Otaki Sanatorium reflected the belief in the germ-busting power of sun, rest and fresh air for infections. This is how it looked in 1957. Read more on page 5. Photo: Otaki Museum Collection.

Dedicated Thorndon campaigner remembered

"If you go to sleep, you will lose this city's heritage" – this was the message that Tony Burton frequently delivered at council meetings during his sustained campaigns to preserve the city's historic buildings. Tony, who passed away earlier this year, was once known as Thorndon's Society's 'guerrilla planner'. He is remembered for leading the restoration of a worker's cottage, known as 'The Quoin' at 297 Tinakori Road, in the mid-1980s, and for saving Premier House which had been under serious threat from development. "Tony left a wonderful legacy of achievement in Thorndon," says David Watt, HNZ Central Region Outreach Advisor.

Social media replaces Archaeology Week events during lockdown

Wellington archaeologist Mary O’Keeffe has taken her popular capital walking tour of the capital online via Facebook, as Covid 19 lockdown has impacted on this year’s New Zealand Archaeology Week. The event, organised by the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA), is now embracing social media as a way of telling the stories that would otherwise have been shared at events throughout the country. Mary recommends settling down with a cuppa or glass of wine for her 40-minute tour. Christchurch-based archaeologists have also developed a lively blog on their local discoveries and research. Check out more of what has been happening for the 2020 NZ Archaeology Week here.

ANZAC Day in the Cemetery
The Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery have been offering a self-guided tour over ANZAC Weekend for several years, with help-yourself boxes of leaflets including a map. The layout directs people on a winding trail of red poppies over several minor tracks, past 17 white crosses for the servicemen who were descendants of people buried in the cemetery. This year, committee members Kate Fortune and Priscilla Williams put out the crosses with careful social distancing ahead of the weekend. Covid 19 and the Level 4 Lockdown meant that it was not appropriate to offer leaflets so information about the servicemen was posted as a downloadable file on the Friends’ website.

Typical of the messages received was this email: “I wanted to thank you for the wonderful Bolton Street Cemetery walk you created – and the accompanying information and map. We walked it on ANZAC day afternoon and appreciated very much the work you had put in to the white crosses and information provided. A lovely way to mark a very different and special ANZAC day - and discover some Wellington history along the way. Thank you.”
Kate Fortune, Friends of the Bolton Street Cemetery

Haiku docos offer different perspectives on WW1
Māori and Pasifika voices are the focus of a new series of World War 1 documentaries available on the National Library website. Producer and director Anna Cottrell calls them ‘haiku’ documentaries, and they are told via letters, diaries, and archives held in the Alexander Turnbull library and through memories handed down to iwi and families. The series was suggested in 2012 by Dr Jock Phillips as a collaboration between the Ministry for Culture & Heritage, Archives New Zealand and the Turnbull.

Christ Church tours go high tech
You can now visit Wellington’s oldest church from the comfort of your home. The Christ Church Preservation Society worked with local company HomePlanNZ to create a virtual tour of the church and grounds. The technology takes a little bit of getting used to, but once you are moving around on screen, you can also zoom in to read plaques of the church wall and headstone details in the grounds.

GREAT WAR
stories

A screen shot from the new virtual tour of Christ Church, Taita

For regular Wellington Regional Heritage Promotion news, stories and upcoming events – plus back issues of Heritage Today – please go to our Facebook page created by Peter Anderson of Karori Historical Society.
A century of battling germs

Weeks of social distancing and mandatory hand washing have got me thinking about health, hygiene and germ-busting strategies from days gone by, starting with some of my own family history.

By Anne Taylor

My maternal great-grandmother would probably have been labelled a ‘clean freak’ had she been alive today. Whenever my mother and her twin sister went to stay with her, they were ushered into a bath to which a generous capful of Dettol had been added. Elsie believed in the disinfecting power of fresh air coursing through the house, even on cold mornings, and copious sunshine on towels and bed linen.

My paternal great-grandmother also had some firm beliefs on health and advocated “natural cures”. She walked vigorously taking in lungfuls of fresh air, and massaged her feet with goose grease to prevent cracked heels. She also believed that bras caused cancer and opted to make her own, which resulted in “a rather low-slung appearance”. In her defence, she had raised four children!

Germs did not stand a chance on a 1940s wash day, as Mum remembers: “All the clothes washing was done in a boiling copper with a roaring fire assembled underneath. Three rinses followed, with a ‘blue bag’ added in the final one. Everything was aired in sunshine and after that came the ironing process.” She also remembers her father parading through the house with some sulphur burning on a shovel, as a disinfecting strategy. Hand washing with carbolic soap before meals and after handling animals was vital.

"Everyone at school sported a camphor bag (homemade) which was hung round the neck or pinned to your singlet. The fumes wafted up as it warmed on your skin – it smelt lovely. This was to ward off coughs, colds, and, maybe diphtheria. Later, we were all injected with something to protect us from this – how well I remember that day!”

An aunt took drastic measures with any library books that crossed the threshold; they were swiftly covered with brown paper “because who knows where they had been taken to – perhaps the long-drop – by a previous reader!” The nibbling of nails was very much frowned on, as was bare feet, as “nasties could burrow into tiny cracks in the feet and create havoc once inside”. Pertinent advice for tropical jungles but perhaps slightly over the top in suburban Christchurch!

Justified fears

However, it’s not surprising that some anxiety around health and hygiene was passed down through the generations. My great-grandmother was a young mother during the 1918 flu pandemic, which killed around 8,000 people in New Zealand, and an estimated 50 million worldwide. The spectre of infant mortality and other contagious diseases such as TB, diphtheria, meningitis, and whooping cough loomed large and real. The study of viruses was in its infancy and it was only in the 1930s with the advent of electron microscopes that virology advanced significantly. Antibiotics were a distant dream, only becoming available in the 1940s.

The best cure available, then, was prevention. And women were seen as front line defenders. Plunket (established in 1907) and other publications advised women of the importance of keeping clean, well-ventilated homes, serving fresh fruit and vegetables, and ensuring their families got regular exercise and good sleep. Training for girls in home hygiene and other skills was advocated. It was believed that dust harboured microbes – in fact, the air itself was full of germs – so scrubbing furniture and floors, keeping windows open and boiling clothes was the urgent work needed to prevent family tragedy. Earlier typhoid outbreaks meant people knew the importance of good sewerage systems and proper disposal of waste at home, though these would not have been possible for or available to all.

Influenza arrives

The flu epidemic arrived in the summer of 1918 and lasted around six weeks. Barbara Mulligan has researched its impact in Wellington as part of her work at Karori Cemetery. “In 1918, people had no idea about how the flu was transmitted,” she says. “Shops, pubs and eateries were

Closed but there were no constraints on funerals, and the Armistice Day celebration attracted crowds of people. 'Inhalation chambers' were set up in converted sheds at Wellington's Town Hall, and people were encouraged to queue up and have a chemical sprayed into their throats as a way of tackling the disease.

The risks of such mass events are obvious to us now. Hair salon worker Rita Jory gives an eye-witness account, in Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890-1939: "There was a great long queue waiting to go in. All they had there for you to do was a wee acetylene lamp with a little glass tube and the steam coming out of this glass tube. You had to go and open up your mouth and let the steam go into your mouth...So we went and did that and I went straight home and had the 'flu. Went straight to bed and I never went back for a week."

Papers Past reveals how the pandemic unfolded across the country, showing similar patterns of blame, denial and reassurance in the face of unpleasant facts as seen in contemporary reporting. For example, the finger was pointed at the mail liner Niagara which docked in Auckland in October, as being the source of the disease. There were claims that army camps were causing contagion in the community but the military suggested that it was the other way around: the general public infecting soldiers. The account of flu sufferers at Featherston Military Camp makes alarming reading given what we now know about how viruses are spread (left).

Looking at historic accounts of disease and prevention attempts, we can be grateful for advances in science and technology. Our ancestors did the best they could with the knowledge available to them at the time. We can also wonder at the gaps in our own knowledge, and what might be revealed when the history of these times is written.


Above: Katherine Mansfield was well-acquainted with infectious diseases – from the Wellington typhoid outbreaks to her own exhausting battle with tuberculosis. Read the fascinating story on the KM House & Garden website.

A WELLINGTON SLUM LANDLORD.
This delay in getting men before the doctor was in evidence all the time the sick parades were so big, for there were not enough "quacks" to expedite matters. In about a week there must have been 4000 men down with the disease and its awful complications. By this time all training had ceased, every man who was on his feet being required to act as a hospital orderly or carry on the necessary fatigue. The camp itself was practically a huge emergency hospital. All the institutes, the picture show, the officers' club, the dining-rooms, and dozens of the huts were full of dolorous "diggers" coughing, gasping, and groaning in the clutches of the flu.

New Zealand folk, who "enjoyed" their attack of the flu amidst the comforts of home and the tender ministrations of woman, can hardly conceive the horrible conditions under which the boys in camp had the fight for life—especially in the early days of the epidemic. Their fever-racked bodies sought relief in vain on their torturesome wooden stretchers and straw-filled "donkey's-breakfasts."

Above: Emergency ambulances which carried victims of the 1918 flu pandemic, pictured outside the Wellington Town Hall. In the main cities, 1128 died in Auckland, 773 in Wellington - with 54 funeral services held in one day at the Karori cemetery in November 1918 - and 458 in Christchurch. Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: PACOLL-7489-69
History with walking distance

During this time of curtailed movement and limited travel, we asked members to describe a heritage feature that is within walking distance of their homes...

The Otaki Sanatorium
Within walking distance for many Otaki residents is the old Sanatorium site – situated in Mill Rd, behind Haruatai Park and the swimming pool area – where there are some interesting walkways.

The Sanatorium was opened in 1907, providing care for tuberculosis (TB) patients, and the buildings featured wide verandahs, balconies and large opening windows front and back, enabling exposure to the open air.

The Sanatorium housed both male and female TB patients until 1919. For a few years from 1917 it was used for returned and camp soldiers from WWI. However, there were complaints about the behaviour of ‘disobedient soldier patients’ and in 1920 it was decided that the Sanatorium was not suitable as a military hospital. From 1919 until 1956 it accepted female patients only. The Sanatorium patients were expected to work in the grounds as part of their treatment. The Sanatorium farm had poultry and dairy cows, and farm produce was used by both the Sanatorium and the local hospital. The local community was very involved with the Sanatorium community, and in the 1950s, patients also organised their own amusements. They ran concerts and talent quests, and published their own magazine. By then, the Sanatorium also had a nine-hole golf course, a billiard table, indoor bowls and a tennis court.

The buildings were renovated in 1926-27 and in 1949-1951 an extension to the East Deck was added. Patient numbers reduced over the years as TB incidence decreased and different forms of treatment were adopted. The Sanatorium finally closed in 1964 and the last remaining patients were transferred to Auckland. After the closure, the Otaki community was determined that an alternative use be found for the buildings. In 1965 the Sanatorium buildings became an annexe of Kimberley Hospital and Training Centre in Levin. The annexe was later named Koha Ora (Gift of Health), housing first men and later women as well.

Koha Ora closed in 1985 and all residents were housed back at Kimberley, despite opposition from the staff and the Otaki community. The buildings remained empty and over time many of the interior fittings were taken. In 1997 they were demolished and only impressions of the foundations now remain.


Past sacrifices

My great-grandfather the Rev James McCaw was minister of Knox Presbyterian Church in Lower Hutt from 1909-32.

James and his wife Agnes had eight children. In November 1918, during the Spanish flu epidemic, the church hall was turned into an emergency hospital. James, Agnes and all three daughters helped administer to the sick. All four women caught the illness. Sadly Nan (aged 19) died and Marion (13) suffered permanent nerve damage. Son Bert (20), who helped with the sick while based at Featherston Military Training Camp, also succumbed.

During the crisis my great-grandfather took an average of 10 funerals a day, including Bert and Nan on successive days.

Earlier in 1918, my great-grandparents had learnt of the loss of son Peter (22) while fighting overseas, resting now in France. Peter joined six of his first cousins among the dead.

Lest we forget both the lessons to be learned from the past, as well as the sacrifices.

Tim Thorpe, Upper Hutt
Silver Stream Railway
Ka935 is our largest steam locomotive built at Hutt workshops in 1941. Being based in Palmerston North for most of its life, 935 journeyed over most lines where 4-8-4’s were permitted in the North Island, and became the last of its class to haul a passenger train on the main trunk, along with several other “last” excursion trains before being retired from NZR service in late 1967. 935’s journey into preservation started as many of our items did, with a letter to NZR management requesting to buy a Ka locomotive when they were surplus. Various locomotives were looked at, including one of the Baker valve gear equipped Ka’s, before the focus narrowed to 3 (935, 941 and 945) with 935 being picked because of its superior mechanical condition at that time. The first few responses from NZR were rather terse, however persistence paid off for our early members, who raised the $1200 (about $22,000 in 2020 money) and arranged for 935 to be moved into interim storage in Te Awamutu, before being moved to Wellington in 1972. It arrived at SSR in 1984 and operated more than any other 4-8-4 in preservation until last being used in 2003. It requires a major boiler overhaul, and while some materials have been purchased to undertake this work it is currently well down the priority list and in the medium term is likely to take pride of place in our display shed while other projects and developments are completed. Paul Lambert, Upper Hutt Heritage Trust

Settlers Cemetery, Porirua
We didn’t notice it at first. Only when a recent move to Porirua, coupled with Covid 19 lockdown, saw us living within walking distance of the cemetery did we take another look. And there it was — the name Mungavin, first through the gate, a name I knew so well and associated so strongly with Porirua East!

Everyone who drives down the Porirua motorway or through the roundabout reads the distinctive road sign for Mungavin Ave. Then the memories flooded in. There was also once a grand old house remembered from my childhood as the Mungavin Homestead. If you drive into the Settlers Cemetery you will likely miss the grave of Patrick and Mary Mungavin. It’s on the first sharp bend in the steep, narrow roadway, facing away. It lies next to a delightful little building that is repurposed as the gardeners shed for Porirua City Council and is surrounded by thick planting.

Excited that my walk was so quickly fruitful I returned home to my computer. The Mungavin family purchased 365 acres of land in eastern Porirua, near the present railway station and to the east of the motorway. Patrick was born on the ship bringing his parents from Ireland and would have seen the area transformed from dense bush into farmland. It has in recent history been transformed again and again. The former Mungavin farm hosts one of the largest state housing developments this country has seen. More recently this former farm has been bounded to the north and east by the burgeoning and upmarket new Aotea development which in places overlooks and dwarfs the state housing development. The old homestead has indeed been moved and now operates as the restaurant Little India. This was the venue for a recent reunion of Mungavin descendants. Merran Fleming

You can read more at the Railway’s website and Facebook page.
The Broderick families of Glenside

In 1843, Creasey and Sarah Ann Broderick (nee Walters) sailed from England to New Zealand on the Mary. They were following in the footsteps of Sarah’s sister, Ceres Selina Drake (nee Walters) and Thomas Drake, who were living in Wellington and had established the settlements first brewery and a flour mill.

In 1845, the Brodericks followed the Drakes out to Section 19 on the Porirua Road and both families began farming. This area was the ‘Halfway’, later named Glenside. Here the Brodericks built a clay house. The remnants of the house were photographed by the Historic Places Trust in 1977 before it was bulldozed to make way for the Wingfield Place subdivision, which was initially called Broderick Park.

Sometime between 1846 and 1849, the Brodericks departed for the goldfields in Australia. They returned in 1856 to live in Prospect Cottage, a wooden cottage on their 26 acres of Section 19. In 1876, Creasey and Sarah Ann sold Prospect Cottage and bought a farm on Takarau Gorge Road at Ohariu and lived there, with several of their unmarried children, to the end. Meanwhile, in 1863, Creasey had bought Section 27, 104 acres of land further north along the Porirua Road. A wooden cottage was built and the property named The Woodlands. His son Thomas Broderick and wife Clara (nee Hobbs) lived here for the rest of their lives. Between 1881-1886 the farm was impacted when the Wellington-Manawatu railway cut through it. In 1890, Thomas and Clara added to the farm, buying 94 acres of Section 26 and 28 across the Porirua road. Their sons, Alfred and William Broderick took on the farming enterprise.

In 1903 William bought Section 31, adjacent to Section 27, and lived there. It is presumed that when he married and moved to Palmerston North, he sold this block to his brother Alfred. Two years later, their mother, Clara Broderick died. Alfred and his wife Elizabeth (nee Kemp) remained on the farm, caring for Thomas Broderick. Thomas died in 1924, aware of the public works planned that would soon decimate his farming legacy. Between 1927-1935 the railway line deviation was constructed, deviating from Tawa Flat through Glenside to Kaiwharawhara. The deviation ran alongside the Porirua stream, through the Woodlands house and into the hills through two tunnels. A tram line, cut into the farm above the house, would later be formed into Rowell’s Road. The original Woodlands cottage was pulled down for the construction of the railway deviation. A replacement cottage, known by the family as “the second Woodlands” was constructed on the west side of the Porirua road and stream.

The second Woodlands became the centre of the farm operations. Alfred and Elizabeth lived here with their only child, Alfred Roland Broderick (1915-1963). In the early 1950’s, the farm was again divided, this time by the building of the Northern Motorway. The Brodericks received compensation of £2123 for acquisition of eight and a half acres, severance of 142 acres and loss of water. However, they could not access the 142 acres from the Glenside side of the motorway and this part of the farm had to be sold. Thomas died in 1950 and his wife Clara, in 1952. In 1953, in recognition of the family, Wellington City Council renamed Johnsonville’s Waterloo Road as Broderick Road. Ten years later, Roland died unexpectedly, leaving behind a young wife Louisa (1918-2009) and teenage daughter Diana. Diana sold the Woodlands farm on her marriage to Nigel Flatman in 1968. It has since been subdivided several times, with the name Woodlands retained for Section 31. Barry and Marg Ellis live in the second Woodlands house and call their property Glen Tui. The woolshed is Barry’s man cave and a popular rugby club meeting venue. The Broderick wool-bale stencils have been put to good use on signage for Glenside events at the historic Halfway House.

Reminders of the Broderick family that are accessible to the public are Broderick Road in Johnsonville, a freshwater spring on Rowells Road, and the Broderick burial plots at the Ohariu and St John Anglican Churches. Diana Flatman lives in Auckland and returns regularly to Glenside and Johnsonville to reconnect with friends. Her story about the Broderick family was recently published on the Glenside website. Claire Bibby, President, Glenside Progressive Association