



FRIENDS OF MOUNT STREET CEMETERY
ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

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www.mountstreetcemetery.org.nz

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Mount Street Cemetery Newsletter

This newsletter provides you with a summary of work done in the cemetery over the past year. No major construction or repair work was undertaken in the last year, so the Committee has concentrated on weeding, landscape maintenance and planning for future work. We have had a great contribution from community groups and corporate businesses who give up time to help charities such as ours. Around 20 volunteers weeded every grave and the Waiteata Rd boundary garden during the BNZ 'Closed for Good' day on 2 September 2015. In addition, volunteers from St Patricks College, Kilbirnie also undertook weeding around the cemetery. This is the second year they have done this and their help is appreciated by the Friends.



The Light grave retrieved by Mary O'Keeffe working alongside volunteers on the BNZ Closed for Good day.

During one of the working bees a team assisted archaeologist Mary O'Keeffe with work. They helped Mary clear a large grave base and a possible footstone on the main path. Several headstone fragments were also recovered during the work and some such as the Light grave could be pieced together.

Landscaping proposed for the next year includes the removal of problematic wilding trees and planning a new path to link the Main Entrance with the Upper Entrance. Historic maps of the cemetery show a path leading down the northern boundary between the entrances, but it appears that over the years this path has fallen into disuse and is now no longer visible. The committee is investigating the paving options and costs of reinstating the path.

The previous improvements to pathways have enhanced the access through the cemetery so now people are encouraged to walk on the path rather than unmarked graves. The new fences around the

border of the cemetery have also helped by increased the definition of the site by making the boundary clear. Access through the Upper Entrance is now clearly defined and the fence funnels visitors to the significant graves at the summit of the cemetery. Linking the Upper and Main entrances with defined paths will continue these improvements.

The heritage roses planted over the last few years are now well established and give the cemetery colour and style during the summer months. Weeding is an on-going job, and without the assistance of volunteers the situation would quickly revert to the rather sorry and sad cemetery it looked in the past (see A Sad Cemetery).

Over time many monuments in the cemetery have been damaged or destroyed. Some have become completely buried below ground and lost. The committee consider that it is important that the remaining monuments are looked after so that the historical values of the area are preserved. Recognising the importance of maintaining headstones, the committee is preparing a Lotteries Board grant application for repair of up to 14 headstones in the cemetery that have significant architectural or historical value. It is hoped that more headstones will be repaired in future years.



Rosa 'Mutabilis' in the Swan grave.

It is with regret that the committee have accepted the resignation of Ken Scadden. As well as being an active committee member, Ken has done a great deal for the Friends, including the publication on burials with maritime links at the cemetery.

We thank the Archdiocese of Wellington for their administrative and financial help, Victoria University of Wellington for their support, and the president and committee for their continued work to preserve the Mount Street Cemetery.

Finally look out for an article on the Mount Street Cemetery in the Heritage Quarterly publication of NZ Heritage.

A SAD CEMETERY
Evening Post, 13 March 1908, Page 3

IN MOUNT-STREET.
FORGOTTEN GRAVES.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled,
That crawls by a track none turn to climb,
To the strait waste place that the years have
rilled,
Fall but the thorns that are touched not of
Time.
The weeds he spares when the rock is taken,
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain,
Only the stones and the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

"Who is in charge of the cemetery in Mount-street?" enquires a correspondent who signs himself "A Son of One." "As a visitor I took a walk to the spot on Sunday last, and instead of finding things neat and tidy discovered, to my horror, a stockyard: horses innumerable running about destroying everything, fences pulled down, trees destroyed, and generally speaking the graves desecrated. Is this all the respect the authorities have for the pioneers and their offspring who laboured so hard in the early days?"

Yesterday, when a representative of The Post reached the reserve, the horses were out, but traces of the animals' recent visitations were abundant enough. The trespassers were visible down below near their stable proper, a quaint old house more ancient-looking even than the cemetery—a low-framed slate-tiled structure, with walls of clay.

Wherever the eye turned there was desolation. Some railings had rotted away, and others had been broken down. Headstones were forlornly awry, and the drab spirit of ruin brooded over all. Some of the burials took place half a century ago, and one, in very good order, is as recent as last December.

The hand of man has charitably mowed down some of the brambles, and fire has taken pity upon the waste place, but has gnawed into the wood here and there. This is a place where the irony of "Sacred to the memory" and "In loving memory" makes the visitor—a rare commodity—smile sadly. What do the dead think of such a sacred emblem of remembrance as a tottering, crumbling epitaph?

There is humour even in this mournful old burial place. A notice says to all the world—"Any person stealing or removing flowers, timber, or loose material from this cemetery will be prosecuted. By order." No signature is attached. The wind and the rain may prosecute him, and the lightning may sheet home the crime. Poor flowers! They mostly went beyond the pale of the pilferer long ago. Few waste any sweetness there on the desert air. There was one rose-tree in bloom yesterday, but the pale pink blossoms were very lonely.