



HERITAGELINK

The Official Magazine of the
WELLINGTON HISTORICAL & EARLY SETTLERS' ASSOCIATION

ISSUE No 115

JUNE 2015

President's Report

Dear Members,

I will begin with recording the success of our last luncheon and congratulating Jane Tolerton on her lecture – 'Not just the nurses who went to the First World War'. We thoroughly enjoyed the stories of women involved in many different roles supporting the forces engaged in that awful strife. And it brought home to us the suffering experienced not only by those directly involved, but how it must have been for those waiting at home, not able to contribute in any practical way. In this centennial year of commemoration we have much to be thankful for. There was certainly much to hear and see of the centennial of WW1 – and the relighting of the Carillion, etc, drew huge crowds in very pleasant weather. The Te Papa/ Weta Workshop Exhibition 'Gallipoli – The Scale of our War' is still attracting crowds and will, no doubt, continue to do so for months to come.

I wish to draw your attention to a Website operated by the Wellington Regional Heritage Promotion Council. Its magazine is entitled "Heritage Today" which is produced online. Heritage month takes place in Wellington, usually in September/October and has done so since 1993. Participation is invited from interested parties who can contribute to a programme of events, displays and activities of interest to the public. Our Association has twice hosted the opening at the Wellington Museum of City and Sea, the last occasion being the year of our Centennial, 1912. The 'Heritage Today' magazine can be viewed by going to wrhpc.org.nz. You will be able to see the monthly programme of events taking place and advertised by various historical and interested societies. There are also some very interesting articles. Let us know what you think of the site and what you think we can contribute.

Our next meeting will include the AGM of the Association. Please be assured that your attendance will not bring any pressure to join the Committee, although we would be delighted if some 'new blood' would volunteer, or maybe you could nominate someone prior to the meeting – with their permission, of course! We apologise in advance for any inconvenience experienced by members because of the development of the top floors of the Museum. The work is going ahead apace and some upset is bound to occur, but the displays, etc, will be considerably enhanced and added to by the completion date in 2020. Many items that have been stored for years will be on exhibition.

Do please join us for our next meeting at the Wellington Museum for luncheon – soup, sandwiches and cake – and hear from Helen Bichan speaking on Porirua Hospital. The Museum kitchen may be unavailable, hence soup instead of heated savouries! We look forward to your attendance from 12pm on Thursday, 18 June.

Sincerely

Vonnie Nunns
PRESIDENT

Annual General Meeting

NOMINATION FORM

To: The Hon. Secretary, Wellington Historical & Early Settlers' Association Inc
I, as a financial member of the Association, nominate

Name of Nominated Person For the Office
of.....

Proposer's Name Proposer's

Signature.....

I agree to accept the nomination

Signature.....

Candidate's

NB Nominations must be received no later than 4.00 pm 12 June 2015
Wellington Historical & Early Settlers Association Inc
P O Box 239 Wellington

X

A Dairyman's Wife at Oriental Bay (18.10? - 1888)

by Hilda McDonnell



Aubrey Christopher, c.1870's-1910's Ref. C-930-023 Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

The *Wellington Almanack 1865* listed only two households for the whole of Oriental Bay. At 'Oriental Terrace' were: J. Wilkinson, gardener; Mrs Whebby'. Wilkinson's tea gardens in Grass Street are well documented elsewhere. A rate book index for 1863-4 showed Mrs Whebby as owner/occupier at Oriental Terrace and 'owner of land on the Town Belt (Mt Nic). Thomas and Edith Whebby, both 31, had embarked with their two children on the *Clifton*, which arrived in Port Nicholson on 17 February 1842. They were to have five more children. According to the Scholefield Papers at Wellington Public Library Thomas and Edith Whebby first lived in 'Tinakori'. Mrs Whebby had a brother, Robert Grange, who settled at the Hutt. In 1847 Thomas was on the Jurors List as 'Thomas Whebby, Willis St, milkman'. In January 1848 he placed an advertisement in the paper: 'Found Strayed: a Light Red Cow, strawberry coloured on the rump, with a Calf by its side, apparently five or six weeks old... The owner can have the Cow and Calf on payment of all expenses, by applying to: Thomas Whebby, milkman, Willis-street.'

The family decided to move round to Oriental Bay. In Feb 1854 the Jurors' List showed Thomas Whebby, Oriental Bay, milkman'. By Aug 1854 he was listed as a 'dairyman', with freehold land at Oriental Bay. In Feb 1856 he was described as a farmer of Oriental Bay, with leasehold land at Upper Hutt. He was still on the Jurors List for Feb 1857. Thomas Whebby died in the winter of 1857 and was buried in the Bolton Street Cemetery on 28 July. Mrs Whebby battled on. She placed an advertisement in the local paper of March 13, 1863: 'Lost On Wednesday, 11 March, between Mr Burne's shop, Lambton Quay, and the residence of W. Bowler, Esq., Tinakori Road, Two £5 Notes and a £1 Note. Whoever has found the same and will return them to Mrs Whebby at Oriental Bay, will be liberally rewarded'. Again, 'For Sale, a Cow, just Calved. Apply to Mrs Whebby, Oriental Bay 5 Aug 1865'. Edith Whebby died in October 1888 and was also buried at Bolton Street. Probate was granted for her estate that year. The obituary of her son C. Whebby (born in Yeovil, Somersetshire on 11 July 1846) stated that when his parents took up residence in Oriental Bay 'the hills were covered with bush down to the water's edge, and it was necessary for a clearing to be made before a wharf could be erected'.

A Christopher Aubrey watercolour of Oriental Bay, dated 1869, in the Turnbull Library (C-930-023) showed cows at the foreground of the painting.

Sources: Wellington Public Library; Archway; NZ Deaths online; Papers Past; Scholefield Papers; obit. C. Whebby FP 17 Sept 1931

"As I Remember"

'School Holidays in the Early 1930's' Pat Ridding of Masterton

This issue's contribution from the 'As I Remember' stories broadcast on National Radio is from of Pat Ridding of Masterton. Listeners nationwide enjoy *Sounds Historical* with Jim Sullivan on a Sunday evening between 8pm - 10pm.

Recently my grandchildren were talking about their plans for the school holidays. I didn't bore them with "when I was young" anecdotes but memories returned with a clear nostalgia for my holidays and the way I spent them in the early 1930s.

I was an only child in Wellington and eagerly looked forward to visits from my New Plymouth cousin Peter. What we managed to pack in over a week and how we made a shilling provide us with a week of adventures would be impossible these days!

I lived in the centre of Wellington so there were many interesting places within walking distance - anyway cars were for the wealthy and legs were made for walking in those days. We started off with a day's fishing on the wharves. I can't remember if we caught anything but we certainly discovered the fascination of the "big ships". We watched with awe as their cargoes were unloaded, swinging perilously in large rope baskets and landing with a thump on the wharf. How we talked and dreamed of sailing on these fascinating, mysterious wonders.

After dinner we were back on the wharves again, this time with my dad, to see the departure of the *Arahura* or *Matangi* on their nightly trip to Nelson. Often we waited for a quarter of an hour to watch the departure of the Lyttelton ferry - a larger, faster ship that would race the *Arahura* to the heads.

Another day we walked along Courtenay Place to Rowell's bakery. I went to Clyde Quay School with the boss's son so we were allowed to spend time in the bakehouse watching huge beaters mixing vast amounts of dough into luscious cakes, bread and scones. We watched the cakes being iced or filled with cream and if we were lucky we were allowed to choose a cake - my favourite was a "fly cemetery", filled with fruit and enclosed in flaky pastry. I can taste it even now!

A walk up Tory Street took us to the milk treatment plant. A polite request and a smile gave us access to the stables where the horses that did the milk rounds were kept. When I see Wellington streets today it's hard to imagine those trusty old horses pulling the milk carts to the suburbs in rain, hail or shine. They were friends to all the children on their rounds and keen gardeners quickly scooped their droppings up. On our way home down Taranaki Street we walked quickly past Haining Street. I had been warned that mysterious Chinese men lived there in pakapoo dens. I never did find out why that street was to be avoided!

Another treat was the ride on a double-decker tram to Island Bay. We had to wait until the "rush hour" at 5 o'clock for this and were very disappointed if someone had taken our front seat up top. We wound our way through busy streets, the Basin Reserve, Athletic Park and finally a glimpse of the sea at the terminus. A ride on the cable car then a walk through the Botanical Gardens and the old Bolton Street cemetery was another favourite outing. On the cable car we always sat on the slippery wooden seats outside and, greatly daring, we stretched our legs out and touched the tunnel wall as we climbed up the hill.

For Saturday we went to the "flicks". With threepence for admission and a penny to spend I wouldn't have changed places with Princess Elizabeth! We cheered and stamped when Tom Mix vanquished the "baddies" and "Our Gang" was another favourite. We loved the unbelievable adventures of the gang and their dog with a black spot around his eye. Once, as a special treat we went with my dad to see his favourites - Marie Dressler and Wallace Beery in "Tugboat Annie" but our films were much more exciting and we slept most of the way through this film.

I think the highlight of all our outings was the day excursion on the Days Bay ferry *Cobar*. We packed our togs, my mother cut our lunches, and off we went, nearly jumping out of our skins with excitement for our day at sea. Sometimes Bert, a family friend from Karori, joined us. Little did I know that he would one day be my husband! The two boys disappeared to explore the ferry while I looked after the lunches and togs. I sat enthralled as we sailed past the old coal hulks moored near the Hut Road, then across the harbour to Miramar wharf where a large crowd packed on board. Everyone found a place and we were soon tying up at Days Bay wharf. After lunch and a quick swim we all packed back on board for the return trip. All too soon we were back at the ferry wharf and hundreds of happy, sun-drenched travellers made their way home.

The week had passed quickly, but, with the optimism of youth, unmarked by the Depression and the gathering war clouds, we looked forward to our next school holidays.



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The names of those fearless men who laid the foundations of Wellington are immortalized by the streets and localities which bear their names and so, from those small beginnings, has grown one of the finest cities in the Southern Hemisphere.

It was during the eighteen forties that Lambton Quay was named as the main thoroughfare, and from it the beach slipped down to the water's edge. Barrett's Hotel stood at its southern point and the street then straggled in a curving line up to the Te Aro Plains where, at that now lost shore, were the private wharves of the newly-established merchants—Rhouer, Varhann, Lewin, Filchers and Beidune and Hunters, whose business premises were in Customhouse Street, Hill Street, Parish Street, Cornhill Street, and Lambton Quay. Not one left for posterity to be proud of—the last of them—'Bethune's', was demolished in 1958.

The "Tory," with a small party, led by the New Zealand Company's Principal Agent, Colonel William Wakefield, a brother of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, had arrived at Port Nicholson on 20th September, 1839, in order to pave the way for impending settlement. After the "Tory's" arrival, that intrepid leader, Colonel William Wakefield, concluded a land deal with the two chiefs of the local Maoris, and on the deck of the ship bought from them "the whole visible landscape up to the summits of the surrounding hills from Cook Strait to the Pakakariki Hills." In exchange the Maoria received blankets, muskets, tobacco and merchandise, whose value amounted to £1651. The deal was sealed on September 27th, 1839, and on the 30th Wakefield hoisted a New Zealand flag to a mast of 21 guns from the "Tory"—an unofficial annexation.

As the decade slipped away year by year, Wellington saw great development in spite of being hedged about with difficulties and frustrations and from the fact that war had broken out between the soldiers and the Maoria. In 1842 it knew the catastrophe of fire which, starting in Lloyd's bakehouse on the southern side of Colonel Wakefield's home, swept up the beach to Te Aro Flats, destroying stores, warehouses, hotels and a Maori Pa, and rendering many of the settlers homeless. In 1848 the people were alarmed and terrified by a very severe earthquake which occurred on October 16th, at 1.30 a.m. The "Wellington Independent," describing the disaster, graphically says: "The scene can never be adequately described—the crashing of houses, the fall of bricks, the wave-like motions of the earth produced a chill at the heart sufficient to nappal the stoutest-minded in the place." Then Colonel Wakefield died in 1848 and his death "created a feeling of deep and universal sorrow not only among the colonists, but also among the aboriginal inhabitants of the settlement," quoted the "New Zealand Spectator and Cook Strait Courier" in recording this sad event.

And so, at the end of their first ten years of colonisation, the pioneers were able to look back with pride on their achievements in bringing the primeval land into the shape and pattern to be followed and developed as the years followed one another through the door of time.

WELLINGTON IN THE 1840'S

Courtesy Margaret Billon

'Pioneers' Progress'

Arranged and written for the Early Settlers' and Historical Association of Wellington. March 1960.

WELLINGTON IN 1840'S

Know'st thou an island on the misty ocean.

Green, green, with fern and many an ancient tree.
Whose waving tops, with soft perpetual motion.

Repeat the same primeval melody.

The Rain with red pine interlaces and lights

The forest with a scarlet gleam;

The sunshine on the hills the shadow chases

The fern-tree bends in silence o'er the stream.

Lady Wilson,

Rangitikei,

1889.

Imagine the hustle of the English port of Gravesend in 1839—a tall sailing ship, the "Aurora," at anchor on the point of departure—'to where?' A place called New Zealand, a land lying in the South Pacific sea, and these men, women and children going up the gangway, laden with luggage, are about to set sail under the wing of Edward Gibbon Wakefield for their unknown destination.

What courage, what determination, what a sense of adventure must have dominated the minds of those nineteenth century pilgrims enabling them to desert security for danger, comfortable homes for virgin soil and friends and relatives for the unknown.

Then the long wearisome journey, weeks, even months of it, until at last the ship dropped anchor in the harbour of Port Nicholson. Such a beautiful, if strange sight those pioneers must have thought their destination was—the naturally lovely harbour in the same today—a safe refuge for any ship after the storms and tribulations of the voyage. But those passengers were not greeted by wharves forested by tall cranes and customs sheds, paved streets and handsome buildings, but by bush-clad hills rising one beyond the other as far as the eye could see. Petone beach was the landing place of the pioneers on 22nd January, 1840. Can one imagine the thoughts of these brave women as they stepped upon the shore of their new home. It is difficult for their descendants, knowing only this modern city, to understand what must have been a bewildering, confusing future to contemplate.

They named the place "Hudonville," but after a time it was decided to move further along the coast to establish a permanent township where Wellington now stands.

But the early Pioneers were an intomitable band of British settlers and as adaptability overcome homesickness, perseverance triumphed over difficulties, and the initial struggle to provide themselves with shelter, food and jobs was accomplished, their leaders began to plan. Roads were cut through the bush-clad hills and an indispensable part of the early transport were the bullock wagons, the first vehicle to travel over the newly made road from the Hutt to Thorndon in 1841 being a bullock dray.

As the year progressed more little sailing ships, carrying more and more settlers arrived—the "Oriental," the "Duke of Roxburgh" and the "Herald Merchant"—all dropped anchor at journey's end soon after the "Aurora."

Wellington, named by the Directors of the New Zealand Company, took shape by the building of churches, hotels, shops, a library, a bank and a school, and an settled an English community, law and order were early established in the form of a small police force, and in regular sittings of a Magistrate's Court. The name for the new town was oddly apt, as by its bold contours and invigorating air, it was somehow reminiscent of the famous military Duke of the 19th century, after whom it was called.