



FRIENDS OF MOUNT STREET CEMETERY - ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

October 2010

Issue 2

www.mountstreetcemetery.org.nz

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Mount Street Cemetery Newsletter

△ Mount Street Cemetery as painted by artist, architect and former Mayor of Wellington Sir Michael Fowler. Sir Michael has very kindly agreed to make prints available for fundraising.

INVITATION

You are invited to attend a service of blessing and remembrance at Mount Street Cemetery on 31 October at 3pm, led by the Archbishop of Wellington, John Dew — to commemorate the 170th anniversary of the consecration of the Cemetery by Bishop Pompallier.

Refreshments after service
(and wet weather venue):
Hunter Common Room, Hunter
Building, Victoria University
Please RSVP for catering
purposes to Karen Adair.

Are you a De- scendant?

Descendants planning to attend the remembrance service are encouraged to provide photos or display boards of their ancestor(s), to be viewed in the Hunter Common Room.

Contact Micaela 021-02675280 for any further information.

Website and burial list with 700+ names launched

The Friends were delighted to launch our website www.mountstreetcemetery.org.nz (under the main Wellington Catholic Archdiocesan website) in August. Last month we uploaded a preliminary burial list, containing more than 700 names. We will be updating this list as we gather further information - and we now believe we may in time have several hundred more names to add.

There were other, very small, burial grounds for Catholics in early Wellington at Ohariu Valley, Upper Hutt, Pauatahanui, Kaiwharawhara, etc, and eventually we will upload these few records

Grant for repairs

We are pleased to report a generous grant of \$5,000 from Wellington City Council to repair two wooden grave surrounds of high heritage value.

Viewing platform

Victoria University has now completed construction of the viewing platform designed by Athfield Architects. It affords great views over the Cemetery towards the harbour.

Memorial walk

St Mary's College students walked to Mount Street on 8 September as part of their 160th anniversary celebrations, to visit the graves of the founding nuns.

Bouquets

- We are very grateful to the 9 British defence force personnel, part of a group seconded here for a 4-month joint military exchange, who worked very hard on a very wet day in July, maintaining and cleaning the graves of the 65th Royal Tigers Regiment.

- We also thank Gwen Sturgeon, Annie Fischer and Anne Parker for assistance in planting heritage roses around the priests' graves.

- Sincere thanks also to Alan Blundell for the early Burton Brothers photograph of the Cemetery that he has kindly donated to the Friends.

Science helps conserve the past

In July, Dr Hans-Dieter Bader conducted an archaeological survey to locate burial sites adjacent to the Cemetery's current main pathway, which forms part of the City to Sea Walkway.

The photo at right shows Dr Bader at work.

The Friends are very grateful to Wellington City Council for funding this survey.



Walter Hippolyte Pilliet (1840-1885)



**ANCESTOR
PROFILE:**
the first in an
occasional
series

... by descendant Michael Pringle



Walter Hippolyte Pilliet

The early death of Walter Pilliet in November 1885 was a devastating blow for his wife and young family. He died quite unexpectedly in Wellington of typhoid fever, aged just 45, leaving five children. He was working as a political reporter for Christchurch and Wellington newspapers, and he had walked as usual to his home at College Green, Newtown, just a day before he died.

Walter had recently made arrangements for his family to join him in Wellington from their Christchurch home.

The year before, he had lost his seat in the General Assembly at the general election of 1884.

That loss marked another unwelcome milestone in a career that was often tenuous and peripatetic, reliant on political connections and

friendships - friendships which he often lost as quickly as he made new ones. He was as much at the mercy of patronage, as he was a beneficiary of it, for if favour was not found, assistance in finding employment was withheld.

He was born in Lyon, France in 1840 to an English mother and French father.

His father, Jean Hippolyte Pilliet, joined the Napoleonic armies in 1811 aged 18 and fought in battles in Russia and at Liepsic, in Spain after the restoration of the French monarchy, and in Belgium in 1832.

Jean married an English Catholic, Ann Mary Hill-Coyney, whose ancestor, Edward Coyney, had funded a seminary for English Catholic priests at St Omer near Dunkerque. Ann had herself been living in France for some years.

She had been born at Weston Coyney in Staffordshire in September 1805, the daughter of Walter William Hill and Mary Coyney. Mary was heir to the Coyney estates and her husband, also from a wealthy landed family, took the name and arms of Coyney upon marriage.

Their daughter Ann had been studying at a convent in Amiens in France in 1821, and again in July 1837. She may have been living in Amiens since 1821.

At the time of the marriage Ann was living in Paris.

Parents married in Paris

How and where she met her husband is unknown, but they married at the church of St Roch in Paris on 8 February 1838, after a civil ceremony at the Hotel de Ville.

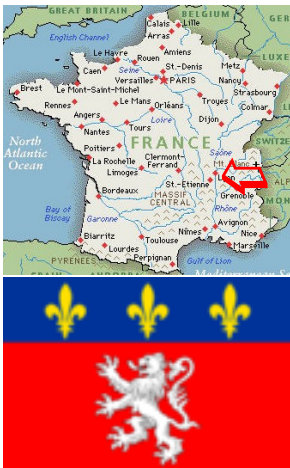
Jean's final appointment was to *Chef de battalion* of the 42nd infantry regiment on 28 June 1844.

He retired from the army in 1846, after 35 years service, and probably received a military pension for the rest of his life.

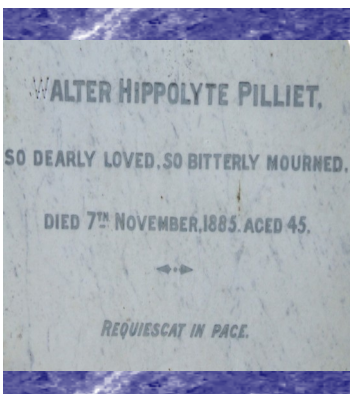
Jean lived out his retirement in Dunkerque, where he died on 22 April 1881.

He was accorded a large military funeral.

Below: Walter Pilliet's headstone at Mount Street Cemetery



**"He was born in
Lyon, France in 1840
to an English mother
and French father."**





**ANCESTOR
PROFILE:
Walter
Hippolyte
Pilliet**

Sailed at age 16

Jean and Ann's son Walter left Lyon at age 16 for England, where he joined his English family for a few months before sailing for New Zealand on the *Heroes of Alma* in May 1857.

His mother's family was Catholic, and English Catholic relatives had preceded Walter in the colony – the Cliffords, the Vavasours, Frederick Weld.

These connections assisted him in finding his first position, working as a clerk in the Lands Office in Wellington, upon his arrival, and he was soon transferred to Napier to work in the Hawkes Bay Provincial Survey Department. It was there that he met Sir Donald McLean, then Superintendent of Hawkes Bay.

Back in Wellington in 1864, his acquaintance James Coutts Crawford suggested he accompany him to Havelock in the Marlborough Sounds, where gold had recently been discovered.

Magistrate at 25

Crawford was Resident Magistrate there and quickly appointed Pilliet Warden of the burgeoning goldfields; by 1865 the 25-year-old Pilliet was himself Resident Magistrate.

He met Mary Ann Johnston of Nelson and married her in that city in 1865. In 1867 he joined the Marine Survey, charting the Marlborough coastline with Captain Woods, but was shipwrecked at Kaikoura in 1868 and in December of that year, after a stint working in journalism in Wellington, he became



St-Jean-Baptiste Cathedral, Lyon

Resident Magistrate at Kaikoura.

Private Secretary to Sir Donald McLean

The Kaikoura Magistracy was disestablished the following year and he became private secretary to Sir Donald McLean, based in Auckland, handling his correspondence and keeping him informed of political news.

McLean proved an awkward man to work for, and when the Resident Magistracy of Akaroa became vacant in 1870, Pilliet applied for and was granted the position.

Bittersweet years in Akaroa

Two enjoyable years on the Peninsula, where he was popular with both the English and French settler families, and pursued negotiations over land with local Māori, were brought to an abrupt end in 1872 when his wife Mary Ann died after complications following the birth of her fifth child, Caroline.

Pilliet married again to Agnes, a daughter of Ebenezer and Agnes Hay of Pigeon Bay, but happiness was once more shortlived.

Court case

He was dismissed from the Magistracy, after a conviction for assault was upheld in the Lyttelton Magistrate's Court. He had punched the Christchurch architect Samuel Farr during an altercation on the Lyttelton wharf. Farr complained to the Lyttelton police and a much-publicised court case ensued.

"His knowledge of languages put him at ease both with British and with French residents."

Elected to Provincial Council

He then pursued a newspaper career, editing and purchasing at least one Canterbury title, and was elected Member for Bays in the Canterbury Provincial Council in 1874. He ran for election to Parliament for Stanmore, a Christchurch seat, in 1881, on an Oppositionist ticket. He won election, but was unseated on petition for a corrupt practice under the Electoral Act. He stood again in the subsequent by-election and won, but was soundly defeated in the 1884 general election.

Move to Wellington

It was after this defeat that he moved again into political reporting for the daily press, and made arrangements to bring his family to resettle them in Wellington.

They had yet to leave Christchurch, however, before news came that he had taken ill and died at his home.

His second wife, Agnes Hay, left the colony after a few years for the United Kingdom leaving her step-children scattered among various relatives in New Zealand. They saw little of one another over the ensuing years.

"Only one of his five children was to marry and have children."

Of Walter's five children, only the youngest, Caroline, was to marry and have children. She married William Pringle in Nelson in 1897, and one of their sons, also William Pringle, was my grandfather.

Persistent errors:

"...son of Chevalier Jean Hippolyte Pilliet... a General and Aide-de-Camp to King Louis Philippe... Pilliet was educated in France and at Rugby and served for a short time in the French Navy..."

"Walter Hippolyte Pilliet: Early Settler and Journalist", *Evening Post*, 15 July 1961. [Reproduced courtesy of The Dominion Post]

Pilliet family stories

It was from my grandfather that I heard many stories about his grandfather, Walter Pilliet. Some of the stories had been collected, and embellished, by his aunt Francesca, Walter's daughter, after her return from travels in England and France in the 1920s and 30s. [See box above for how these embellishments may persist! — Ed.]

Although many contained the germs of truth, few were entirely true, and my own research in the UK and in France and New Zealand over the last two decades has added a great deal of new information to the sketchy, inherited stories passed down from older generations.

Jean and Ann Pilliet had a second child, Ann Mary, who had no children, and died in France in 1920. Since Caroline was the only one of Walter's five children to marry, the Pilliet name is not known in New Zealand today, but survives in some parts of France.



FRIENDS OF MOUNT STREET CEMETERY

The *Friends of Mount Street Cemetery* was established earlier this year to preserve, protect and enhance the heritage of the Mount Street Cemetery for the benefit of all. Consecrated almost 170 years ago by Bishop Pompallier in 1841, the Mount Street Cemetery was the first Cemetery in Wellington for Catholic burials, and contains the graves of about 800 Wellington pioneers.

You can become a founding member of the *Friends* now by payment of an annual subscription. Any additional donations are very welcome. As we are a registered charity, all donations of \$5 and over are tax-deductible. All funds received will be put towards the on-going work of protecting, conserving and maintaining the Cemetery for the benefit of all.

By becoming a member:

- Your subscription/donation will help to preserve this important part of Wellington's heritage.
- You will be informed of the on-going work through the *Friends'* newsletters.
- You can assist in the voluntary work, including research and working bees.
- You will learn more about this unique and precious area in the heart of Wellington.

Your financial support would be greatly appreciated for this important heritage project. Please direct any enquires you may have to: Karen Adair, President, Friends of Mount Street Cemetery, Email:

karen.adair@xtra.co.nz

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I would like to become a founding member of the *Friends of Mount Street Cemetery*.

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

Please indicate the type of membership for the year 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011:

Individual	\$15
Family	\$20
Religious Order	\$40
Corporate	\$100
Donation	\$ _____ (<i>Donations of \$5 and over are tax deductible</i>)
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$

Payment Options (Note: all payments will be receipted)

You may send a cheque made out to Friends of Mount Street Cemetery to:

Friends of Mount Street Cemetery
Archdiocese of Wellington
PO Box 1937
WELLINGTON 6140

You may pay directly to our bank account:

Friends of Mount Street Cemetery
03 1359 0335290-00

(If you choose this option please indicate your name in the reference field and don't forget to email us with your address details so we can send you a receipt and keep you informed of progress with the project.)

If you have ancestors buried in the Cemetery please provide details if you have not already sent these to us.

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