



**FRIENDS of
BOLTON STREET
CEMETERY** INCORPORATED
PO BOX 2336 WELLINGTON

NEWSLETTER No 36

May 1993

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 17 MAY 1993 at 7.45 pm

ST ANDREW'S ON THE TERRACE LOUNGE

GUEST SPEAKER

Mrs Beverley Price

(who writes as Beverley Randell), author of
A Crowded Thorndon Cottage (published 1992)

Beverley Price will speak about the Randell family, who lived in Thorndon and are buried in the cemetery. They are the subject of her recent book.

AGENDA - AGM 1993

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Minutes of the 1992 Annual General Meeting
- 3 Matters arising from the minutes
- 4 Chairperson's report
- 5 Treasurer's report and financial statement
- 6 WCC Parks and Recreation Department report
- 7 Election of Committee
- 8 Election of Auditor
- 9 Address by Beverley Randall

SUBSCRIPTIONS - Is yours overdue?

If you receive a membership renewal form with this newsletter, it means your subscription for the 1992-93 year is still due. Please help us by renewing your membership promptly. We value your support.

BOLTON STREET MEMORIAL PARK CHAPEL DISPLAY

An opening ceremony for the historical display in the rebuilt cemetery chapel, now known as the Bolton Street Memorial Park Chapel, took place on Monday 15 March 1993.

The ceremony took place at 10.30 am and was introduced by Mike Oat Manager of the Botanic Gardens. Councillor John Gilberthorpe then spoke, followed by Chairperson of the Friends, Nick Perrin. Guests then enjoyed morning tea provided by the Parks and Recreation Department, in brilliant autumn sunshine.

The displays feature aspects of the cemetery's history. They were based on research by Margaret Alington, and designed and made by Judith Hamblin of the Parks and Recreation Department. The opening of the chapel display is a satisfying end to the long saga of the memorial park and the rebuilding of the chapel.

The chapel will be open 9.00 am to 4.00 pm daily.

THE SAMUEL DUNCAN PARNELL STONE

The chapel display features two magnificent historical nineteenth century headstones. One is the Wakefield stone, which was housed in the chapel for many years following its replacement by a later stone. The second is that of Samuel Duncan Parnell, the founder of the eight-hour day and a hero of the trade union movement.

Parnell's headstone was replaced by a modern stone in 1961. The stone recently returned to the chapel had lain for many years in the Wellington Trades Hall. This stone was thought to have been the original headstone, but recent research indicates that instead it was a memorial to Parnell which was housed in the Wellington Public Library from 1893 to 1940. Further research is being done into the memorial and we will let members know more in a future newsletter.

Whatever its origin, the stone is a striking piece of Victorian stonemasonry and is very large. The installation of these two stones in the chapel display is a triumph of logistics and sheer musclepower by Parks and Recreation staff.

BURIAL LIST PROJECT

The first stage in compiling a complete, unified list of burials in the Public, Church of England and Jewish sections of the Bolton St Cemetery has been completed using the computer program dBase. This list will be the first one to include burials in all three sections in one database, and will include the following information:-

Name (surname first)

Date of burial

Cemetery (C of E, Public or Jewish)

Register No. (for Public and for Jewish and C of E burials from 1892)

Original plot number

Grid Location (for visible graves and memorials as shown on map B217)

Whether or not grave was disinterred for the motorway

Data has been entered from the old index cards held by the sexton at Kurori Cemetery, and photocopies held by the Alexander Turnbull Library of the Public and Church of England registers have been checked to extract the date of burial and plot numbers. Already a few cases of graves recorded as unidentified in the index to B217 now have their occupants known.

The index cards were compiled in 1939 and 1939, probably by T.C. Southward, acting sexton. They are in separate sets for the Church of England and Public cemetery. The former have name, date of burial and plot number, while the latter have name, register number and plot number. (The C of E register used dates while the Public register used consecutive numbers).

The next stage will be double-checking the printouts against the registers and historic maps, and to examine the database for duplications and mistakes, followed by a determination of whether or not specific graves were disinterred for the motorway.

A truly complete list of burials would be impossible, but when we have exhausted all the possibilities with checking sources, our list will be the next best thing. Many burials have no known plot listed (about 600 of the more than 4000 in the Public Cemetery alone), and some may be names of people not buried in the cemetery, as early attempts to compile registers had to rely on inscriptions and it is not unusual for family members buried elsewhere to be commemorated on the family headstone. There are also problems with the spelling of names, and it is not unknown for these to be wrong on headstones. Also, the Public register has a gap between July 1855 and January 1858 when records must have been lost. This gap may include at least a dozen, and possibly up to 30 burials judging by the numbers before and after these dates.

Almost all the listed burials in the Public cemetery from 1849 to 1860 have known plot locations, but between 1861 and 1878 many have no recorded plot. 1875 to 1878 were the worst years, with no locations recorded except for burials in existing family plots. It appears, however, that these burials were mainly in blocks B and C, and were therefore subsequently disinterred for the motorway. Similar problems exist in the C of E records.

Only when this list is complete will it be possible to produce a list of those disinterred for the motorway to be commemorated in a memorial book to be held in the chapel in Bolton Street.

STEPHEN CARKEEK

by Frances Verity

Just under the Denis McGrath footbridge, and to the west of the Wakefield graves, lies the grave of Stephen Carkeek. Stephen Carkeek was one of New Zealand's first public servants and played a great part in the development of both Nelson and Wellington.

Stephen Carkeek was born in Swansea in 1815. He first went to New South Wales as a first officer of a convict ship and took service under the Government in command of a revenue cutter. In 1840 at the age of 25 he was seconded to New Zealand and appointed as landing waiter at Russell and was employed for some time with the cutter *Ranger* in the survey of Nelson Harbour. On 2 February 1842 he was advised by George Cooper, the Collector of Customs, that, subject to him furnishing "two sufficient sureties in the sum of one thousand pounds ... in order that the proper Bond may be executed"¹ he was appointed sub-collector of Customs at Nelson. Carkeek travelled to Nelson with his wife and family, three boatmen, and the frame of a two-roomed house.² Nelson at that time had a population of 500, and the arrival of four more emigrant ships was imminent.³ Accommodation was at a premium, and Carkeek was obliged to curtain off a part of one of his two rooms to use as an office until a separate office could be built some nine months later. The new Customs office was a wooden shed 19ft by 11ft erected at a cost of £65. A request to the government to reimburse the cost of freighting his house to Nelson, because it was being used as the custom-house, met with a refusal on the grounds that it "would create a bad precedent".⁴

In addition to his duties as sub-collector of Customs Carkeek became sub-treasurer, harbour master, quarantine officer, and postmaster, as well as authority to license bonded stores and auctioneers, despite the fact that the Customs Ordinance of 1841 declared that "no officer of Customs ... shall ... be compelled to serve in any other public office or employment ...". His increased responsibilities did not increase his salary however - it was and remained at £200 a year.⁵ Even then his salary was often in arrears, and the slowness of receiving authority from the government to pay accounts meant that he, and other public servants, were often out of pocket for everyday expenses.⁶

Shortly after his arrival in Nelson he wrote to the Collector of Customs in Auckland saying that he "deemed it necessary, in view of the desperate characters carried on board the various whaling and sealing boats frequenting Queen Charlotte Sound, Cloudy Bay, and the creeks and inlets of Cook Strait, to arm his boats crew with five boat carbines and bagnols, to the value of five pounds sterling".⁷

Carkeek stayed in Nelson for 7 years, during which time he entered the community life of the town. He was appointed a member of the Committee of Public Safety in 1843, and a member of the board of management for native reserves in 1848.⁸ He participated in whale-boat races with his aptly named boat *Revenue*.⁹ A son born in 1843, who was later to become a recipient of the New Zealand Cross, was named Arthur Wakefield Carkeek after the victim of the Wairau incident.

In 1849 Carkeek transferred to Wellington as Collector of Customs, where he remained until he retired in 1866, by which time he was receiving a salary of £600 a year, and retired on a pension of £364.5.6.¹⁰ In 1858 he was appointed first Inspector of Customs for New Zealand, and in 1865 he opened the Customs in the Chatham Islands. He lived in Boulcott Street, was involved in the Anglican Church,¹¹ and was an acting trustee of the Bolton Street Cemetery.¹² He was a keen astronomer, and was responsible for the establishment of a time-ball for the convenience of shipping in Wellington. The letters he wrote, while he

was Collector of Customs in Wellington, to C W Richmond show him as a man of humour and acute political awareness." In December 1859 he wrote to Richmond:

"The new tariff has worked admirably here. I never saw mercantile affairs in such a depressed state in Wellington before; and yet the falling off in the revenue has been comparatively trifling, which I attribute solely to the tariff. Its bitter enemies are astonished at the smoothness of its working ... I would strongly advise you not to touch it, next session."

And in February, 1860:

"If you are determined that nothing shall ever be settled in New Zealand I have no objection to assist you by all the means in my power, to pull our former work to pieces; but recollect if you cast out the Devil from the 3/- per cwt foods he will enter into a whole herd of swine, beer, haberdashery etc, etc, because the Auckland cry does not affect this Province at all, neither does the Nelson affect Canterbury and so on ...; therefore I think you ought to say that it is perfect, and not give the enemy an opportunity of saying that you yourselves are the first to point out that your legislation of last session requires patching already... I say let it alone. Nevertheless ... if you are determined, I will do all I can to assist you when you come down to Phillipsia."

Stephen Carkeek retired to Featherston, where he established a private conservatory. He died in 1876.

REFERENCES

- Alington, M H *Unquiet Earth : A History of Bolton Street Cemetery*, Wellington, 1978
 Allan, Ruth *The History of Port Nelson*, Wellington, 1954
 Allan, Ruth *Nelson : A History of Early Settlement*, Wellington, 1965
 Customs Department, *Customs Bulletin*, No. 167, May 1983
 McLaren, C M "Port of Nelson - Contrasts 1842-1982", *Customs Bulletin*, No. 167, May 1983, 4
 Scholefield, G H (Ed) *The Richmond-Atkinson Papers*, Vol. I, Wellington, 1960
 Ward, L E *Early Wellington*, Wellington, 1975

NOTES

1. Letter of Appointment reproduced in *Customs Bulletin*, No. 167, May 1983, p.7
2. R. Allan, *Nelson : A History of Early Settlement*, 92
3. Allan, 91, 94
4. Allan, 151
5. C M McLaren, "Port of Nelson - Contrasts 1842-1982", *Customs Bulletin* No. 167, May 1983
6. See Allan, 150
7. McLaren, 5
8. Allan, 281, 301
9. McLaren, 4
10. *Appendix to the Journals*, 1866
11. L E Ward, *Early Wellington*, 211
12. M H Alington, *Unquiet Earth : A History of the Bolton Street Cemetery*, 40
13. See *Richmond-Atkinson papers*, 521, 506

MEMORIAL PARK SEAT

The Friends have contributed a half share of the cost of a seat which has been sited adjacent to the chapel. A plaque on the seat records this joint venture to provide more comfort for park users.

This pleasing joint venture resulted from the proposal made by our former Chairman Hugh Fullarton at the Annual Meeting of the Friends two years ago.

HERITAGE WEEK CEMETERY TOURS

Wellington's 1993 Heritage Week included three tours of the cemetery. These were conducted by Margaret Alington, Anne Burnett, Annette Fairweather and Nick Perrin. Anne and Nick also took a large group of Queen Margaret College pupils on a tour.

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