



HISTORIC PLACES WELLINGTON INC
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Newsletter

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To join Historic Places Wellington or learn more about HPW, go to www.historicplaceswellington.org.

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Our email address is
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EVENTS (See page 4 for details)

- Island Bay trip on 28 November
- Seminar on 1950s

Historic Places Wellington AGM

Historic Places Wellington held its AGM on 18 August which was attended by some 26 members. Given all the constitutional changes of the past few years as the society has morphed gradually from a branch of the Historic Places Trust to a fully independent non-governmental organisation with charitable status, it was a pleasant change to have on the agenda this year only some minor changes to the Rules of HPW. The meeting was followed by a talk by **Nigel Isaacs on three Museums of Buildings** (open-air museums) he visited recently in the UK and USA, illustrated by a range of photographs, the museums being:

- * Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Sussex, England (www.wealddown.co.uk)
- * Shelburne Museum, Vermont, USA (www.shelburnemuseum.org)
- * Hancock Shaker Village, Massachusetts, USA (www.hancockshakervillage.org).

Conversation afterwards centred on examples of similar museums in New Zealand although on a more modest scale.

Committee. The committee elected and the office bearers for the forthcoming year are as follows: Peter Dowell – *Chairman*; Priscilla Williams – *Vice-Chairman*; Vivienne Morrell – *Minutes Secretary*, John Daniels - *Treasurer*; Committee Members - *Deborah Cranko*; *Nigel Isaacs*.

We regularly appeal for new committee members as the current number means our resources are thinly stretched and we are not able to address adequately the issues facing heritage in the Wellington region. Anyone who feels they could assist in some capacity should contact us by email.

Please remember to look at our website www.historicplaceswellington.org and Facebook page www.facebook.com/historicplaceswellington which are regularly updated with photos and stories by committee member Vivienne Morrell.

Historic Places Aotearoa AGM

Our national body, Historic Places Aotearoa, held its Annual Meeting in early November in Ashburton, hosted by Historic Places Mid-Canterbury. Nigel Isaacs and John Daniels attended the meeting on behalf of HPW. John retired as a member of the Executive and Nigel has taken his place. The other new Executive member is Denis Pilkington from Historic Places Hawkes Bay. James Blackburne of Historic Places Tairāwhiti remains Chairman.

The meeting was attended by Bruce Chapman, Chief Executive of Heritage New Zealand, who gave a frank and comprehensive survey of the issues faced by the organisation. Bruce's talk was well received and gave rise to a very useful exchange of views. All present felt that the relationship between Historic Places Aotearoa and Heritage New Zealand had been strengthened.

Our delegates have urged HPA to work on widening its membership by recruiting regional heritage organisations which are not presently members. This would make HPA a more effective lobby group and would reduce the membership levy by spreading its costs over a wider base.

GHQ Building

In several previous newsletters we have written about our concerns for this building on the corner of Buckle and Taranaki Streets. It has again been in the media spotlight as the NZ Defence Force is arranging to renew the consents for demolition of the three buildings on this site as they had expired. Resource consent for demolition is not required despite the heritage listings for two of the buildings.

This has brought a sharp reaction from a number of quarters. Councillor Iona Pannett, who heads the Transport and Urban Development portfolio, has stated her firm opposition to demolition. Heritage New Zealand has noted this building is a significant part of the nation's story. Claire Craig of the regional office has met recently with NZDF to explain their concerns and she notes there is a high level of goodwill to find a constructive solution. Three NGOs are actively lobbying for the building's retention - Mt Cook Mobilised, Wellington Civic Trust and HPW. Peter Cooke, a military historian and member of Mt Cook Mobilised, organised a protest on Armistice Day to show support for the GHQ Building. Our photo shows Peter with some of the other supporters on a very cold rainy day outside the building; in the photo but not very visible are also three WCC councillors – Iona Pannett, Andy Foster and Nicola Young.



Both the Civic Trust and our organisation have responded with letters to the Dominion Post, expressing strong concern about the possible destruction of such an important heritage building and one which is an essential part of the newly constructed Memorial Park. As our letter stated, we hope that NZDF will balance in the equation the advantages of keeping such an important building as a showcase of Wellington's defence history against the serious loss to the city if they were to destroy this unique legacy.

Also on this defence site is the HMNZS Olphert Building, constructed in 1941. It is on the WCC heritage list but does not have a Heritage NZ listing.

Truby King House and Garden



On a perfect Spring day, HPW members visited the Truby King House and Garden in Melrose, an event hosted by the Manager of Wellington's Botanic Gardens, David Sole. This garden is the least known of the four gardens which make up the city's cluster of Botanic Gardens although it is open to the public year round. Truby King's house, on the highest point of the surrounding garden, is opened on occasional days but this was a unique opportunity to see every room in the house as it is

between tenancies and has had extensive restoration and strengthening. Our photos show one of the heritage rooms and also some of the quirky brickwork which is throughout the garden. The house, designed by William Gray Young was built to maximise exposure to sun and air, echoing Truby King's firm beliefs in the efficacy of such elements.

There are three buildings of heritage interest on this site. The only one with some public access is the **house** with its steep but interesting garden and which also contains the **mausoleum** housing the bodies of Truby King and his wife. Both the house and mausoleum are Category 1 listed by Heritage New Zealand and are on the WCC heritage list. The Council has recently decided to rent the house to Conservation Volunteers New Zealand, an organisation which recruits volunteers from New Zealand, Australia and around the world to join important environmental and wildlife conservation projects. It is believed their aims will fit well with the Council's plans for the complex.



Below the house and through a separate archway is the former **factory**, known as the Karitane Products Society Building, also designed by William Gray Young and constructed in 1923-1924. This has been extensively altered inside and is a private apartment building with no public access. It still has its striking art-deco exterior and is similarly listed as Category 1 and on the WCC heritage list.

The third building is on the highest point of the Melrose site with a stunning view overlooking the harbour and Lyall Bay. This is the former **hospital**, also designed by Gray Young and with gardens containing brickwork similar to that around the house. It became a maternity ward, and in 1962 a three-storey nurses' home was built on the site. In 1978 the hospital was closed down, then leased until finally sold in 1982 and subsequently used as a conference centre, now also closed. The hospital is earthquake-prone and has been red-stickered, so there is no public access. It is not on the WCC heritage list but is identified as worthy of protection by Heritage NZ through a listed heritage area which encompasses the whole Truby King/Mt Melrose site including the hospital.

Ohariu Valley Heritage Buildings



A “Garden Ramble” was held on 8 November to raise funds for two heritage buildings in the valley which are under repair. The Ohariu Valley Hall, built in 1906, which continues to serve this local community’s needs, has been repiled and now has disabled access. Further into the valley is the simple but attractive Anglican church of Holy Trinity built in 1870 which is proud of being the oldest church in the Wellington region still holding regular services.

As our photo shows it is now receiving some much needed maintenance of walls, windows and roof.

In 1955 the Holy Trinity Ladies Guild was formed with the objective of supporting these two buildings. The Guild celebrated its 60th year in May and launched a booklet of its history, written by Judy Siers and published by the Onslow Historical Society. It is encouraging to note that the Guild is still continuing its work by planning to raise much of the \$100,000 needed for the current project. \$20,000 has been contributed from the WCC Heritage Cultural Fund.

Events

Visit to three Island Bay buildings

This will be on Saturday 28 November starting at 2pm and expected to finish by 4pm. Details of the programme and of the three buildings we shall be visiting are on the website: <http://historicplaceswellington.org/upcoming-events/> Members and their guests are welcome. Please bring \$10 so we can make a donation to each place.

Meet at the Home of Compassion visitor centre at 2pm. The address is 2 Rhine Street, Island Bay, at the end which comes off Murray Street. If you take an Island Bay No. 1 bus get off at the stop just past Dee Street on the Parade.

Symposium on 1950s architecture

“Everything tastes better with cream” – NZ architecture in the 1950s: a one day symposium 2015. This event will be held on Friday **4th December** 2015 at the School of Architecture Wellington. Details including the full programme and costs are available on the website of the Centre for Building Performance Research and the link is:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/architecture/centres/cbpr/conferences/everything-tastes-better-with-cream-new-zealand-architecture-in-the-1950s>