



FRIENDS of BOLTON STREET CEMETERY INCORPORATED

PO BOX 12 426, WELLINGTON, 6144, NEW ZEALAND

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

NEWSLETTER No 86 NOVEMBER 2018

Editor: Kate Fortune

POPULAR SPRING TOURS

The Friends have held two fully booked tours recently. On 28 September, 40 people took a guided tour, 'Tip-toe through the Tombstones', and on 26 October, 60 turned up for a 'built heritage' tour of the Cemetery. The latter included a rare opportunity to see inside the 1857 cottage in Bolton Street which was once occupied by Anglican sextons.

Both tours have strong connections to the two former committee members whose obituaries appear in this issue. **Judy Bale**, our 'tours coordinator', planned both events although too ill to participate. And **John Daniels** was an authority on the history of the cemetery and its city links, serving on our committee for 29 years up until 2009.



Above: One of the tour groups on 28 September at the Wakefield family grave in the lower Cemetery, with tour guide Nick Perrin (far right). Photo: David Dunsheath

During November, we commemorate in the Cemetery two important events:

***Armistice Day on 11th**, marking the end of WWI, and the **FLU PANDEMIC** that killed thousands, reaching its fatal peak in mid to late November.*

We offer separate self-guided tours for both, see details on page 5 and back cover.

IN THIS ISSUE:

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|----|
| Commemorating 1918 flu epidemic | 2 | Botanic Garden Manager's Report | 11 |
| Working Bees, October 2018 | 6 | Committee Contacts | 11 |
| Obituary: John R S Daniels | 8 | WWI: Lads who never came home | 12 |
| Obituary: Judith G Bale | 9 | Armistice Day Commemoration | 12 |

COMMEMORATING THE 1918 FLU EPIDEMIC

This November, communities around New Zealand will be commemorating not just the centenary of the Armistice which ended the Great War, but also the centenary of our worst disease outbreak, the lethal influenza pandemic that struck between October and December 1918. In two months New Zealand lost about half as many people to influenza as it had in the whole of World War I. No event has killed so many New Zealanders in such a short period. By the time it eased in December the death toll had reached 9000. Maori suffered very heavily, with about 2500 deaths, although more may have been unrecorded. But death did not occur evenly either among Maori or New Zealanders as a whole; some communities were decimated, others escaped largely unscathed. The only places struck with uniform severity were military camps. One unusual feature of this flu was that it targeted most severely those in their 20s and 30s, rather than the usual vulnerable groups. And uniquely in New Zealand, twice as many men as women died in these age groups for reasons that are still unknown.

Because of the in-depth research by Dr Geoffrey Rice of Canterbury University, we know a great deal about the victims of this epidemic; indeed New Zealand is the only country to have such a detailed set of mortality records for this global event. Wellington had the highest death rate among our urban centres of 7.9% with the death count being 757. Most of these were buried in the Karori Cemetery, the main cemetery operating at that time, after the Bolton St Cemetery closed in 1892 except for family plots.

Because there were existing family plots, seven of the flu victims were buried in Bolton St Cemetery and two are memorialised there. It is interesting to note that of the nine, seven are men who died in their 20s or 30s, the other two being older women.

Current grid references are given and all memorials will be marked with **white crosses** from about 15 to 27 November when the Wellington deaths were at their highest. A brief account of each follows (in order of death) although information is sparse if the victims were from poor or working-class families whose lives were largely undocumented.

Gunner Vivian Middleton died at sea 5 September, aged 20. D15 15, Moffitt grave, Te Ara Uhu Path. (*Pictured right.*)

Vivian was among the 40th NZ Reinforcements on the troop ship *SS Tahiti* which became a death ship after leaving New Zealand in July 1918. The 1217 people aboard had had no exposure to the deadly flu and when the ship called at Sierra Leone insufficient precautions were taken.



The *Tahiti* left Freetown on 26 August, heading in convoy to Plymouth, and almost at once the first cases of flu were reported to the ship's hospital. The outbreak onboard peaked three days later, with more than 800 people ill, two-thirds of everyone aboard and including both doctors. This shows how infectious this disease was, and how quickly it could be transmitted in a crowded environment. In all, roughly 90% of those

on the *Tahiti* became ill from influenza. Over 70 New Zealanders died and a medical inspection after arrival found only 260 men fit out of a force of over a thousand. Gunner Middleton is commemorated on the Moffitt grave near the Church of England cemetery entrance on Bolton Street. (For details of his life, see newsletter #85, June 2018).

Captain Charles Cyril Pontin Tanner died 5 October, aged 26. J14 16, Madeley Path. Captain Tanner's story is on p 12, part of our 'Lads Who Never Came Home' series.

Gilbert Ross Hewitt died 1 November, aged 30. I09 04, Lyon Path.

Gilbert was a tally clerk working at the wharf so would have been exposed to the disease at an early stage when infected people arrived in Wellington by ship. Unmarried, he lived at 4 Lipman St, Mt Victoria, the son of Thomas Brackenridge Hewitt and Rosina Mary Hewitt. Thomas was waterworks overseer to the Wellington City Council for 27 years, and his tombstone was erected by his fellow employees. It records Gilbert's death as 30 October but official records give it as 1 November.

Sarah Martha Watts died 12 November, aged 64. H05 05, off Robertson Way.

Her parents were William and Esther (née Flood) who were married in Marlborough, UK, in 1837 and came to New Zealand on the *Arab* in October 1841 with two children. Four more, including Sarah, were born here. William and Esther are recorded on the family tombstone which was in the gully area of the Church of England cemetery and thus disinterred for the motorway construction and moved up the hill. They died at their residence at Tinakori Road, while Sarah is recorded as living in Cambridge Terrace at the time of her death and as single. We have no other information about her and her name is not on the tombstone. Of five siblings only her youngest brother outlived her.

Walter Harold Macey died 14 November, aged 25. K09 12, near Robertson Way.

This tombstone was moved for the motorway from the public (Sydney St) cemetery near the northern end. It also records his father, John Thomas Macey, who died 1 December 1910 aged 41, and four other of John's children who all died as infants – Muriel Florence, Eric John, Iris and Noel. Walter who was single was working as a clerk at the time of his death and living at 22 Hataitai Rd. He died in a temporary hospital set up in the Sydney Schoolroom, one of several such hospitals established during the epidemic in Wellington. This building was in Sydney St East, now Kate Sheppard Place and had beds for 41 patients. A large and attractive hall, designed by Swan and built in 1897, it still exists today. After over 60 years use by St Paul's Parish



it was moved to the Thorndon School and is now (pictured left) a listed building with Category 2 heritage status. Walter's mother, Minnie, was a nurse and may well have been at this hospital during the epidemic. Having married John when she was very young, she was only 35 at the time of his death. Five years later she married Frank Lewis at St Thomas's Church, Newtown. Dying in 1946, she was buried with her second husband in the Karori cemetery.

Mary CLELAND died 21 November, aged 79. O11 09 Woodward Path.

Another relocated tombstone commemorates first the daughter of Mary and her husband Robert McGiffert Cleland, who died aged 18, then Robert who died aged 48, then their only son Alfred who died at 25 and lastly Mary herself who was outlived by one daughter. At the time of her death Mary was living in 39 Upland Rd, Kelburn.

William Sterling CLARK died 27 November, aged 30. N15 ? Lower lawn near corner of Robertson Way and Governors' Way.

It took some time to trace this burial, due partly to a misspelling of Sterling as Stanley in the records. William's father, a carpenter, was also called William. He died in 1895 aged 36 and was buried in plot 226.A of the Public Cemetery, where his baby son Alexander Forbes Clark had been buried in 1890 before the cemetery closed. We have no record of William Sterling's burial location but it clearly must have been in the family grave with his father and baby brother. Nor do we know anything about him except that at the time of his death he was unmarried and lived at 9 Green St, Newtown and may have been unemployed. We have no record for the burial of his mother Jessie, nor a sister Violet Murray born in 1890. Although this grave just missed being disinterred for the motorway, it has no tombstone and is grassed over so its exact location cannot be determined with certainty.



*Pictured left,
emergency
ambulances outside
the Wellington Town
Hall during the flu
epidemic.
ATL Ref PAColl-
7489-69*

Arthur Henry Hunter STEVENSON died 28 November, aged 36. D15 11, lower Cemetery, near Bolton Street.

Arthur, youngest son of James Jackson and Mary Stevenson, was a qualified accountant living at 36 Plunket St, Kelburn, who was assistant executive officer of the Munitions and Supplies Department at the time of his death. Before the war, he was on the staff of the City Council for 19 years, becoming Assistant Rates Collector. His father, who had been born in Canada, was already buried in the family grave and later his mother was also interred there. Arthur had married Ruth Gillik and they had one son, also called Arthur, who was only aged four at the time of his father's death.

James Chirnside died 29 November, aged 31. K11 08, relocated tombstone on the bank above the motorway overbridge.

Although this was another working-class family death, we have information about Jim (James) thanks to a book, *The Twigs of My Tree*, written by his nephew Ian Stewart that recounts stories about the Chirnside, Firth and Stewart families. Jim's parents, Robert and Margaret Chirnside, had eight children and died at a relatively young age leaving their eldest daughter Annie to bring up her younger siblings. Both parents were buried in the Sydney St public cemetery (now part of the Bolton St cemetery) along with an 11-year-old son who had died of typhoid fever, and Robert's mother, Ann. These four are recorded on the family tombstone but Jim is not. William, the eldest surviving son, served in the South Africa war then in World War I, rising to the rank of Lieutenant and dying at Passchendaele on 11 October 1917. Two younger brothers Thomas and John also served in the Great War but both survived. Jim was the youngest and unlike his brothers was ineligible for war service because he was a carpenter and (as often happened then) had lost some fingers in an accident with a saw. In 1912 he married Mary Josephine O'Neill and they had one daughter Marjorie Annie born in 1913. During the war he worked for the tramways ('essential work' for the purposes of war regulations), although his death certificate describes his occupation as turncock. According to the Stewart book, Jim caught flu through comforting an unknown woman whose husband had just died of the disease. He soon had a severe fever, became delirious and died at his home. 49 Childers Terrace, Kilbirnie. Mary's immediate problem was his burial because she was Roman Catholic but her husband was not. The solution, in the difficult circumstances of the November epidemic, was the Chirnside family plot in the Sydney St public cemetery where Jim's parents were buried. Maybe Mary did not wish to add Jim's name to the tombstone, or simply could not afford to.

There is a postscript to the Chirnside story. Annie – who had brought up all her siblings and seen many of them through marriage or death – was determined to be buried in the family plot in Sydney St. But when she died on 25 January 1967, aged 88, motorway work was about to start and burials were being halted, especially for graves in the construction area. Annie did not know, because with deteriorating health she was no longer able to read newspapers. An order-in-council to stop burials was in preparation but not yet passed at the time of her death. Ian Stewart wrote that the Wellington City Council tried to dissuade him and his brother from having her buried in Sydney St, since the grave would have to be moved soon after. But they argued that her wishes were clear and should be respected. Thus Annie Chirnside became the last person interred in the old cemetery and two months later all burials were legally prohibited.

Priscilla Williams

Commemorations in Wellington will focus on two **Open Days at the Karori Cemetery** on **Sundays 18 & 25 November**. This is a rare opportunity not only to learn of the epidemic but to have some guidance around the cemetery, one of the largest in New Zealand. In the Bolton Street Cemetery, **white crosses** will mark the deaths noted in this article.

To learn more of the flu epidemic, see Professor Rice's latest book *Black Flu 1918* which is a condensation of his earlier and important work on the same subject.

WORKING BEES IN OCTOBER 2018

We were able to have two working bees in October. The first was a regular Friends' Sunday morning session early in the month and despite it being a rather cold and windy day we did plenty of clearing and weeding, mainly below the Thorndon Lookout.

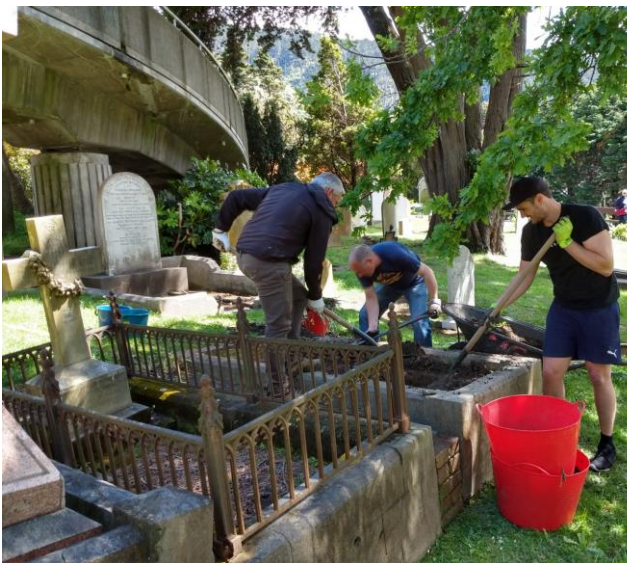
Friday 26 October was a busy day; as well as having our Heritage Week tour in the evening we were delighted to have a team from NZ Post spend a day working in the cemetery. After heavy rain and strong wind overnight it was a beautiful day and Jenny Smith and her eight co-workers did a great job. Stuart Allen had lined up a range of tasks including tidying up around the Sexton's cottage ready for the tour, weeding graves and gardens, mulching, transplanting bulbs, digging out a concrete slab and clearing out accumulated dirt that had obscured the wording on a grave plaque. The weeding and clearing had the approval of resident blackbirds who were out looking for tasty morsels for their chicks and appreciated what was turned up for them.

Our last session for the year is scheduled for Sunday morning, 25 November; we will be without Nina and her team from Victoria University but hopefully our loyal band of regulars will be there and maybe even some new recruits.

A very big thank you to everyone who has come along! The work done during all our sessions is much appreciated and really helps with keeping the cemetery looking so great. Please contact me if you would like to join us or have any queries about our working bees (see page 6).

Article: Jennifer Robinson; photos Stuart Allen, Jennifer Robinson & Jenny Smith (NZ Post) for the group photo below





The Bolton Street blackbird that supervised the digging and waited for the worm



OBITUARY: JOHN RICHARD SINCLAIR DANIELS

John Daniels, a long-serving member of the committee of the Friends, died on 9 July 2018. In his working life John served the heritage sector with distinction as a senior civil servant, but he also took on voluntary service to many heritage areas. In both capacities he contributed hugely to the establishment of the cemetery as an area of historic importance.

John was Director of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (now Heritage New Zealand) for 16 years from 1971-1988, a position he held with distinction during a challenging period for heritage preservation in New Zealand. For the next decade he held senior heritage management positions on historic resources policy with the Department of Conservation. (*Photo: Kate Fortune*)



His work in the voluntary sector can only be described as heroic. Despite having busy and demanding paid employment, throughout his life John put aside much of his time to serve the heritage interests of New Zealand in a voluntary capacity. An early interest was archaeology and as a member of the Archaeological Society, he was the NZ Site Recording Scheme central file keeper for some 14 years. He was an active member of the Onslow Historical Society from its inception, serving as its 2nd President (1975-77). A member of the Friends of Old St Paul's, he served as Chairman of the Joint Consultative Committee, and his work helped to save this very important heritage building. More recently John had been engaged in setting up the new organisation of Historic Places Wellington and its parent body, known as Historic Places Aotearoa.

One particular project of concern to John was the preservation of Wellington's first cemetery, founded in 1840 and subsequently operated as three cemeteries – Public (Sydney St), Church of England (Bolton St) and Jewish. Closed in 1892, except for burials in family plots, it gradually became a neglected wilderness with broken memorials, a decaying mortuary chapel and a forgotten history. Worse was to come in the 1960s when the decision was made to construct the urban motorway right through its centre. A protection society was formed but failed to persuade the authorities to save the burial ground. The next phase for supporters of the cemetery (who formally became Friends of the Cemetery in March 1977) was to save as many of the memorials as possible and to ensure respectful reinternment of the thousands who were exhumed. But there were also many years of wrangling with the city authorities and other interested parties about the land allocation and use.

During all this, John had an overview of the destruction of the cemetery from his office. Despite heading the Government's main regulatory body for heritage areas, John took the unusual step of engaging actively in the voluntary effort by joining the committee of the Friends in 1980 and after a year as deputy Chairman, serving as Chairman from 1983 until 1989. These were particularly difficult years as the land deal and other undertakings needed to be implemented. John's leadership in the negotiations and his willingness to cooperate with all interested parties was crucial to final completion of

the project in 1990, but with lingering regrets that a better scheme was not possible and that certain undertakings, most notably a piazza over the motorway, were never implemented. John continued to serve on the committee, undertaking the role of Treasurer from 1992-98 and finally stepping down in 2009, a record service of almost 30 years to an important part of Wellington's early history.

Members may recall that John spoke to the AGM in July 2009 about his years with the Friends and a summary of this talk was given in our newsletter #68 of December 2009. This provides a fuller explanation of the land deals and other negotiations.

In his work for the cemetery, John brought to the table his deep knowledge of the heritage sector – both governmental and non-governmental – drawn from many years' experience. Just as important was his personality as a team player who valued the contribution of others and worked as a leader to bring out the best in his colleagues. He was constantly encouraging, helpful, knowledgeable and supportive. In recognition of his long and outstanding service the Committee of the Friends decided this year to recommend to the 2018 AGM that he be made a life member of the Friends of the Bolton St Cemetery. Sadly and unexpectedly he died a few days before that meeting so the formal decision was unable to be implemented.

We offer our condolences to his wife Jenny and family. Jenny was an active member of the Friends and a consistent supporter of John's work for us. *Priscilla Williams*

OBITUARY: JUDITH GIBBONS BALE



(Photo: Michael Bale)

Judy Bale, a valued committee member, sadly lost her long battle with cancer and died on 29 September 2018. It is a tribute to her determination that until her final weeks she continued to be an actively engaged in Cemetery matters, still sending messages on her laptop from hospital. Judy made a huge contribution, bringing great enthusiasm, imagination and positivity. She engaged well with a wide range of people and sought with great success to make the Cemetery better known to Wellingtonians. And she advocated for and enhanced the heritage rose collection which is now one of national significance.

Judy and husband Karl moved into a house adjacent to the Botanic Garden about 20 years ago. Both keen gardeners, they spent those early years creating a beautiful garden, assisted by Judy's keen eye for form and colour. It was inevitable that their attention would turn to the Botanic Garden and to the Cemetery, both of which offered excellent opportunities for daily dog walking and observation of interesting botanic collections.

At the Friends' AGM in 2002 it is recorded that Karl and Judy offered their joint services to committee membership. By the following AGM, it was Judy who became the committee member and from then on was responsible for coordinating tours and publicity. She was also a tour guide. She did this alongside full-time management of her shop Sommerfields, a Wellington institution specialising in high quality New Zealand items and strategically placed by the Cable Car entrance. Its success owed much to Judy's design flair.

Perhaps due to Judy's skills as a trained teacher, she soon had our tours under good control, making sure we had enough guides, that we turned up as promised and kept to the script. And the script would vary. Not content with the standard ad hoc history tour, she introduced themed tours such as "Murder and Mayhem" as well as catering for special interest groups who might want to look at subjects like epidemics or architects and artists. More recently, together with committee member Jennifer Robinson and backed up by our regular researcher Nick Perrin, Judy researched a tour entitled 'Obelisks, Urns and Angels' that focused on the extensive symbolism used on Victorian headstones. The result was 30 pages of notes and photos about the meaning of these symbols, covering some 32 memorials – a substantial piece of research that will continue to be excellent resource material for us.

Not surprisingly, Judy's attention moved beyond the tombstones to the planting around them, and the heritage roses particularly. She was a member of the Heritage Rose Society and grew knowledgeable about the types available. There was a time when the Cemetery's collection became run down, due partly to staffing shortages and partly to inadequate watering systems. Again Judy turned to research, noting that 122 different roses had been listed in the Cemetery in 1995, but by 2013 only around 70 could be identified (newsletter #75, June 2013). During periods of drought she and Karl – working as always in partnership – took to hand-watering and fertilising the most vulnerable plants.

Both were delighted when resources were freed to improve this important aspect of the Cemetery and a better labelling programme was instituted. Judy was particularly pleased by the appointment of a heritage curator who shared her enthusiasm for developing the rose collection and showcasing the planting more imaginatively. In newsletter #77, June 2014, Judy reported on obtaining more roses from the Heritage Rose Society and choosing others for planting in the lower cemetery, with funding from the Botanic Garden and from the Friends. There are currently 120 different named roses in the Cemetery with another 35 that need identifying. Daily walks with Karl and their dog Gerry meant that right up until her final months, Judy kept a close eye on these plantings.



We express our sincere condolences to Karl, to her sons Michael and Steven and her grandchildren, all of whom were an important part of Judy's life. We shall miss her greatly but we shall remember her through the beautiful heritage roses that she cared for and loved so much.

Priscilla Williams

REPORT FROM THE BOTANIC GARDEN MANAGER

David Sole's report to the Friends' AGM on 12 July 2018 acknowledged 'great work achieved between the Friends and the Wellington Garden over the last year'. Apart from getting through the restoration programme, highlights were:

- development of the Anzac Memorial Trail, which can be used again for Anzac Days and Armistice Day commemorations. The combination with the Anzac crosses was especially powerful and poignant this year.
- relocation of the Samuel Parnell plaque from the chapel museum. This meant a lot to the Trades Hall restoration team.
- September 2018 through to November 2019 marks the 150th anniversary year for the Botanic Garden, with a calendar of events being finalised.
- Artist-in-residence programme at the Sexton's Cottage has gone well with a high occupancy this year. Keen to improve connections with artists, not just offering the cottage, and will look to identifying and exploring opportunities.
- As ever a warm acknowledgement of the work of the Friends and especially to the committee. Led by Jenny, each and every one of you make a special contribution to the Cemetery.

[Summary: Kate Fortune]

COMMITTEE CONTACTS 2018 – 19

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Jenny Button <i>President</i> | Policy & strategies, Tours co-ordinator | jennifer.button.nz@gmail.com Tel (04) 476 5759 |
| Priscilla Williams <i>Vice President</i> | Repairs, Heritage WP database, Guide | priscillawilliams.nz@gmail.com Tel (04) 977 4667 |
| Elizabeth Fletcher <i>Minutes Secretary</i> | Committee Minutes | elizabethfletcher1@gmail.com Tel (04) 527 4222 |
| Kate Fortune <i>Treasurer</i> | Membership Secretary, Guide, Editor Newsletter | kate_fortune@hotmail.com Tel (04) 970 0024, 021 109 4001 |
| Karen Adair | Mount Street Cemetery liaison | karen.adair@xtra.co.nz Tel (04) 473 1778 |
| David Dunsheath | Iron railings repairs | davidd@bcpl.co.nz Tel 027 248 9488 |
| Nick Perrin | Biographical & burial list research, Guide | n.perrin@xtra.co.nz Tel (04) 472 3767 |
| Jennifer Robinson | Working bees coordinator, Guide | jennif.robinson@gmail.com Tel (04) 973 8137, |

GENEROUS DONATIONS FROM MEMBERS HELP WITH REPAIRS

We are grateful and immensely heartened by the terrific response to our ongoing appeal for assistance with conservation and repairs. So far we have received \$2,300 (tax- refundable donations) from our membership. Many thanks to you all!

WWI: LADS WHO NEVER CAME HOME

Captain Charles TANNER of the Royal Garrison Artillery

Charles Cyril Pontin TANNER was born in New Zealand on 11 August 1892, only son of Cyril William & Ann Tanner of Wellington. Charles' father was a barrister and city councillor while his mother Ann was the daughter of Doctor Mark Kebbell of Wellington. Charles was educated at Wellington College and at Bedford, England, and was noted as being a keen sportsman, a good cross-country runner and an excellent rifle shot.



He received his commission in February 1913. In June 1914 he was sent to India where he served on the North West Frontier. Then he was posted to Mesopotamia (now part of Iraq) where he led his battery at the taking of Tikrit in September 1917. Captain Tanner died of pneumonia on 5 October 1918 at the Isolation Hospital in Baghdad, aged 26. We are reasonably certain that the pneumonia would have been the last stage of illness following the virulent type of 1918 influenza that affected the lungs. He was buried at the Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery.

As well as his war grave marker Captain Tanner is commemorated in the Bolton St Cemetery on a KEBBELL headstone (Madeley Path, J14 16) and on the 'Baghdad' Bell, donated by his two sisters to the National War Memorial Carillon in Wellington.

Captain Richard John Spotswood SEDDON of the NZ Rifle Brigade



Captain Richard John Spotswood SEDDON of the NZ Rifle Brigade, 3rd Battalion, A Company, was born on 29 May 1881 at Kumara, Westland, eldest of 10 children of Richard and Louisa Seddon. The young Richard's lifelong interest in the military began when he joined Wellington College Cadets after the family moved to Wellington. His first commission was as a junior officer in the Heretaunga Mounted Rifles, followed by a period as a cadet in the Royal NZ Artillery.

In 1899 Seddon volunteered in the Boer War as a lieutenant, rising to the rank of captain. Back in New Zealand in 1901 he was appointed military secretary to his father, (who was then Premier) Richard John Seddon.

On the outbreak of World War I Richard Seddon volunteered but did not actually enlist until 21 February 1917, embarking from Wellington for England on 2 March 1918. He had been in France only a few days and was second in command of a Company of Rifles being held in reserve at Bapaume when a shell landed in the midst of a small group he was with, killing him instantly, on 21 August 1918. He was 37. Captain Seddon was buried at Hebuterne Military Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. The plaque recording his death is at the rear (east side) of the Seddon Memorial, E04 01.

ARMISTICE DAY COMMEMORATION:

Our self-guided World War I Memorial Walk will be available over the weekend of 10-11 November, with signs and poppies marking the family graves or headstones where 17 New Zealand servicemen are remembered.