

Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery Inc.

P.O. BOX 2336, WELLINGTON

NEWSLETTER NO. 16, April 1984

CEMETERY TOURS

Three Wellington City Council historic tours visited the cemetery in June and November. These tours were guided by Friends Committee members.

The tours are an excellent way of learning more about the history of your city. Participants were very interested in the cemetery's history, making the tours a rewarding experience both for them and for the Committee members involved.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
at
ST ANDREW'S-ON-THE-TERRACE
Wednesday, 23rd May, 1984
8 pm

ALL MEMBERS ARE URGED TO ATTEND

Mowbray Street - LAND ISSUE STILL UNRESOLVED

Progress - or rather lack of it - in finalising the addition of land on the corner of Bolton and Mowbray Streets to the Bolton Street Memorial Park can only be described as extremely disappointing.

The May 1983 newsletter of the Friends set out a scheme to add this land to the Park, as part of a transaction involving construction of a semi-underground car park under the land and the landscaping of the upper surface. This scheme offered a financially viable method of adding this very expensive piece of land to the park. The scheme was regarded as attractive by both the City Council and most of the landowners involved.

Now - twelve months since that report to members - it seems that little further progress has been made. The City Council has advised the Friends on several occasions that negotiations are continuing, but there has been no public statement about what is taking so long to negotiate, nor has there been any meeting of interested parties at which the proposals could be aired and discussed. There seems to be lack of commitment and interest in the City Council to bring matters to the conclusion that seemed so close twelve months ago. The advice from the Mayor to the Chairman of the Friends in December 1983 that "there are many difficulties still to be overcome before the goal is realised" scarcely suggests a speedy end to this drawn out saga.

The matter is further complicated by a pending change in the zoning of this land from Residential to Office. This will of course lead to a heavy increase in its value, which could throw the economic viability of the scheme into doubt. The Friends foresaw this threat some years ago, and sought to avert it first by objecting to the District Scheme and when this proved unsuccessful, by an appeal to the Planning Tribunal.

Unfortunately that appeal had to be withdrawn, on legal advice, after the Tribunal made it clear that for technical reasons there was little chance of the appeal achieving any purpose.

The failure of this move will lead to a substantial increase in land value which will make the Council's aim harder to achieve.

The Committee has kept the issue before the Mayor and Councillors and will continue to do so. The Committee has also recently begun to formulate a campaign to stimulate public awareness of the issue and generate renewed public demand for a solution. This campaign will be activated unless a settlement is announced in the near future.

NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

We are pleased to report that through the efforts of the Parks & Reserves Dept. the William Seed stone has been returned to the Memorial Park.

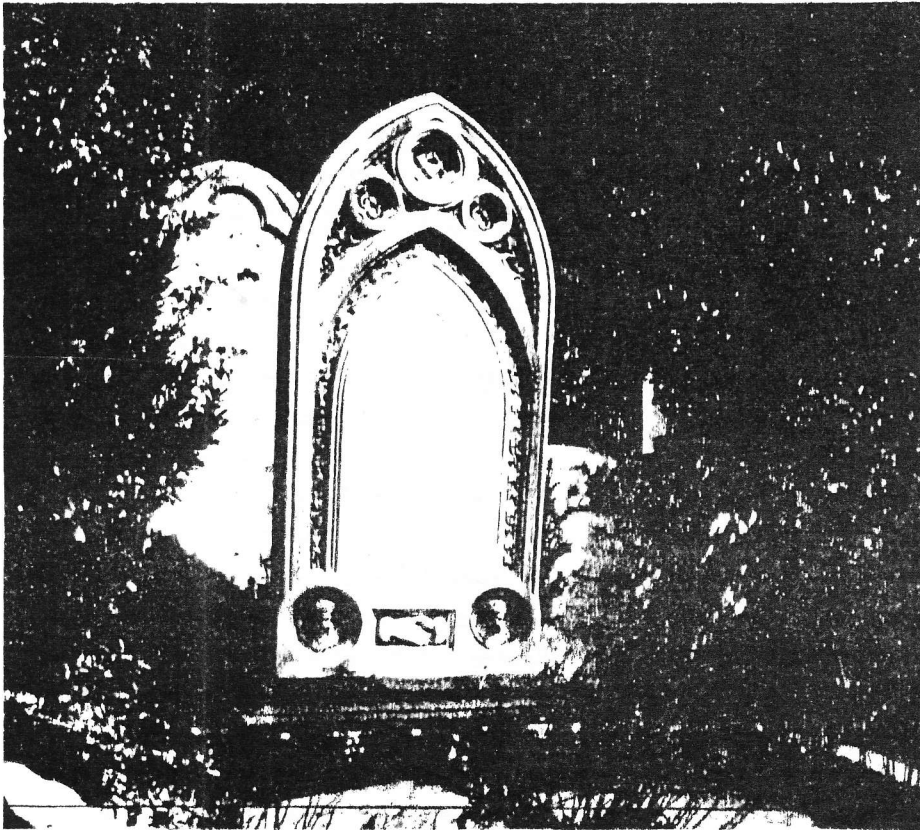
William Seed, J.P., Secretary & Inspector of H.M. Customs and Marine Dept. was prominent in city affairs, including the Mechanics Institute. He died 6 February 1890, aged 63.

This stone was one of those claimed by a descendant when the cemetery was dismantled in 1968, and placed on a private property in Khandallah. As the property has changed hands several times, and as William Seed had played a prominent part in early Wellington, efforts were made to reclaim the stone for the city. With the co-operation of the present owner, the stone was returned to the cemetery by the Parks Department in December 1983.

Rodney Reed who lives in the old Sexton's Cottage has been very attentive in keeping the bottom half of the cemetery clean. This area has become a popular lunchtime park for people working in the nearby Terrace offices. Mr Reed has also been busy blackening lettering on some stones.

The annual memorial ceremony at the grave of Edward Gibbon Wakefield was held on 20th March. Wellington's deputy-mayor, Gavin Wilson laid a wreath during the service which was well attended. Mr Wilson acknowledged the famous pioneer's contribution to the city when he spoke at the ceremony which marked the 122 year since Wakefield's death.

Alexander DOULL Stone



ALEXANDER DOULL and his wife Catherine came to New Zealand in the Hermione in 1882. He was a monumental mason, and brought with him from Edinburgh some blanks for tombstones. As deaths in New Zealand were few, and carved headstones only for the affluent, he could not make a living at his trade, and took to dairy-farming first at Horokiwi and later at Taita. Two stones he was commissioned to make for Maori chiefs are in the Maori burial-ground at Koputaroa, and illustrated here is the stone he carved for his own plot in the old Sydney Street cemetery. It is on the west side of the motorway, four rows east of the gardeners' shed. (Family information from Mrs Phyllis Avery.)

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