



## NEWSLETTER, August 2018

**Our next meeting is being held on Tuesday 4 September 2018**

**at St Ninian's, Newcombe Crescent, Karori**

**at 7.45 pm.**

**Members and friends welcome**

### *The history of Makara & Ohariu*

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue cardigan over a patterned scarf and blue jeans. She is standing on a rocky, grassy outcrop, looking out over a valley. The background shows a road and some buildings in the distance.

We are fortunate to welcome a speaker with an extensive knowledge of the history of the Makara and Ohariu area.

Christine Grace has lived in Makara most of her life, her family having been residents since the early 1900s. Arguably Christine could be known as the unofficial 'Mayor of Makara', given her strong involvement and support for the community. She is a long-serving member of the Makara and Ohariu Community Board, and involved in a wide range of community events, from the Makara Country Fair to organising the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Makara Model School in October 2016.

Christine is passionately interested in and concerned about issues which affect Makara and Ohariu Valley, and is actively involved in ensuring the rural atmosphere of both areas is maintained and improved wherever possible.

Please join us as Christine shares her experiences and wealth of historical knowledge

**Supper will be served after the meeting**

We look forward to seeing you on Tuesday 4 September

## ***June Meeting - AGM***

**The following officers were elected at the AGM:**

**President**, Adrian Humphris

**Vice-President**, John Harper

**Secretary**, Henry Brittain

**Treasurer**, No nominations were received and an appointment was held over

### **Committee members:**

Four outgoing members were re-elected, Judith Burch, Peter Anderson, Jo Elworthy and Kristin Gibson. Four new members were elected,

Steve Porter

Chris Rabey

Richard Bentley

Geoff Slack

It is great to see a larger committee for the coming year, and I'm looking forward to working with everyone and seeing what events and speakers we can arrange. If you are interested in getting involved in our quarterly meetings, helping with an event, or know of a speaker you would love to hear present, then please [let me know](#).

## ***June Meeting Talk***

The theme for our talk at the AGM in June was the Karori Teachers College site. Our guest speaker was Jamie Jacobs, Central Region Director for Heritage New Zealand, who spoke about the architectural significance of the site.

As the College had recently been sold and the entire site due for redevelopment, the presentation was very topical.





Taken from the Karori News, 3 December 1974, this aerial photograph shows the block bounded by Karori Road, Donald Street, Scapa Terrace and Campbell Street.

Clearly visible are Karori Normal School, the Teachers College, as well as the original Karori Swimming Pool.

The expansion proposed at this time did not go ahead.

One of the clippings held in our KHS Archives, at Karori Library.

At the conclusion of Jamie's presentation, the Society's Secretary, Henry Brittain gave a ten-minute reminiscence about his growing up in Karori adjacent to the area where the Training College was later built.

### ***More news about the Teachers College site***

We have also recently been advised by Heritage New Zealand has also confirmed that the Teachers' Training College (Former) has officially been added to the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangi Kōreroas a Category 1 historic place. This took effect on Wednesday 18 July.

The list and detail regarding the site can be viewed [online](#). Heritage New Zealand also advised ongoing discussion with the Wellington City Council to get the place added to the [WCC District Plan heritage schedule](#).

### ***Have you paid your subscription?***

There are still a number of outstanding subscriptions for the 2018-2019 year. We ask members that haven't yet paid to do so as soon as possible. The annual rate is the same as it was last year, which is

\$20 for individual membership  
\$25 for a family membership.

You can pay via online banking, our account number is below. Please enter your Name and phone number in the 3 panel payer space

Bank account: 06 0501 0208280 00

In the next couple of weeks we'll also be sending out individual reminders, so please get your sub paid today! If you have any queries please contact me (Adrian Humphris, [adrianinka02@gmail.com](mailto:adrianinka02@gmail.com))

### ***Support for development of Birdwood Reserve***

In July the Society was asked by Councillor Andy Foster to write a letter in support of a grant application being made to Transpower by [Friends of Birdwood Reserve](#). They are seeking the funds so they can build a new track and install interpretive signage in Birdwood Reserve.

Birdwood Reserve is a 5.3 hectare piece of land held as reserve in the ownership of Wellington City Council. It is part of the Wellington City Outer Green Belt. It sits at the entrance to Karori and the entrance to Zealandia ecological sanctuary. The Te Mahanga branch of the Kaiwharawhara stream runs through Birdwood reserve, from the historic 1870's Karori Dam in Zealandia, to a tunnel underneath Birdwood Street and the 1930s Appleton Park landfill. The land is steeply sloping on both sides of the stream, and is entirely vegetated in advanced regenerating native bush.

A really important part of the proposal is that it is not just a useful track but very much a journey towards Zealandia, and the aim is to 'tell stories' along the way, some of these are geological and natural, some are about the history of the place and the features within it. In this respect the project fits well with the aims of Karori Historical Society.



We wish the friends well with their application and ongoing development of the area. If you are interested in getting involved or learning more please get in touch with Friends of Birdwood Reserve.

### ***Influenza Project; events in November***

During November and early December 1918, nearly one hundred years ago, as the war was in its final days, there was a steady stream of funeral parties making their way to Karori Cemetery every day. As the days wore on, and the influenza epidemic death toll increased, the coffins became more and more roughly made from poor quality materials, and Post Office trucks were pressed into service carrying many bodies at a time to the Cemetery for burial. Some had no funeral as they were from out of Wellington and had no family to organise their final journey, or the rest of their family were also stricken and unable to leave their homes. Many were from the poorest parts of town – the Te Aro flats where the housing was slum-like, and parts of Newtown and Thorndon, but the virus attacked rich and poor alike. It favoured those who were in the prime, productive years of their lives, and slew many more men than women. Inexplicably, those usually most vulnerable – the very young and the very old – were often spared. WW1 finished on 11 November and the crowds that gathered to celebrate the Armistice dramatically increased the infection rate. Many men had already been killed during the preceding four years of war, and these further deaths were yet another devastation to families and their communities.

More than 650 burials took place in Karori Cemetery during November and December 1918. The greatest number were buried on 19 November – 63 people, all of whom went into their own plots. During November and December 435 people who died of influenza and its deadly complications were interred in newly dug plots in the Anglican, Catholic and Public sections. 112 were buried in pre-existing family plots. 100 men who had either served overseas, been wounded and returned to New Zealand, or were in the military training camp at Trentham, also died and were buried in separate plots in the newly developed Services section. A further 71 people who died of influenza in Wellington were buried elsewhere in the wider Wellington region (Bolton Street, Taita, Johnsonville, Porirua, for e.g.) and the final resting places of some of them have not yet been identified. Perhaps they had family elsewhere in New Zealand who arranged for their burials locally or maybe their names were misspelt and haven't yet been found on the Karori Cemetery database. Altogether, more than 700 people in Wellington died of influenza during the epidemic, including also some who died in January and February 1919.

In November 2016 a group of people gathered at the Karori Recreation Centre one Sunday afternoon to find out about the project and then do a walk around of each of the main areas where burials took place. From then on, throughout that summer and the next (2016/17 and 2017/18), up to 30 people at a time have turned up one Sunday afternoon each month and spent two hours revealing the graves of those who died. They have been weeding, scrubbing, cutting down small trees and shrubs, and cleaning headstones, many of which were unreadable because of decades of accumulated grime. Discoveries were made, and connections to those who were buried strengthened. Meantime, and throughout the last two

years, a small but dedicated group of genealogists have been researching and writing up the stories of many who died – more than 120 have now been completed and uploaded to the project website. Family members of some of those who died have been contributing, either after finding our website, or being tracked down by a genealogist, and their input has been invaluable.

In the winter month seminars were held to inform those interested about the influenza epidemic and latterly to start planning for commemoration activities in the cemetery in November 2018.

This project is entirely volunteer-based and has been well supported by Wellington City Council who have provided many of the tools needed for the working bees in the cemetery, and more recently a grant of \$5,000 to assist with costs which will be incurred to ensure the commemoration of the epidemic and those who were buried in the cemetery during it will be long lasting.

Karori Historical Society has become the project's other most supportive partner – assisting with the application for funds to WCC, and now managing funds within the Societies activities. This is a great help as the influenza project has no formal status and is not eligible to make funding applications. Being taken under the wing, so to speak, of the Society has been a crucial development and we look forward to working closely with the Society and its members during the next few months as we plan and organise commemoration activities. It is also gratifying to combine under one entity to highlight activity in Karori's largest heritage site – the cemetery.

To find out more about the project and its aims and activities go to [our website](#). We also have a [Facebook page](#)

If you would like to keep in touch with the project and its activities your name can be added to the obligation-free volunteer database – just email [flu1918karori@gmail.com](mailto:flu1918karori@gmail.com) Those on the list receive a newsletter and updates on activities about once a month, and are also reminded of working bee and other project dates.

To find out more about the epidemic, Professor Rice's recent publication "Black Flu" is available at Karori and other public libraries throughout Wellington and can be purchased for \$30 from all good bookshops around town.

Meantime, note these dates in your diary – November 18 and November 25 2018 - when there will be tours of the influenza burial sites from 11.00am to 4.00pm each day, and an Information Centre in the Mortuary Chapel will be open. The Mayor and some Councillors will be joining us at 11.00am on Sunday 18 November to acknowledge and commemorate those who died and were buried at Karori Cemetery, and Professor Geoffrey Rice, author of NZ's seminal works on the influenza epidemic will be speaking.

All commemoration events are open to the public and free to attend, so do come along and support this activity in the biggest heritage and historical site in Karori.

***Your Committee needs a Treasurer (we really, really do!!).***

While our Committee has grown this year, we are still looking for a Treasurer. If you are keen to get involved please let us know. It does not take up a lot of time, and involves

- Keeping an eye on our bank account and terms deposits
- Advising Geoff Slack (who looks after our membership info) when subs are received
- Paying invoices and bills throughout the year (only a small number)
- Giving an update at our quarterly committee meetings, and helping prepare our annual Charities Commission return

We are also missing a treasurer at the moment; since the departure of Valerie we have had much appreciated help from Maurice Horner but have not yet found a long term replacement. If you are willing to help [please let me know!](#)

***Content for our 50<sup>th</sup> Stockade!***

As already mentioned, this year we will publish our 50<sup>th</sup> Stockade. As always we rely on our members to contribute articles, images or stories. You may have a family connection to Karori you could share, or an early image or document people will find interesting. You could also uncover an untold story or fact about Karori via our Society archives; you can find these on the top floor of the Karori Library.

If you do have something to share or are prepared to write an article, please let the Committee know. Remember also you can browse copies of earlier Stockades online, via the following link:

<http://www.wrhpc.org.nz/archive/khsindex.htm>

***Don't forget to check out our website and see what's new***

A reminder a wealth of information about the society and our activities can be found online at our website, <http://www.karorihistory.org.nz/>. We are also on Facebook; check it out and contribute! <https://www.facebook.com/Karori-Historical-Society-184528484931598/>

Adrian Humphris  
President