: JENNY BUTTON



The AGM of Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery on 23 June elected **Jenny Button** as President. Jenny joined the Committee a year ago, admitting that her interest in the Cemetery arose because she has Fancourt ancestors buried there – including Archdeacon Thomas Fancourt, first vicar of Karori (died 1 Feb 1919). Quite a number of charitable and heritage organisations have captured Jenny's time and attention since she retired as Headmistress of Samuel Marsden Collegiate School, and the Friends are delighted to have her leadership and involvement in our activities.

CEMETERY REPAIRS COMPLETED DURING 2014-2015

As happened last year, funds were used from our annual allocation to repair one brick and plaster surround. We selected the **Schultze family** grave, on the eastern side of Robertson Way (grid reference L10 02), where the walls of this grave, which had had previous repairs, had then collapsed during a strong earthquake in 2013 and needed urgent attention. The old bricks were replaced with concrete-block walls and plastered.

The restorer, Chris Logan of *Outsiders*, also managed to piece together the various parts of the elaborate cast-iron surround using a braising technique in the cemetery for the first time. We hope this can be used elsewhere on many other broken cast-iron railings. The completed grave with its intensive planting now looks very lovely.

The marble cross commemorates the four people buried there – Charles and Anne Schultze, their eldest son Frederick who died in Sydney aged 12, and an infant, Percival Schultze Johnston. These are the only four recorded as buried in the grave but a recent working bee uncovered the base of another marble memorial so possibly other family members are interred here too.

Other repairs were undertaken by Kim Stops of *Headstone World*. The **Ebden** tombstone teetering above the motorway on Friends Path was removed to a safer spot



nearby; the **Sheehy/ Harding** headstone propped up on Lyon Path was moved back onto its base so that the full inscription could be seen; and a little cross was replaced on the **Alexander** grave on the slope above Bowen St. The most challenging repair was for **Eliza Munro and family**, a reinstated memorial near the base of the overbridge. Its crumbling concrete backing was replaced by white granite, shaped to match the tombstone. A lead-inscribed marble tombstone for the **Hutchings** family



grave (grid reference D14 25) which had recently been unearthed on Buxton Path in the lower cemetery was given a “desk” base to keep it above ground (*see left*). Kim also repaired the **Muir family**’s iron memorial (*see story below*). The remaining allocation for 2014/15 was spent on repairing two wooden railings, described in detail in newsletter #79, June 2015. As this was the first time we had used the firm

Heritage Gates and Fences, we cautiously chose two simple designs of posts and chains, splitting the cost with the Botanic Gardens. One of these was for **Ellison** and the other described as “unknown, next to Quee”.

Since then, committee member Ian Jolly has done some sleuthing in the archives and has established that the unknown grave is the burial plot for four members of the **Godber family** – Ethel, Mary, Charles and Mary Ann. Its identification is thanks to little Ethel Godber as the vital but obscure clue of her original plot number was found in the Burial Register when she died in 1880 aged 2 months. The Burial Register also indicated that three more Godber family members died after the cemetery was closed, and were buried in the same plot. Finally, it was established that the Godbers were closely related to the Quees who are buried in the next plot. It is always good to give a name to a previously unknown plot and to pinpoint the resting place of someone’s ancestors. The plot has now been assigned a grid reference and the website updated.

Priscilla Williams

JAMES MUIR: PIONEER PRINTER

This year a book called *Printer’s Progress: A New Zealand Newspaper Story 1840-2014*, was launched in Parliament House. Margaret Rees-Jones, a Muir descendant, tells the story of the Muir family and its involvement in newspaper publishing from the founding of Wellington until the present day – a remarkable record of six generations. The family’s association is primarily with the *Gisborne Herald*, one of New Zealand’s few independent daily papers, but for Wellingtonians the opening chapters of the book are of particular interest – covering the racy and confusing period of competing early newspapers in the new colony. By coincidence, the tombstone of James Muir and his wife Janet, in the Bolton Street Cemetery, was mended just a few months earlier as a cast-iron section



had broken away. These recent repairs (giving more strength to the memorial which before excavation had been protected by attractive cast-iron railings) provide an appropriate time therefore to give a brief summary of this important pioneer's life. The following account is drawn in part from the book *Printer's Progress* with the permission of the author.

Details about James's actual birthdate and early life are sketchy and uncertain; his death notices in 1865 give his age as 58 while his tombstone opts for 62. Sometime around 1803-07 he was born in Edinburgh, and then served a printer's apprenticeship with the well-established publishing firm of Ballantyne's. His obituary recalls that one of his cherished memories was of carrying book proofs to novelist Sir Walter Scott.

However James clearly was restless for wider horizons and became a seafarer, joined a New Bedford whaler and finally arrived at Bluff around 1839. Making his way to the Wellington area he earned a living as a sawyer and by ferrying across the harbour the very first pioneers brought out under the Wakefield settlement scheme.

There, apparently on the beach in March 1840, he encountered Samuel Revans, a pioneering journalist who had recently arrived in Wellington with a printing press in order to establish a newspaper for the new colony. Family lore reports that Muir was selected by Revans because of his clean-shaven appearance; but an experienced printer would have been a great asset in those early days when skilled craftsmen were hard to find. Recruited at that time was the much younger and inexperienced Thomas Wilmor McKenzie, whose story was given in newsletter #73 (June 2012). Publisher Revans, printers Francis Yates and James Muir, and apprentice McKenzie produced New Zealand's first newspaper, the four-page *New Zealand Gazette* on 18 April 1840, James pulling the first damp sheet from the press. In those days they had to be much more than printers and James frequently wrote material as well as setting copy.

The early years of the colony were difficult ones for newspapers. The *Gazette* lasted a few years as did the *Colonist*, followed by the *Spectator*. During this period James married or entered into a common-law partnership with Janet Coutie (née Ramsay) with whom he was to have five sons and one daughter, Elizabeth, after whom Elizabeth Street in Mount Victoria is named.

In 1845 a group of five printers, including Muir and Thomas McKenzie, started the *Wellington Independent*, a bi-weekly, then weekly paper which competed with the *Spectator* and later the *New Zealand Advertiser* in a tiny market. They managed to find the right mix of material as the *Independent* not only survived but expanded in size and frequency, moving to a tri-weekly in 1864 and finally a daily in 1871. As part proprietor of Wellington's leading newspaper, James came to occupy an important and influential position in society. His two elder sons joined the *Independent* staff, moving later to found their own newspaper in Poverty Bay, the *Poverty Bay Herald*, renamed the *Gisborne Herald* in 1939 and still being published as a daily paper.

1865 was a significant year for Wellington when the seat of Government moved from Auckland and the colony began to flourish. Henry Blundell took the considerable gamble of starting a daily newspaper, the *Evening Post*, in February of that year. Two

months earlier James Muir retired, after a long and comfortable partnership with McKenzie who remained sole proprietor of the *Independent*. James did not enjoy retirement long, dying on 24 November 1865. Janet died shortly afterwards in 1867, aged only 51. Both were buried in the Sydney Street (public) cemetery.



Although James and Janet are the only names on the iron tombstone, the cemetery records show that Arthur Muir, their fifth son who died in 1877 aged 25, was also buried in the family grave. His name may have been recorded on the tombstone as the cast iron form is designed to accommodate extra names on additional panels, and two panels were missing in the 1960s before the grave was dug up for the motorway. This photograph shows what the tombstone looked like before the recent repair, with a gap for two panels and the bottom panel broken off. The Muir tombstone can be found on Woodward Path near the junction with Sydney Street Path (grid reference O11-16).

Story and photos: Priscilla Williams

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS BOOST WORKING BEES

Substantial progress has been made during the year on various projects in the Cemetery with much-appreciated volunteer assistance from large groups of office workers. Most recently, we were joined by a group of about 20 BNZ staff members on 2 September, as part of the annual “*Closed for Good*” community service day.

This initiative has become a wonderful source of reliable volunteer manpower for us every year since 2009.

Earlier in the year Volunteer Wellington has provided teams of workers from firms in the city, including ANZ.

We are delighted that the Cemetery has now been “adopted” by a group of staff from the Parliamentary Counsel Office.



This group from the BNZ “Closed for Good” volunteers helped spread gravel on paths

The Parliamentary Counsel group have spent a couple of days in the Cemetery, and they are planning to give us a whole day’s work on Friday 27 November.

Kate Fortune

ENHANCING THE CEMETERY: TIM HARKNESS

We have received accolades in the past two or three years about the attractive appearance of the cemetery. While the Friends are happy to take some credit, much of it must go to the team of gardeners who manage or work in the cemetery, including James Jones, Leanne Killalea, Rachel Solomon and most particularly Tim Harkness who has been very closely involved in creating recent improvements.



Rachel Solomon and Tim Harkness in the Rose Garden in June

Tim had worked for ten years in the parks and gardens of the city before joining the rose team and thus starting his work in the cemetery in April 2013. From the outset he took an interest in the memorials and understood the need to use the planting as a complement to them rather than a competition to overwhelm them. He has also appreciated the need to develop more seasonal interest and his extensive bulb planting has been a treat in early spring. The species rose area has been enhanced by Tim's use of re-cycled old bricks. He has been helpful and cooperative during our working bees and we know that volunteers from firms in the city enjoyed doing the special projects he thought up for them, in spite of the heavy work involved.



Centre: apricot japonica

We were sad to learn that Tim was leaving us to take up the challenging role of a parks ranger, but know he will tackle it with the same enthusiasm and sensitivity that he has given to the cemetery garden role. We shall miss you, Tim, but will continue to enjoy the added beauty you have given us in the cemetery gardens.

Priscilla Williams (Photos: K Fortune & P Williams)