

1918 INFLUENZA PROJECT KARORI CEMETERY

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2017



**2017 Regional
Community
Awards**
Wellington City
Finalist

"The Great Death in Paradise: the 1918 Influenza pandemic in Fiji, Tonga, and the Samoas."

I am delighted to advise that Dr Ryan McLane has agreed to make a presentation outlining the spread of influenza in the Pacific.

Dr McLane first became interested in the 1918 influenza epidemic when he was a public health nurse in Alaska. His role led to his involvement in research into local communities which were decimated by the disease. He has since pursued this interest by completing a PhD at Otago, and he is assisting with pandemic planning for the Ministry of Health in Wellington. Dr McLane's expertise and passion for the subject means his talk will be fascinating, and he will explain to us some of the wider ramifications of the spread of the disease.

Make sure you note the date in your diary
When: Sunday 29 October, 2.00pm-4.00pm.

Where: Community Room, Karori Recreation Centre (behind the Library)

Entry: Free, cuppa and biscuits included

Working Bee Dates Nov 2017-May 2018

The second season of working bees starts in November, and will continue throughout summer months until May 2018. The focus of the work will be in "Gum Gully" – the Public section of the cemetery where more than 200 people were buried during the epidemic. Let's hope the almost incessant rain of the last few months will have ceased and it will be dryer underfoot than is currently the case. The area is terribly overgrown and neglected and we will have to be very organised about dividing the area into workable units to make sure we can improve access and visibility.

Working bees are from **2.00pm – 4.00pm** on **Sundays**, as per the following schedule:

November	12
December	10
January	28
February	25
March	25
April	29
May	27

PRESENTATION 13 AUGUST 2017

On Sunday 13 August Jenny, Max, Beverley and I presented the results of the research they have been doing on some of those who died during the epidemic and were buried at Karori. Jenny and Beverley talked about the family combinations they had researched – the CLAYDENS (mother and son), the QUNLIVANS (adult brothers), Percival AUSTIN and his infant son, Rosa Jane JOHNS, Ted and Nellie CARRIG (brother and sister), William and Mabel WEAVER (husband and wife), and Albert and Nellie WHELDON (husband and wife) and Nellie’s sister Kathleen REYLING. Beverley also outlined the complex issues arising from names being misspelt, as in the case of Mabel BOWN (registered as Brown).

Max summarised the challenges he faced researching the stories of four men from the Indian sub-continent who were living in the poorest streets of Te Aro and their likely route to New Zealand.

On behalf of John Boyd, who had found much information about several mariners, I spoke about two who were far from home when they died. Arthur HOWELL was from Pembroke in Wales, and Malo GOURIO was from Brittany in France. I also outlined the work John had done on John DREWETTE, Captain of the SS Monowai, who was one of the first to die of influenza in Wellington.

Many of these stories have now been uploaded to the project website (details below) so if you weren’t able to attend the presentation you can still read all about them.

PROJECT WEBSITE AND BLOG

A website has been developed to be the repository of information about the epidemic and the stories of those who died in Wellington and were buried in Karori Cemetery. Many of the stories highlighted at the presentation in August

have been uploaded, and more will be available during the next few weeks, so do keep an eye on it. The website can be found at

www.1918influenzakarori.weebly.com.

The blog set up initially is still available also and currently contains photographs and information about more of the people whose plots have been cleaned, especially in the Anglican section. The address for the blog is

<https://1918flu.wordpress.com/>

BLACK INFLUENZA

A new publication by Professor Geoffrey Rice will be available shortly. Apparently it is called “Black Influenza” and Unity Books advise it will be selling for \$30 per copy.

KIM HILL INTERVIEW

In July Kim Hill interviewed Laura Spinney, author of PALE RIDER: THE SPANISH FLU OF 1918 AND HOW IT CHANGED THE WORLD. Laura, who lives in Paris and has been in touch since our project began, was able to talk about our project during the interview. If you didn’t hear it at the time, the interview is still available on <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/saturday/audio/201852031/laura-spinney-pale-rider>

RIP

My brother Ron died on 29 August following a major heart attack. We gave him a great send off, sharing lots of laughter and happy memories. His quietly supportive presence at our working bees and public talks will be missed.

Condolences also to Beverley Hamlin, whose mother also died in August.

Barbara Mulligan
Project Coordinator
24 September 2017