



Mount Street Cemetery Newsletter

AGM: Longer-term projects under way—President's Report

The third Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Friends of Mount Street Cemetery held on 28 June was well attended, with a number of descendants present - one having travelled from as far as Auckland.

Committee re-elected

The President and Committee were re-elected, with Karen Adair President, Ken Scadden Vice-President, Suzanne Sutton-Cummings (descendant) Treasurer, and Committee members Michael Desmond (descendant), Vaughan Stagpoole (descendant), Priscilla Williams, Micaela Buckley — and Andrew Wilks and Kevin Brown *ex officio*, representing Victoria University and the Wellington Archdiocese, respectively.

We are very grateful to Archbishop John Dew and the Archdiocese, and to Victoria University, who have continued to support our work. We have also received valuable help from Wellington City Council, the Historic Places Trust, the Society of Mary, the Sisters of Mercy, descendants, and of course members of the Friends.

Grant funding

In December 2011 the Friends received a grant of \$8,000 from the Lion Foundation, which was used to repair the Marshall, Walsh, and Ward headstones. \$10,000 from the Wellington Community Trust was spent on four headstone repairs (Card, Counahan, Dunne, and Monaghan). A grant of \$5,000 from the

Wellington City Council, to repair timber grave surrounds, has been accrued to the new financial year.

As we are reliant on grants and donations to support our conservation work, applying for grants remains a focus.

Main pathway

This year we are looking forward to confirming the realignment of the main path (part of the City to Sea Walkway) with Wellington City Council, which will undertake the work.

Fencing and signage

We hope to obtain grant funding for fencing and signage— as recommended in the Conservation Plan.

MARITIME MEMORIES OF MOUNT STREET...



A Presentation by
Ken Scadden,
Maritime Historian

7PM Thursday
27 September

Connolly Hall,
Guildford Terrace,
Thorndon

\$10 includes supper

ALL WELCOME!

HERITAGE MONTH
EVENT— FUNDRAISING
FOR CEMETERY
CONSERVATION



A special note of thanks

to archaeologist Mary O'Keeffe, who has so kindly given of her time to assist the Committee in applying for an Archaeological Authority from the Historic Places Trust. This provides the necessary Authority for any anticipated ground disturbance work over the next five years—and was necessary to obtain before commencing projects such as work on pathways and fencing.

Cemetery benefits from the generous efforts of volunteer groups

We are very grateful to the volunteer groups who have carried out maintenance work in the Cemetery.

In May, for the third year, Bishop Viard College sent a large group of students to help weed and maintain graves. On the same day we also hosted for the third time a group from the BNZ on their 'Closed for Good' community work day.

The area around the priests' graves has now been covered with crushed shell (at right), as it would have been originally.



Wellington's early religious Sisters

... by Sister Stephanie Kitching, Congregation Archivist
Sisters of Mercy New Zealand/Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa

Sr Mary Augustine (Anne Maxwell)

1828-1874

Sr Mary Teresa (Elizabeth Walsh)

1832-1860

Sr Mary Agnes (Elizabeth Maude Barry)

1850-1877

Sister Mary Teresa

Orphaned at 14 in 1846, Eliza Walsh taught at a girls' school at Whangaroa from 1847, and aged 18 joined Bishop

Viard's mission to Wellington, along with 3 other young girls (19, 12, and a novice of 11) whom Viard consecrated as religious on 19 March 1850. Father O'Reily, who with Captain Richard O'Connell and others greeted the party at the jetty in April 1850, on seeing the young Sisters, exclaimed to the Bishop: "My Lord, I expected some fine, old, Irish nuns, and I see but a handful of children!" But by September these young women were the founding teachers of St Mary's Girls' School. Their workload increased when the Providence (orphanage) of St Joseph, the Māori Girls' School, opened in 1852. Sr Mary Teresa was Principal of St Mary's Convent when she died of tuberculosis in 1860, aged 28.

Sister Mary Augustine

Born in Kilkenny, Mary Augustine (Anne) Maxwell came to Auckland in 1857 with Mother Bernard Dickson (a Mercy Sister who served with Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War). She took her vows in

1861 and came to Wellington to assist Viard's mission, teaching at St Mary's as Assistant Superior to Mother Bernard.

Not one Catholic school

"While walking one day in late 1871 with the convent boarders through Mount Street Cemetery, her eyes wandered over the streets, green wastes and tracks of what was called the Reclaimed Land or Te Aro Flats [*a very poor area*], and the painful thought took possession of her mind: 'So many houses, places of business and non-Catholic churches springing up as if by magic—so many little girls running wildly through the streets and fields, and not one Catholic school in that quarter to receive them.' She then fell on her knees and offered herself as a victim for the Te Aro children."

[1877 recollection of Fr Michael Cummins SM, quoted in Flannigan 2004.]

In January 1873 she opened St Philomena's Girls' School, near the corner of Webb and Willis Streets, Te Aro. Soon there were more than 100 children attending. Sr Mary Augustine died of tuberculosis in 1874. Her funeral was attended by over 1500.



Sister Mary Augustine Maxwell

Sister Mary Agnes

Dublin-born Mary Agnes (Elizabeth) Barry came from Melbourne and joined the Mercy congregation in Wellington on 7 August 1873. She was professed on 8 September 1876, being already ill with tuberculosis.

Beautiful soprano voice

She was a highly educated woman who possessed a beautiful soprano voice. As a teacher she also had the rare ability of imparting her knowledge to her students while commanding respect and preserving discipline. She was 27 years old when she died in 1877.

"My Lord, I expected some fine, old, Irish nuns, and I see but a handful of children!"



Last resting place at Mount Street of Srs Mary Augustine, Mary Teresa, Mary Agnes



**Sr Mary Catherine
(Mary Ann McEvoy)**

1849-1878

**Sr Mary Aloysius
(Agnes Golder)**

1840-1880

**Sr Mary Francis
(Catherine Dwyer)**

1832-1885

**Sr Mary Colomba
(Mary Kennedy)**

1858-1888

**Sr Mary Agatha
(Priscilla Cimino)**

1838-1891

Sister Mary Agatha

Sister Mary Aloysius

Priscilla Cimino (Sister Mary Agatha) was the daughter of Salvatore Cimino, a prominent Wellington businessman and Church benefactor. In 1852, aged fourteen and a half, she joined Bishop Viard's mission as a volunteer to assist at St Joseph's Providence in Thorndon.

Agnes Golder (Sister Mary Aloysius), a member of the pioneering Golder family of Upper Hutt, joined the community in 1856, aged 16.

Both worked in the Providence, then later in other schools set up by the Sisters.

Early Sisters of Mercy

When the Sisters of Mercy came to Wellington in 1861, Priscilla Cimino and Agnes Golder were the first to join—along with Hannah Maney, another young Wellington woman who had been a devoted teacher at the Providence since 1851, aged 17. These young women had long aspired to take up the religious life.

Though “not trained teachers or professed sisters, it could be argued that without them the whole venture would ... have folded. They would have been the ones who taught the younger children, and who cooked and cleaned and attended to all the many domestic tasks associated with the boarding school and the Providence.” [Deere 2010, p66]

They worked in these fast-growing schools under the tutelage of Sister Mary Teresa, who was Principal of both the Providence, and of St Mary's Girls' School, until her death in 1860.

Sister Mary Aloysius died in 1880, of dysentery. She was 40 years old. Sister Mary Agatha died aged 53 in 1891.

Sister Mary Francis

Catherine Dwyer (Sister Mary Francis) was born in Ireland, and joined the Mercy Congregation in 1873, aged 41. She was professed by Bishop Redwood on 23 April 1878. During her time as a Sister she worked within the convent doing household duties, helping to make the community a home for the other Sisters. She was 53 when she died in 1885.

Sister Mary Colomba

Mary Kennedy (Sister Mary Colomba) came to New Zealand from Ireland on the ship *Rialto* in 1878. She had joined the Mercy congregation in Gorey, Ireland, and made her vows in Wellington on 23 March 1880.

Sister Mary Colomba's mission was within the convent, and she supported those in active ministry, particularly on visitation to the sick and bereaved. She was only 31 when she died.

Sister Mary Catherine McEvoy was in the thirtieth year of her age, and the second of her religious Profession. She was born in County Mayo, Ireland, and entered St. Mary's Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Wellington, in the year 1873, receiving the religious habit from the hands of the Right Rev. Dr. Moran. His Lordship, Dr. Redwood received her holy Profession in the year 1876. She laboured for some years in the Sisters' school in the Te Aro district, and there contracted the seeds of the fatal consumption which has snatched her from us. During the last two years of her life she spent her failing energies in teaching in the schools attached to the Convent.

Obituary, NZ Tablet,
16 August 1878

The following sources are gratefully acknowledged:

Margaret H. Deere, *Girls in Bonnets: The Life and Times of the Young Women who Founded St Mary's College 1850-1860*, St Mary's College, 2010

Mary de Porres Flannigan RSM, *Like a Mustard Seed: The History of the Sisters of Mercy Wellington*, Sisters of Mercy NZ, 2009

Mary de Porres Flannigan RSM, *No Half Measures*, Sisters of Mercy Wellington, 2004

The Sisters' headstone at Mount Street



The order of the Sisters of Mercy was founded by Catherine McAuley in Ireland in 1831 'to bring mercy and hope to the poverty stricken, sick and abandoned'

FRIENDS OF MOUNT STREET CEMETERY

The *Friends of Mount Street Cemetery* was established in 2010 to preserve, protect and enhance the heritage of the Mount Street Cemetery for the benefit of all. Consecrated in 1841 by Bishop Pompallier, the Mount Street Cemetery was the first Cemetery in Wellington for Catholic burials, and contains the graves of about 1000 Wellington pioneer settlers and tangata whenua.

You can become a 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 ongoing 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 ongoing 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: mountstreetcemetery@wn.catholic.org.nz

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I would like to become a member/renew my membership of the *Friends of Mount Street Cemetery*.

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

Please indicate the type of membership for the year 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013:

Individual	\$15
Family	\$20
Religious Order	\$40
Corporate	\$100
Donation	\$ _____ (Donations of \$5 and over are tax deductible)
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 [Westpac]

(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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