



FRIENDS of BOLTON STREET CEMETERY INCORPORATED

PO BOX 12 426, WELLINGTON, 6144, NEW ZEALAND

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

NEWSLETTER No 93 JUNE 2022

Editor: Kate Fortune

NOTICE OF 46th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5.45 pm Thursday 7 July 2022 at

ST ANDREW'S CENTRE, 30 THE TERRACE

Please bring this newsletter with you as it contains essential information for the AGM.



Above: The headstone shown, on the 1894 Towersey grave (009), is a fine example of a handmade 'folk art' grave marker. See inside for Nick Perrin's detailed article on **materials used for grave markers** in the cemetery.

(Photos: Kate Fortune)

STOP PRESS: We are absolutely delighted to announce that we have been **successful** in obtaining **Lottery Environment and Heritage funding** from the Lottery Grants Board to enable us to proceed with our plans to renovate displays in the Bolton Street Cemetery Museum shown below. We are to receive the full amount we requested (more than \$110,000), and work will begin on production following further discussions with iwi and final sign-off from our steering group.



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AGENDA FOR AGM

Agenda for the 46th Annual General Meeting on **Thursday 7 July 2022** at 5.45pm.

1. Present and apologies
2. Minutes of the 45th AGM (see page 10 of this newsletter)
3. Matters arising from Minutes
4. Report from the President (see page 3 of this newsletter)
5. Report by the Manager Botanic Garden, Wellington City Council
6. Performance Report and Financial Statements (see page 9 of this newsletter)
7. Election of Committee (see below for current committee)
8. General Business

TALK TO FOLLOW BUSINESS OF AGM:

Now that we have secured Lottery funding, it is a giant step towards implementation this year of all our hopes and planning over the last three years. **Lara Simmonds**, Trestle Creative, will present a short illustrated talk on our plans to renovate the small museum in the replica Chapel building on Bolton Street. Lara is a highly qualified professional, who has already developed the detailed design that has been approved by the Friends' committee. Our aim is to focus on the lives of people buried in the cemetery, and Lara has led a process of consultation and research over many months.

Come along to see Lara's presentation (about 6.30pm) following the refreshments offered after the business of our AGM. Do join us at 30 The Terrace at 5.45pm.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS 2021-22

Jenny Button <i>President</i>	Policy & strategies, Museum Steering Group, tours support	jennifer.button.nz@gmail.com Tel 027 477 0578
Priscilla Williams <i>Vice President</i>	Repairs, research, Museum Steering Group	priscillawilliams.nz@gmail.com Tel (04) 977 4667, 027 436 8370
Kate Fortune <i>Treasurer</i>	Membership Secretary, guide, Museum Steering Group, editor <i>Newsletter</i>	kate_fortune@hotmail.com Tel (04) 970 0024, 021 109 4001
Karl Bale	Garden liaison	<i>On leave of absence</i>
David Dunsheath	Museum Steering Group, Tours support	ddunsheath@gmail.com Tel 027 248 9488
Elizabeth Fletcher	Minutes Secretary	elizabethfletcher1@gmail.com Tel: (04) 934 5113, 021 0218 9765
Nick Perrin	Biographical & burial list research, guide	n.perrin@xtra.co.nz Tel (04) 472 3767, 027 478 0193
Anne Phillips	Community & iwi liaison; garden liaison.	filmaphillips@gmail.com 022 500 2415
Jennifer Robinson	Working bees, guide	jennif.robinson@gmail.com Tel (04) 973 8137, 021 0245 2650

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT 2021–22

I am delighted to present this Annual Report, to be read in relation to the Statement of Performance (*see page 9*), for the 2021-22 year.

This has been a very busy year with much time spent on our major project, the new Museum exhibition, with Lara Simmonds, Trestle Creative. With the Concept Design delivered in March and presented to wider stakeholders, it is now so exciting to see the Developed Design with the focus on the creation of the new displays. We expect the Detailed Design in July and are at last able to plan for production later in the year. Our thanks to Lara for her splendid commitment and enthusiasm. I also wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of the Steering Group and in particular the tireless effort of the research group.

Priscilla has continued the very important conservation and repair work with several private commissions still under negotiation. We thank the Beetham family for their generous assistance. Again, this year, an increased number of grave descriptions and photographs have been added to the website. The number of enquiries about family members has also grown. The detailed research entailed in responding to these plays a crucial role in assisting the public and maintaining an accurate database. We were delighted to see Nick Perrin honoured with the award of the Queen's Service Medal, as a well-deserved recognition for his longstanding service to historical research.

Helped by warm weather, a number of very successful working bees have addressed identified projects. All participants, including several new volunteers, have done such amazing work in cleaning, weeding and keeping graves tidy. The initiative last year for the further planting of daffodils has begun and the progressive plan for mapping the daffodils continues, all of which will add to the visitor experience.

Due to Covid restrictions it was disappointing that our scheduled Spring Tour had to be cancelled; but in October two well supported Heritage Tours were enhanced by the Sexton's cottage being available for viewing. Once again around Remembrance Day and Anzac Day we offered our self-guided WW1 tour over ten days, now a regular feature of our programme.

I thank, Kate, our treasurer, for her efficient funds management, demonstrated in the Statement of Financial Performance. The generous donations received are much appreciated and it is very encouraging to see new members joining us.

We value our partnership with the Wellington City Council, and thank David Sole (Manager Botanic Gardens) not only for his encouragement but also financial support of the Museum project. I also acknowledge the work of Franz Tischler and Dale Such (Heritage Gardens), and Clare Shearman (Plant Collections); Karl Noldan (Public Art & Memorials Specialist) gives great support on the Museum Steering Group.

My warmest thanks to all committee members for their outstanding teamwork and dedication, reflected in a significantly greater number of voluntary hours this year.

To our loyal members I express my gratitude for your ongoing support. I do hope you will join us for our AGM. I look forward to seeing you.

Jenny Button

GRAVE MARKERS IN THE CEMETERY

There is a widespread perception amongst people researching their ancestry that anyone buried in a cemetery most likely has some sort of grave marker. This is far from the truth – and in the case of the Bolton Street Cemetery, less than half of all known burials are recorded on a visible memorial.

Suitable materials for grave markers were in short supply in the earliest days of the New Zealand Company's settlement of Wellington from 1840. Some of the early ships were carrying stones suitable for hearths and headstones as part of their cargo, but these were probably few and expensive. The earliest advertisement I can find for grave stones was by J C Penny of Lambton Quay on 10 January 1843, offering hearth and grave stones ex *Prince of Wales* and *Brougham*. Local, native, durable timber, especially tōtara, was often used instead of stone, either as slabs, boards or crosses. Tōtara is the most resistant to rotting in the ground, but we also have at least one example of a kauri marker (which is less resistant to rot).

In the earliest decades, the most commonly used stone for headstones appears to be **sandstone** from New South Wales, of which we have a few from as early as 1841 and 1846. This Australian sandstone continued to be widely used until about 1890.

While most early graves and many later ones were either temporarily or permanently marked by **wooden** slabs, shields, boards, or crosses, we have only 31 that can be seen today. This is largely because of the poor resistance of many timbers to rot, and partly because many had no trace of their original painted inscriptions still present in 1939, when quite a few from unidentified graves were gathered together and burnt.

A notable example of a wooden memorial is that of Henry Preston (died April 1874). Rated as a significant example of folk art, it spent several years displayed in the Timber Museum in Rotorua (defunct since the abolition of NZ Forest Service), and is now in our Museum. Other wooden memorials range from small crosses originally with painted inscriptions to heavy crosses with incised and painted inscriptions, slabs and boards mainly with painted inscriptions, and thick timber in the shape of substantial stone monuments with incised lettering, often with ornate carving, including a single small one with Māori carving and inscription dated 1862 (Ropiha, E15).

Our earliest wooden memorial (1856) was repainted and recently repaired (John Dorset, H14). Later examples were made right up to the 1890s, with large numbers in the 1860s and 1870s. It is possible that our one surviving kauri monument, from an unknown grave, dates from the earliest days.

Our two proven earliest monuments date from 1841. Both are stone: the large sandstone slab for the grave of William Rufus Tyrrell (died 2 September 1841, I14), and the slate plaque commemorating John Pearce (died 26 August 1840, but the date on the stone, I15, has 1841). Tyrrell's slab probably came from a quarry near Maitland in New South Wales, the source of most of the sandstone memorials in the cemetery, and Pearce's slate memorial is made from Welsh slate.

Slate (especially Welsh slate) is great for headstones because inscriptions carved in it are very sharp, and the stone is so durable that inscriptions are as clear after more than

150 years as the day they were carved. The downside is that slate is brittle, and many of the dozen or so slate memorials that we have are split in half. The established date range for the use of slate in the cemetery is 1841 to 1876 at least, but there are probably only about a dozen of them.

Sandstone from Australia was often imported as standard headstone and footstone 'blanks', and the inscriptions were carved locally as needed. Notable early examples of this are on the Gillespie grave (C15), and the reinstated headstone and footstone of Henry Middleton Blackburn (K14). Both these examples date from 1846.

Other sandstone monuments of quite a different style are the large pyramid on the grave of Captain Thomas Fraser (L09), late of the Bengal Cavalry, who died in 1891, and the Tucker/Stafford (E11) Masonic memorial that was made in 1873 in Newcastle, New South Wales by one 'Rt. Cuthbertson', and shipped to Wellington in pieces, accompanied by a man to assemble it.

The Australian sandstones proved to be of variable quality, resulting in weathering (oxidation, causing softening) and delamination. Such deterioration would already have been obvious by 1890, and sandstone appears to have been little used after that date, but we have in the order of 200 of these monuments in Bolton Street Cemetery.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the headstones and other grave markers are made of high-quality **white marble** from Italy. Although probably available as early as the 1840s, the expense would have precluded much use of this material until the 1860s, when it started to become common.

The budget model for graves was thin plaques of marble set into other material or attached as plaques to iron work. Inscriptions were either inscribed, or, more commonly, lead inlay. More substantial headstones for the affluent had inscribed or lead inscriptions that were often ornately carved, or tiered blocks of marble with incised or lettering, surmounted by a marble cross. Those who could afford better had impressive monuments of huge blocks of marble with ornate carving (such as the Richardson/Waters monument, K08), or friezes or three-dimensional ornately carved angels, flowers, etc (in the case of the Flyger monument, H04 – a Statue of Liberty, now lacking the arm with the torch), but the majority were much more modest.

We also have a handful of boulders (granite or marble) used as grave markers, where just one face has been cut and polished for an inscription. A fine example is the memorial for John Sperrey who died in 1890 and his daughter Kate Mair (F14), 1893.

Granite became popular for monuments in the late 1860s and especially after 1880. Monumental mason Walter Helyer was offering granite from Aberdeen and marble from Italy, being directly imported by him in the 1870s. The memorials range from plaques of red or grey granite set in other materials, right up to tall obelisks (e.g. the Hannah grave). The inscriptions were carved and painted white or gilded, and those that have lost their paint are very hard to read because of the crystallinity of the granite. But Walter Helyer seems to have considered granite to be the ideal material to last forever, because he had it on his wife's 1889 grave (K08), where he joined her in 1890.

[Nick's article continues on page 8; his photos are on page 6, plus 2 more on p. 12.]



Top from left: wood (unpainted); wood (1856, painted); slate markers



Second row: polished granite, grey & red; ornate white marble; white marble plaques set on concrete.



Third row: Four examples of iron grave markers: Strang (1852); Thompson (1865); Haden of Warminster cross, (Otaki); & Suisted (1849).



Bottom row, far left: the elaborate Tucker/Stafford grave; and left: the Gillespie grave. Both are Australian sandstone.

WORKING BEES

We have had four very successful working bees since February, although Covid restrictions and isolation requirements prevented some of our working bee volunteers coming to the cemetery on some occasions. We also had two sessions rained off (or blown away!) but we were able to reschedule both.

For the first sessions of this year, we took the working bees to some of the more remote parts of the cemetery, around the bottom of Observatory Path, Trustees Crescent and the Goat Track. This made it easier to abide by social distancing recommendations and also avoid contact with passers-by. For the last two sessions we worked on and near the main path in the upper cemetery so that this area looks good for the higher number of people now walking in the cemetery and the return of tourists to Wellington.

Many thanks to everyone who has participated this year; we are very pleased with what has so far been achieved in 2022. I hope we can recruit some more of you to come along – even if for a short time or only occasionally – so that we can assist the Botanic Garden staff and keep the cemetery looking at its best. 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: Jennifer Robinson

Tel: 021 0245 2650

Scenes from our summer working bees

Photos: Jennifer Robinson & Kate Fortune



GRAVE MARKERS CONTINUED

An alternative to expensive stone and possibly ephemeral wood for grave markers in the early days was **iron**, which could be produced by local blacksmiths and foundry operators. We have about 30 (possibly more) iron grave markers present in Bolton Street Cemetery with a proven date range between 1859 and 1890, but possibly as early as 1852 (Susan Collins Strang, K09). Many of our iron grave markers have lost their inscriptions, and several are on unidentified graves, so it is possible some are of earlier date than 1852. The first foundry in Wellington was started in 1858 by W F Mason, who was an ironmonger and blacksmith before that date, and may have produced earlier iron grave markers.

One style of iron marker is a type of broad cross with an urn on top, with either cast or painted inscriptions. Another is a gothic arch cast-iron frame with attached rectangular plates, also with either cast or painted inscriptions. These are surely locally produced, as the makers usually did not operate far from their place of business. But we have two examples of cast iron crosses (narrow, not broad) that came from England and Sweden. These marked the graves of Richard P Penham (died 1860, F06), and Robert R Suisted (died 1849, L14, although the cross may be later, judging by its excellent condition).

The Suisted cross is an ornate example with raised (cast) inscription and decoration, and was made in Stockholm. Sadly the Penham cross was broken during the motorway construction, but on our website is a photo taken by Sexton Shotter of the intact (but illegible) cross. Today the base lies in-ground with the words Haden and Warminster in raised lettering, and most of the upper half is in storage waiting to be repaired.

A little detective work located other examples of the same cross as Penham's in Dunedin, and I found another at Rangiatea Churchyard, Otaki. Searching online produced the information that Warminster is a town in Wiltshire, and James Burnett Haden had a glass and ironmongery business there from the 1830s to the 1880s. The grave markers produced by Haden of Warminster were very popular, even making it to the opposite side of the earth.

Finally, **concrete** or **plaster** was used for grave markers in a few cases. The George Towersey (died 1884) concrete, pebbles and paua shell cross (O09), and Elsie Oliver's concrete cross (F16) from 1891 are both amateur constructions, and are therefore folk art. Another example is the unusual Holmes monument (K11), which proved to be a hollow concrete box with plaques on three faces.

Pictured right, it had painted inscriptions for the family members who died between 1875 and 1918 (surnames Holmes, Forbes and Fear), surmounted by a hollow obelisk made of similar material. [The story of Corporal Bert Fear, WWI hero, is in newsletter #92, Nov 2021 – *Ed.*] Sadly, only the base still remains after the grave was demolished for the motorway, but this family photo of the original grave, given to me several years ago, is on our website (search 'Holmes Ann').



Story and photos: Nick Perrin

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

PART I: STATEMENT OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE:

- The Society held four guided tours during the year, including two for Wellington's Heritage Week. (We had to cancel one scheduled for the Spring Festival, because of the Covid-19 restrictions.) We also offered the self-guided WWI tour over 10 days around Anzac Day, and again over 10 days around Remembrance Day in November.
- Our website holding a searchable burial database of more than 8600 names was further updated during the year. We have added a further 650 photographs and grave descriptions this year. About 60 enquiries about ancestors were answered with detailed research notes and photographs.
- The Friends arranged six working bees this year for members, all well attended – by about 60 members in total.
- The WCC allocates \$20,000 each year for repairs to heritage graves. We assist by identifying and prioritising the most urgent repairs, providing advice on methods to be used and assessing results. This year's conservation work included liaison on several privately arranged repairs.
- During the year we made significant progress on planning new displays for the Bolton Street Cemetery Museum using the services of Trestle Creative to prepare the concept design.
- Two issues of the Society's newsletter were published during the year.
- Committee members volunteer their own time and skills to carry out the Society's operations. We estimate that on average, committee and member volunteers donated at least fifty hours every month during the year – totalling close to 600 hours during the year.

PART II: STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE:

		<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Income	Subscriptions (current + arrears)	1,350	1,235
	Book sales	30	20
	Donations (for Museum project)	8,553	2,320
	Donations (conservation & repairs)	200	1,500
	Interest	46	215
	Koha from tour groups	<u>369</u>	<u>1,118</u>
	Total Income	<u>\$10,548</u>	<u>\$6,408</u>
LESS Expenses			
	Annual General Meeting	401	418
	Miscellaneous	3	3
	P O Box rental	95	95
	Printing, stationery, copying	453	367
	Project: Museum	0	5,500
	Project: WWI white crosses	0	270
	Website, incl. Burial list inscriptions	<u>139</u>	<u>110</u>
	Total Expenses	<u>\$1,091</u>	<u>\$6,763</u>
	Surplus (deficit) for the year	<u>\$9,457</u>	<u>(355)</u>

STATEMENT OF MOVEMENTS IN EQUITY AT 31 MARCH 2022

Accumulated Funds – at start of year	17,100	17,455
Plus Surplus for the year	<u>9,457</u>	<u>(355)</u>
Accumulated Funds – at end of year	<u>\$26,557</u>	<u>\$17,100</u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31 MARCH 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Accumulated Funds	\$26,557	\$17,100
Represented By: Current Assets		
Westpac Trust Banking Corporation – Current	20,951	3,168
– Bonus Saver	8,567	8,506
– Term Deposit	<u>0</u>	<u>8,466</u>
	29,518	20,140
PLUS Sundry Debtors	<u>114</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Current Assets	29,632	20,140
LESS Current Liabilities		
Sundry creditors	3,000	3,000
Subscriptions in advance	<u>75</u>	<u>40</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>3,075</u>	<u>3,040</u>
Net Assets and Working Capital	<u>\$26,557</u>	<u>\$17,100</u>

Kate Fortune (Treasurer) 9 June 2022

MINUTES OF THE 45TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Thursday 8 July 2021 at St Andrew's Centre on the Terrace at 5:45 pm

1 Present

Jenny Button (Chair), Jane Aim, Bill Alington, Denise Almao, Karl Bale, Barbara Boivin, Chris Chapman, Elizabeth Fletcher (minutes), Kate Fortune, Glenys Lockett, Peter McHardy, Nick Perrin, Anne Phillips, Lynn Pomare, Philip Porritt, Ann Reweti, Jennifer Robinson, Karen Thomas, Rachel Underwood, Priscilla & Sheila Williams, (total 21); Rosemary Bromley (guest speaker), Neil Bromley; Franz Tischler & David Sole, WCC Botanic Garden.

2 Apologies

Caroline & William Aliaga-Kelly, Wade Armstrong, David & Joy Dunsheath, Angela Hill, Terry Love, Caroline McDonald, Alan Martin, Penny Porritt, Karen Pullar, Suzanne Snively, Judith & Ann Trotter, Jillian Wellings. AGREED that these apologies be received. (E Fletcher / J Robinson)

3 Minutes of the 44th Annual General Meeting

MOVED that the minutes of the 44th AGM held on 9 July 2020 be taken as read and approved as a true and correct record. (K Fortune / N Perrin) CARRIED

4 President's Report

President Jenny Button proposed her report be taken as read and briefly summarised key aspects. MOVED that the President's report be accepted (J Button/ P Williams) CARRIED

5 Report by Manager of the Botanic Gardens, Wellington City Council

David Sole presented his report, acknowledging many collaborative achievements during the year between the Friends and his Botanic Gardens team.

In responding to questions, he commented:

- Seddon Memorial update – core samples were as expected. Stage 2 work to start next year.
- Removal of rubbish bins: will review the Friends' requirements.
- Water is to be installed at both the top entrance and by museum entrance.

Jenny thanked David for his continuing support of the Friends' activities. **MOVED** that the BG Manager's Report be received (David Sole / Jane Aim) **CARRIED**

6 Performance Report (Service Performance & Financial Performance)

Treasurer Kate Fortune tabled the Performance Report for year ended 31 March 2021. She commented on the healthy state of finances, and noted significant donations gratefully received. **MOVED** that the Performance Report for year ending 31 March 2021 be approved (K Fortune/ P Williams) **CARRIED**

7 Election of Committee

Elizabeth Fletcher took the Chair for election of President.

MOVED that Jenny Button be re-elected as President (J Aim / K Fortune).

No further nominations. **CARRIED** with acclamation.

Jenny Button then resumed the Chair.

Nominations were tabled for remainder of committee as follows:

- Vice-President: Priscilla Williams
- Secretary (Minutes): Elizabeth Fletcher
- Treasurer & Membership Secretary: Kate Fortune
- Committee: Karl Bale, David Dunsheath, Nick Perrin, Anne Phillips, Jennifer Robinson.

Further nominations were invited. **MOVED** that the above nominations be closed and this committee be elected, with ability to co-opt additional committee members as appropriate. (Karen Thomas / Rachel Underwood) **CARRIED**

8 General Business

There was no general business.

The meeting closed at 6:15 pm

After a break for refreshments, **Guest speaker, Rosemary Bromley**, presented "**The Hutchinson Ladies – a Wellington Story**". This was an interesting historical view of Wellington and a picture of life in Wellington from a woman's perspective. The Hutchinson ladies were extraordinary, and it is good that their story lives on to inspire all of us.

NEW STEPS IN THE CEMETERY



In 2013 the NZ Portrait Gallery held a significant exhibition of **William Beetham's** artwork, covering the years after his arrival in Wellington until his death in 1888. At that time we published an account of his life and work in newsletter #76. Some of his paintings are again on display, this time at Aratoi Gallery in Masterton. The Beethams are holding a family gathering and recently paid to have the grave of William and Mary restored and releaded.

The grave is somewhat precariously placed part way down a steep bank off Trustees Crescent and until recently has been very difficult to access. Last month some family members, at our suggestion, built steps on the steep slope down to the grave, which means that it now can be visited by people of any fitness level. One special gift has been the tōtara boards used for the steps as these have come from *Brancepeth*, the Beetham homestead in the Wairarapa, a property first settled by the family in the 1850s. The photograph shows the restored grave with the steps in the background. On 22 May a family group of about 17 visited the site and because of the new steps were able to examine the grave at close hand.

Story: Priscilla Williams. Photos: Karl Noldan & Kate Fortune

Two final images relating to Nick Perrin's piece on materials for grave markers: John Sperrey & Kate Mair's marble boulder (1890); and the little concrete cross made for Elsie Oliver (1891)

