



FRIENDS of BOLTON STREET CEMETERY INCORPORATED

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

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Editor: Kate Fortune

SPRING COLOUR IN THE CEMETERY

The George White Path is one of the spring highlights of the BSC; it constantly inspires photographers but it has also been captured by many artists over the years.



The George White Path in the upper cemetery with Ixia (corn lilies) in full bloom. The painting (inset) is by Vivian Manthel-French.

Photos: Karl Bale

IN THIS ISSUE:

Burials & Memorials of the NZ Wars	2	Working Bees since Winter	6
Update on our Museum Project	4	Conservation and Repairs	7
Botanic Garden Manager's Report	5	WWI Lads: Danks, Fear	10
Committee Contacts	5	News of members (Love, McGrath)	12

BURIALS AND MEMORIALS OF THE NEW ZEALAND WARS

The Friends Committee was recently asked to research some information about the Bolton Street Cemetery's burials and memorials relating to the New Zealand Wars. The primary reason for this request was to ensure those "war dead" buried in the cemetery had been properly memorialised. This research will be published in future newsletters, but this is an introductory article about the scope of the cemetery's early military heritage. The history of this period is often controversial, and our research does not extend to the hostilities, only the aftermath of burial and commemoration.

Although the New Zealand Wars extended over three decades, the Wellington region was comparatively peaceful for most of this period. Within our immediate area, two armed conflicts occurred, both relatively brief: at Boulcott's Farm, Hutt Valley, in May 1846; and at Horokiri (Battle Hill) in August 1846. In both cases and because it was the most practical arrangement, the British soldiers were buried at the scene of battle. The tombstone at the Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (*below right, photo from NZ History website*) marks the grave of two British soldiers. It was erected in the 1920s amid a burst of memorialising the New Zealand Wars. The site of the battle was the steep razorback ridge to the east of the Horokiri Stream.

It is worth noting also the earlier clash in Wairau, near Blenheim, in June 1843 where four Māori and twenty-four Pākehā were killed, including Arthur Wakefield. Buried at the other side of Cook Strait, Arthur is separated in death from his three brothers – Edward Gibbon, Daniel and William – who are buried in the Wakefield family plot in the lower cemetery (*below left*), together with Daniel's daughter Selina.



So the soldiers' burials in Bolton Street are few: two from Boulcott's Farm who subsequently died in Wellington, and one from Horokiri. The latter is Ensign Henry Middleton Blackburn of the 99th Regiment. While the two other men killed on 6 August 1846 were buried near the battle site, Blackburn's body was brought back to the camp at Paremata for burial. Subsequently it was decided that he should be buried at Bolton Street Cemetery with full military honours, following a funeral service at St Paul's church. Possibly the reason for this is that he was a particularly promising and popular young officer whose death at the age of 22 was greatly mourned. The turnout at his funeral on 4 September 1846 was impressive. Led by the Governor, it was attended by all military officers and all prominent civilians. Shutters on the houses and stores along

the whole of the funeral route on Lambton Quay were all closed. Ensign Blackburn's grave was marked in due course by an elegantly carved sandstone memorial at the head and a smaller footstone. Sadly the grave was disinterred for the motorway, so his remains now lie in the memorial grave; but the two sandstone markers K14-12 have been reinstated nearby.



Left: Both BLACKBURN markers are made of the same sandstone from Australia, but the headstone has been cleaned recently, giving a better idea of what it would have looked like originally. The footstone records just the initials and dates as was customary.

Naval deaths during the New Zealand Wars are marked in the cemetery by the Calliope Memorial. This is a handsome monument noting six deaths of the ship's crew, three of whom are buried in the cemetery. Subsequent articles will cover this memorial's chequered history and the Boulcott Farm burials.

The term "war graves" initially applied only to those serving in the British military units, such as the deaths described above. Later it was extended to Māori casualties, although marked graves were scarce, the concept of war memorials being essentially a European custom.

To our knowledge the only Māori burials in the cemetery which relate to the New Zealand Wars were those of two prisoners who died while in custody in August 1869. Their story is described fully in an interesting article by Nick Perrin published in our newsletter #89 of May 2020. Their graves were unmarked and their current location is uncertain.

Another later change of criteria allowed for inclusion of civilian casualties from military conflicts. There are three in the Bolton Street Cemetery. One civilian was wounded at Boulcott's Farm and died later in Wellington. The other two are a father and son killed in the Hutt Valley in April 1846. The story of the Gillespie grave and its recent restoration is recounted in our newsletter #74 of November 2012. (All our past newsletters can be found on our website.) This is the only grave in the cemetery from the New Zealand Wars that has remained intact and it is worth visiting, not least for its large finely carved headstone.

Maintenance of all the above graves and memorials is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, together with ongoing care of the Wakefield grave as it is one of national importance. We work closely with them on maintenance issues and provide research as required.

Story & photos: Priscilla Williams

UPDATE ON OUR BOLTON ST CEMETERY MUSEUM

This year has seen further consultations with stakeholders, and committee approval for a clear plan to proceed in line with available funding. Lara Simmons (whose company has now been rebranded as Trestle Creative) has been given the green light to develop the concept design into a detailed design ready for implementation.

We estimate that we need to raise funds of at least \$150,000, and therefore we'll be applying for heritage/community grants as soon as possible. This amount is what we need in order to create an exciting, interesting, welcoming museum that will appeal to visitors to the cemetery, to family descendants wanting to find information relevant to their ancestors, and to young and old people wanting to understand the cemetery in the context of New Zealand history.

In the meantime, we are committing \$25,000 from our own funds, and this is being matched by \$25,000 from the Botanic Garden for the year ending 30 June 2022. We are all feeling excited about what can be achieved, and very much heartened by the response of our own members to date. Since we launched our appeal three months ago, we have raised \$5,000 and we have pledges for further support next year.



Left & below: The final meeting to discuss Lara Simmon's concept design was held in the museum on 28 October. Lara is standing on the left.

Our various stakeholders were given until 1 November to send queries and comments to Lara, and she is now proceeding to develop the detailed content for implementation next year.

We have had helpful input from a number of interested individuals and organisations. Consultation with iwi representatives is continuing.

Friends' President Jenny Button is particularly impressed by the general enthusiasm and commitment that has emerged from all the workshops and discussions held so far, and says that the Friends are enormously grateful for the Botanic Garden financial commitment for this year and next.



Story & photos: Kate Fortune

REPORT FROM THE BOTANIC GARDEN MANAGER

At our AGM on 8 July 2021, David Sole noted this was his 17th year of reporting to the Friends' AGM, and that he could "happily say that I have survived unscathed and considerably wiser!" He also felt that "the continuing partnership programme between the Friends and Council is what makes this cemetery stand apart from others."



Some of the key points of the year were:

- The Seddon Memorial statue has been temporarily removed from its obelisk by contractors working for MCH.
- Work was well underway to replace the City's Cemeteries database, to make it more efficient in access to public records and easier updating with new details.
- Funding remains intact for the Bolton Street Cemetery heritage repairs; and a further amount has been allocated in support of the museum development over the years 2021-23. "We are excited by the Museum project and the opportunities it will create to connect with Iwi."
- Acknowledgement of the work of the Heritage Gardens Team led by Franz Tischler, the Grounds Team in day-to-day maintenance, and Karl Noldan for the heritage asset maintenance and repairs; and of Clare Shearman's role in planning the daffodil planting and oversight of the cemetery grounds maintenance.
- Huge gratitude for the Friends' contribution as "our watchdogs" as well as "cemetery maintenance, guiding and hosting, social research and records, and your advocacy for the cemetery".

[Summary & photo: Kate Fortune]

COMMITTEE CONTACTS 2021 – 22

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WORKING BEES SINCE WINTER

We have had three successful working bees recently, with our last one for the year on 14 November. As a result the lower cemetery is now looking very much tidier. There was certainly lots to do after all the stormy weather. Among the rubbish we collected was an abandoned book (*see photo below, top left*) called “Web of Life: Guidance for your life journey”

We are very pleased to have gained several new and enthusiastic recruits so we have achieved a lot, and have been thanked by the Gardens Team. The Friends send a big “thank you” to everyone who has participated during the year.

We are working on what we will do in 2022 and have plans for a BIG working bee, probably in late summer. The session time will be extended so that people can stay for longer or come for a limited period at a time that suits them. A longer time will also mean we can tackle some bigger projects.

If anyone is not already on my working bee emailing list and would be interested in joining us, or if you have any queries about working bees please let me know.

Story & photos: Jennifer Robinson
Extra photos: Kate Fortune & Peter McHardy



CONSERVATION AND REPAIRS

The financial year of July 2020 to June 2021 proved to be challenging because of Covid restrictions but it was finally possible to complete a full programme of repairs, thanks to the work of Assets Manager, Karl Noldan, and his selected tradespeople. Yet again a key person was Simon Lewis 'The Tombstone Doctor'.

A special challenge was the **JUDD** family memorial J08-16, just a few metres off Robertson Way. This is a reinstated memorial and like many others the plaque had been reset in the 1970s, flat to the ground rather than raised above it. Already somewhat damaged, it continued to break up against the onslaught of grass cutting.



Above: Judd tombstone, with plaque: before and after repair.



Above: The state of the Holdsworth memorial in 2014; and now restored (see page 8).

Below: A new plaque identifies a formerly unmarked grave of David Greig, on the Hart Path. The Greig descendants (based in Australia) are delighted.



Simon restored the Judd plaque by piecing together the broken bits, adding lost marble, and replacing missing lead letters. To provide protection from future damage, we have added a concrete base. The Judd tombstone was also cleaned and the lettering repaired. This was our most expensive project for the year, made possible by a generous contribution from the family.

A simpler project for Simon was Alice **GIBSON's memorial** L15-02 on the lower lawn. The old glue break on the marble cross had failed and needed to be fixed more securely by inserting a dowel as well as using modern glue. Two families also used Simon's services for projects which they planned in consultation with the Friends and WCC, but paid for in full. One was an unmarked grave on Hart Path for David **GREIG** I11-06 who died in 1880. Research was needed to find the exact position of the grave using the old maps and records, then wording was agreed for a new marble plaque with lead lettering, mounted on a desk to preserve it from future damage. The family is reassured to know that the grave has been located and is now clearly marked.

The other private project was the grave for Joseph and Mary **ANDERSON** J07-02 near Robertson Way. This year the leading was repaired and the tombstone cleaned. This is one of 12 graves which used to be on the slope facing west to Glenbervie Road, later Bowen Street, and which were endangered by slips in 1945. These 12 graves (five of them with tombstones) were moved that year to flat ground near the Public Sexton's cottage site.

Simon restored two more of our important wooden grave markers. One was for Dr John **DORSET** H14-02 (1807-1856) who came to New Zealand in the *Tory* in 1839 having been appointed principal surgeon to the New Zealand Company. He was the first surgeon at Wellington Hospital, represented Wellington in the Provincial Council and was appointed provincial surgeon. Among other family members listed on this marker is his brother, William Dorset, (1802-1877) who succeeded John as Member of the Provincial Council after his brother's death. The challenge of this repair was that the marker had been painted white in emulation of the whitewash often used originally on wooden memorials. Underneath was rotting wood and past attempts to replace this, so yet more restoration work meant that again white paint was needed to cover the imperfect board. The black lettering was repainted but will need regular repainting.

The other wooden marker, **HOLDSWORTH** P11-05, was (like Dorset) a reinstated memorial moved for the motorway. It needed cleaning and restoration, including painting the inscription covering six family members. Photographs showing the missing lettering and the split before repair and the restored headboard are on page 7. Because of the serious split down the board, iron bands were clamped at the back, using a method common in Victorian times. As some of the lettering had been lost, research was needed to ensure accuracy of names and dates.

Gradually, as finances permit, we are installing fencing around the **Memorial Garden**. This year three examples of ironwork were mended, given concrete footings and placed into position. One was a long piece of cast iron, found in a neighbouring garden and presumed to have 'strayed' from the Sydney St storage pen in the 1960s. A smaller piece can best be described as a chinoiserie pattern. The third one was a most unusual

pattern of wrought iron, found down a bank in a very broken state and skilfully mended by the Tombstone Doctor, who rises enthusiastically to such challenges. It now occupies a prominent corner on the grave.

Then to complete our work on the **TINNEY** grave K16-05, described in Newsletter #90 last November, the broken fence was repaired by woodworker Gavin Smith. Treated pine was used for the base of the five posts, but for the railings and pickets clear of the ground, Gavin was able to source some totara which was the wood originally used for almost all of our heritage markers and railings. The result justifies the extra expense as it looks very elegant on its prominent site, and indeed is possibly enhanced by our decision not to replace the missing pickets.

Story: Priscilla Williams

Photos: Priscilla Williams & Kate Fortune



On the left, the TINNEY grave five years ago, when the wooden memorial had been repaired by Detlief Klein; and below, after Simon Lewis added a full inscription, and then Gavin Smith very recently carried out careful conservation work on the picket fencing

Below: A wrought iron puzzle for repair and installation in the Memorial Garden



WWI: TWO LADS WHO NEVER CAME HOME

In newsletter #87 of May 2019, we published two stories to **conclude** our series of articles on the 16 graves in the Bolton Street Cemetery that commemorate the 17 war service stories and deaths of relatives (sons, nephews, grandsons) of people buried here. Now, through a combination of luck and recent research, we report that the list has grown to a total of 19.

Gunner William DANKS of the NZ Field Artillery

William was the son of John & Emily DANKS, born on 1 March 1884. His grandparents, Samuel & Sarah Danks, had brought their family to New Zealand from Staffordshire, and both Samuel and his son John worked as brassfounders in Wellington. Living with his parents at 30 Tasman Street in 1905, William was employed as a salesman, but when he enlisted at Palmerston North on 18 August 1914, aged 30, his army record indicated that he was a trained engineer although he gave his occupation as a farmer at Piopio.

With the rank of Gunner in No. 1 Battery, he left New Zealand on 23 September and arrived in Egypt on 4 December 1914. He was then sent to the Dardanelles as a Driver on 12 April 1915. Having returned safely from Gallipoli to Egypt – where he served as a Cook – William was then sent to France in April 1916. Serving in the Somme with his unit in Normandy in July, he was wounded on 21 October and died on 28 October 1916. He was awarded the British Victory Medal and buried in the AIF Burial Ground, East of Flers.

As well as his Commonwealth War Grave in Normandy he is also commemorated on the DANKS family memorial J09-04 on the Anzac Path in the Public Cemetery section of the Bolton Street Cemetery.



The DANKS grave at the end of the Anzac Path is adjacent to the SCOTT grave

*Story & photos:
Kate Fortune*

Corporal F J H (Bert) FEAR, DCM, of NZ Engineers 1 Field Company

Francis John Herbert FEAR, oldest son of Francis James Webber & Mary Fear, was born on 28 November 1885. His father was an engineer & importer in Wellington, and his maternal grandfather, John Holmes, was a builder living in Old Custom House Street.

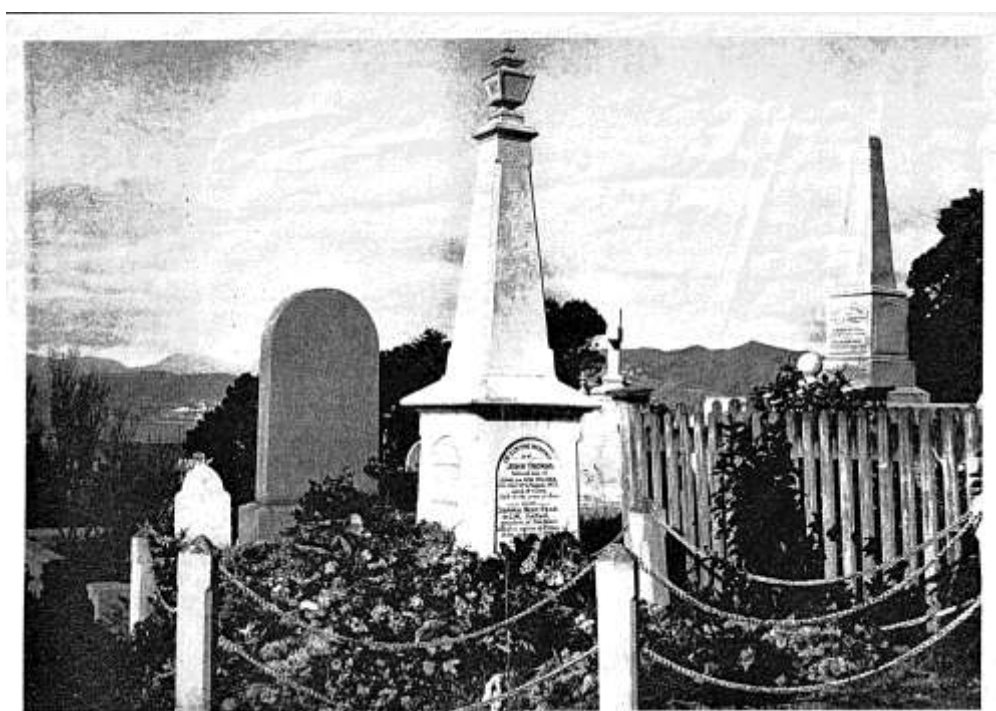


Bert attended Kilbirnie School in Wellington, but he was in England aged 28 when he enlisted on 13 October 1914, giving his occupation as Cheesemaker when he reported to 'Sling Camp', the Bulford army base in Wiltshire. He arrived in Egypt on Christmas Eve 1914 and was soon promoted to Lance-Corporal, before being sent to the Dardanelles.



At Gallipoli, as the citation for his award (in July 1915) of the Distinguished Conduct Medal reveals, he showed "conspicuous gallantry on the night of the 9th and 10th of June 1915, in the neighbourhood of Gaba Tepe (Dardanelles), in volunteering to demolish a Turkish Blockhouse which was within twelve yards of the enemy's trench, and which could only be approached over ground swept by rifle and machine gun fire. He exhibited great skill in approaching and demolishing the blockhouse and was exposed to fire for an hour." Wounded in action on Gallipoli, he was evacuated on hospital ships and spent more than a month recuperating in King George's Hospital in London before returning to active service in Egypt. His army record shows another spell in hospital in Cairo with bronchitis in January 1916, before he was sent to France in April – with a promotion to Corporal confirmed on 4 June 1916. Killed in action on the Somme on 20 October 1916, Bert was buried in the AIF Burial Ground, East of Flers in Normandy. He is commemorated in Hamilton Memorial Park (Hamilton East), and on his maternal grandfather's headstone in the Bolton Street Cemetery.

Sources: NZDF records, NZ Archives; NZ BDM; AWMM; Papers Past.



This early photo of the HOLMES family grave was given to Nick Perrin several years ago. It is our only record of the original inscription. The tombstone was hollow and only a small section of the base remains, K11-10 on the Lyon Path.

Story: Kate Fortune

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

We'd like to share a couple of items of news that have come to hand recently.

First, we are delighted to acknowledge one of our members, **Terry Love**, who regularly contributes corrections, dates and updates for our burial list.



Terry was recognised by *Find a Grave* as its "Volunteer of the Month" in July this year. *Find a Grave* noted that Terry "has not only documented locations of marked graves, but also many unmarked graves in cemeteries", and referred to his research into his great-great-grandfather, John Love (died 1883), buried in an unmarked grave in the Bolton Street Cemetery.

John Love married Sarah Milner at St Paul's Church in 1845, and went on to have 13 children.

Terry Love at the Millner grave L08-06. The little urn on top was recently returned to the cemetery after being located in a stream at Otari.

And it is our pleasure also to share a lovely recent photograph of the family of **Chris McGrath** and the late Sir John. (Chris is a former committee member, who served as Secretary 1990-92). Their four grandchildren were enjoying an opportunity to gather in the upper cemetery at the commemorative seat marking the late judge's regular walk to work, across the overbridge that bears the name of his father, Denis McGrath.



From left: Lucy and her daughters, Claudia and Alex, Chris McGrath (centre), and Tom behind his children Ayla and Ozan. (Behind them, the far left tombstone is the remaining piece of the Holmes memorial pictured on page 11.)