

# 1918 INFLUENZA PROJECT KARORI CEMETERY

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017



**2017 Regional  
Community  
Awards**  
Wellington City  
Finalist

## **NEXT WORKING BEE SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER, GUM GULLY**

### **WORKING BEE DATES DEC 2017-MAY 2018**

The second season of working bees is underway and continues throughout the summer months, until May 2018. The focus of the work is in “Gum Gully” – the Public section of the cemetery where more than 200 people were buried during the epidemic. The area has dried out, and although terribly overgrown and neglected, access to plots for the November working bee was greatly enhanced by the cleaning of the walkways done a few days prior by a group from Datacom. The next working bee will have to get stuck into more clearing of graves which have been invaded by shrubs and small trees, but revealing and then cleaning previously obscured headstones and plaques is proving to be both interesting and rewarding.

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

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

### **PROJECT WEBSITE**

Stories are being progressively uploaded to the website, which has had a bit of a makeover to reduce the number of mouse clicks needed to find any story. The main page for following links to stories is “Remembering”. All names are now listed on the website – those in the areas where we are working (435 names); those in pre-existing family plots elsewhere (112 names); and soldiers in the Services area (100 names).

Project newsletters and information about working bees are also on the website (including “what to bring” advice for working bee participants).

[www.1918influenzakarori.weebly.com](http://www.1918influenzakarori.weebly.com)

## HERITAGE WEEK 23-29 October

Karori Cemetery Tour was one of the providers during this successful week of activities throughout Heritage Week, and on Labour Day afternoon (23 October) 45 people turned up to take a (free) walking tour focussed on the 1918 Influenza Project. Gathering at the Lychgate in the Services section we first looked at the rows of headstones for men who died during the epidemic. There are 109 headstones for men who died during November and December 1918, and of 100 of them died as a result of influenza, most of them while at the Trentham Training Unit.

We then moved on to the Catholic section, and finally traversed – with great caution – the area in Gum Gully which is currently being worked in.

This was an interesting exercise – being featured during Heritage Week raised the profile of and interest in the project, and there were some interesting aspects to guiding a large group *en masse* through some of the cemetery terrain. The experience will help with planning for tours in November/December 2018 when we observe the centenary of the epidemic.

## ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Contact has recently been made with a PhD student, Hannah Mawdsley, from Queen Mary University, a public research university in London, who has been in New Zealand on a research/study tour. Her PhD subject is the 1918 influenza epidemic and is based on a collection of letters from all round the world recording people's experiences and memories of the epidemic. These were sent to a researcher in the 1970's, and are held in the Imperial War Museum (IWM), London. Hannah is reviewing our lists of names to ascertain whether any of the letters at the IWM are from family or others associated with people buried in Karori Cemetery.

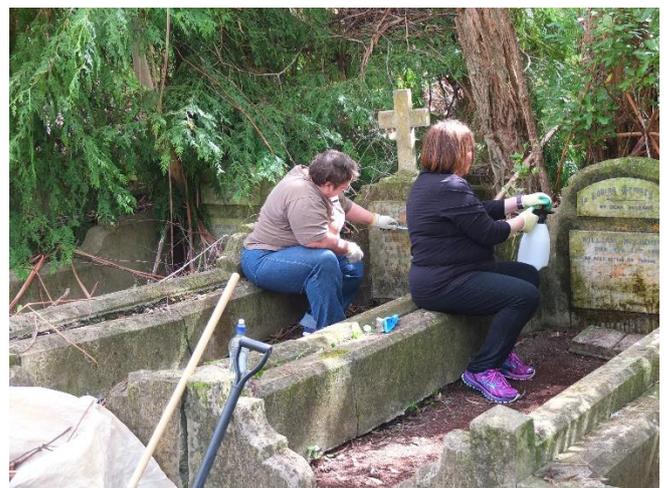
Unfortunately, we didn't manage to connect in person but will continue dialogue electronically.

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

Those of us able to attend the talk by Dr Ryan McLane at the end of October were so fixed on the content of his presentation that no photos were taken. He covered many of the medical aspects of epidemics and why they occur, traversed some medical aspects of the 1918 epidemic which still mystify experts today, and briefly outlined the circumstances of the transmission of influenza to Fiji, Tonga, and then, devastatingly, to Samoa.

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. Dr McLane's expertise and passion came across and he held us all spellbound for more than an hour. Thank you very much Ryan.

Barbara Mulligan  
Project Coordinator  
4 December 2017



WORKING BEE NOVEMBER  
2017

