



Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park

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

NEWSLETTER No 40

July 1995

Notice of Annual General Meeting

**8 pm, Thursday, 17 August 1995
at the Loaves and Fishes Hall,
Anglican Cathedral, Molesworth St, Wellington**

Followed by a feature presentation entitled:

**"Cards, old maps and registers -
Helping to get their names right"**

Nick Perin will describe the results of our research towards a unified burial list, including a demonstration using microfiche and computer. Several mysteries have been solved including identification of several 'unknowns'.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

- Apologies.
2. Minutes of the 1994 Annual General Meeting.
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Chairperson's Report.
5. Treasurer's Report and financial statements.
6. Wellington City Council Parks and Recreation Department's Report.
7. Election of Officers.
8. Election of Auditor.
9. Notice of Motion:
"That, in accordance with Rule 5 of the Rules of the Society, Rule 1 be amended to change the name of the Society to "Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park Incorporated (refer to explanatory note over page).
10. General Business.

EXPLANATION RE THE PROPOSED NAME CHANGE:

At the 1993 AGM it was suggested that we should change the name of our society from "Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery Incorporated" to "Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park Incorporated". The logic behind this suggestion is that the Wellington City Council now officially refers to the area in question as "Bolton Street Memorial Park".

The whole area of burial ground now encompassed within the Memorial Park was often referred to after 1891 as the "Town Cemetery", to differentiate it from "Karori Cemetery". Later the popular name "Bolton Street Cemetery" was adopted but this name was borrowed from the original name for the Church of England section (bordering Bolton Street) of the park. The other section, i.e., the Public section, was originally known as the "Sydney Street Cemetery".

It should also be noted that the whole burial area is no longer legally a cemetery.

The Committee now recommends that this society bring itself into line by the change of name as proposed.

JOSEPH DRANSFIELD - MAYOR OF WELLINGTON

by Nick Perrin

Bolton Street can claim to be the last resting place of both contenders for the title First Mayor of Wellington, namely George Hunter and Joseph Dransfield. George Hunter headed the poll in the election for a council following Governor Hobson's proclamation of the town as a borough in 1842. Hunter died in 1843 aged 56, and is buried next to the Wakefield grave, at grid L15 07. Hobson's ordinance was later disallowed, so there is some justification for claiming Joe Dransfield as Wellington's first (properly constituted) Mayor in 1870. If we accept George Hunter as first Mayor, then Joe Dransfield was the third. William Guyton was the second, serving as Mayor briefly after George Hunter's death. However, The Evening Post of 22 June 1995 described "Wellington's first Mayor Joe Dransfield" in an article about plans for the preservation of Dransfield House in Upper Willis St.

Between 1843 and 1870 Wellington had no Mayor. The affairs of the town were managed by the Provincial Government (1843-63), and the Town Board (1863-70). The Municipal Corporation Act of 1867 allowed the formation of elected councils, but it was three years before Wellington acted on it, electing a Mayor and Council for the first time in 1870. Joe Dransfield served as Mayor 1870-73 and 1878-79 (resigned), and was a councillor 1874-77 (resigned). Before this, he had been on the Town Board of 1863 and served a time as its chairman. When he was first elected Mayor, Wellington had a population of 8,000.

Besides being buried there, Joe Dransfield had other connections with the cemetery. As Mayor, he was no doubt involved in the controversy about the need for a new cemetery, and his Council was responsible for the Public (Sydney St) Cemetery as the non-Church of England (i.e. "non-conformist") portion was then known. As early as 1855 there was pressure for a new cemetery outside the heart of town, and in 1872 a bill was introduced to finance preliminary steps towards opening a new cemetery to the east of Karori Road (now Glenmore St) in what is now part of the Botanic Garden. With the possibility of the closure of Bolton St/Sydney St cemeteries as a result of this act, Joseph Dransfield organised a petition asking for burials to be allowed in the existing cemetery in pre-purchased or existing family plots (exactly the situation that later eventuated after the opening of Karori Cemetery in 1891). He obtained 120 signatures, which probably contributed to the act being withdrawn because of strong opposition.

He was one of 12 former Mayors to have a street named after him. Dransfield St is a rather insignificant street behind Rugby League Park connecting Finnimore Tce to Liardet St (at the end of Hutchison Rd- named after another Mayor).

Dransfield was a Freemason (New Zealand Pacific Lodge No 517). The Pacific Lodge was established in 1842. Dransfield was not one of Wellington's earliest settlers, but he features in the list of those present at a meeting in 1866. He attended the unveiling of the notable Tucker masonic monument in 1874 (Grid E11 03). Tucker had died the previous year, and Joe Dransfield was one of those who attended the funeral. The unveiling of the monument was accompanied by a masonic parade followed by a dinner.

In 1863 Dransfield's place of business was on the north side of Old Customhouse St (now Bond St), and in 1866 it was next to the Post Office in Grey St. He was described as a merchant, and his activities as a merchant extended to ship-owning, the Wellington Almanac for 1883 lists him as owner of two ships- "Conference" and "Malay". In 1863 his house was on the east side of Willis St south of Ghuznee St corner. I haven't managed to determine whether it was the same site as that of the recently fire-damaged, derelict Dransfield House which was built about 1875 in upper Willis St, and can be seen next to the Quality Inn (former YWCA) near the Webb St corner.

The Council was recently agonising over the fate of Dransfield House, which it owns. At first a proposal to move it to Aro St and repair it was accepted, but now there is pressure to preserve it on its present site. I remember visiting a friend flatting there about 20 years ago, when it was in quite good order. But after a period as an arts centre, it was allowed to become derelict, and was recently damaged by fire almost badly enough to require demolition.

Joseph Dransfield died in 1906 at the age of 80, and was buried in C of E plot 5101, along with his wife and, I assume, two daughters. Their graves were disinterred for the motorway, and their reinstated and reassembled broken marble headstone is at grid J14 24. It reads:-

In loving memory
of
MARY LOUISA DRANSFIELD
Who died January 29th 1879
Aged 9

ELVINA DRANSFIELD
Who died February 28th 1893
Aged 25

MARY DRANSFIELD
Wife of J Dransfield
Who died June 8th 1896
Aged 68
*"Her children shall rise up and call
her blessed"*

Also J DRANSFIELD
Husband of the above
Died 21st September 1906
Aged 80 years

This monument can be seen if you step off the path which runs down through the trees from Madeley Path towards the corner of the Early Settlers' Memorial Lawn, behind the prominent Thomas Cook stone on Madeley Path. (It is the second one below Thomas Cook). But first look at the map in the chapel to find grid square J14- it is not far from there.

Most of the above historical information came from the following sources by looking up all references to "Dransfield, J" in their indexes:-

Alington, Margaret H., 1978, "Unquiet Earth" - Wellington City Council and Ministry of Works and Development.

Irvine-Smith, F.L., 1948, "The Streets of my City" - A.H. & A.W. Reed.

Ward, Louis E. 1928, "Early Wellington" - Whitcombe & Tombs.

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