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EVENTS

Sunday 26 Jan 2025 – 1913 Strike ('Sites of Struggle') history walk

Sunday 23 February – Robert Orr historic house & garden visit and afternoon tea

Upcoming Events

I have moved our upcoming events to the front of this newsletter due to the short notice –

1. Sunday 26 January 2025 (afternoon) – “Sites of Struggle” – the 1913 strike, a history walk



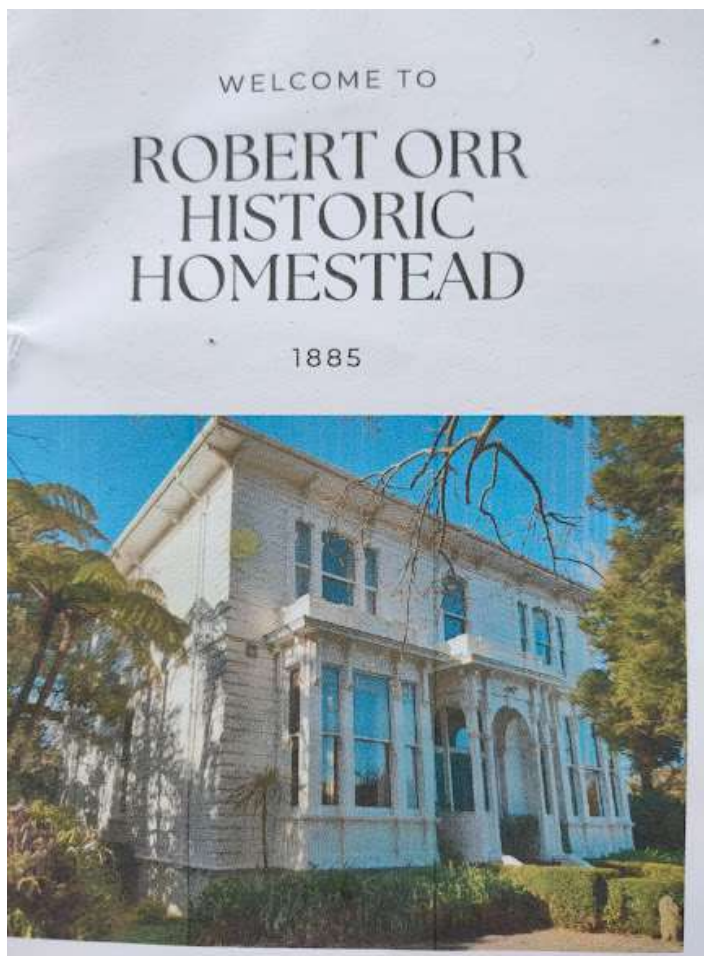
RSVP to Vivienne at
wgtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz
(maximum 16 people). Rain day (if particularly wet) will be Sunday 2 February. There are still a few places left.

The “Great Strike” of 1913 was the largest and most disruptive in New Zealand’s history, involving around 14,000 workers, massive demonstrations and a wave of violence. The real issue at stake was an

industrial power struggle. Wellington was the scene of the most violent events. Although the strikers were defeated, many of the leaders went on to political action and founded the Labour Party in 1916.

Committee member Vivienne Morrell will lead this walk. The walk is based on a brochure written in 2013 by the Labour History Project. But I have adapted it, and supplemented it with my own research. We will start at Pukeahu War Memorial Park (former Buckle St) and end at Post Office Square. It should take about 1.5 to 2 hours. Coffee at a nearby café after for anyone who has time. Image: “Featherston St battle” - detail from Auckland Libraries, Ref: 7-A10659.

2. Sunday 23 February 2pm visit to Robert Orr House, Lower Hutt – with afternoon tea



Robert Orr House in Lower Hutt is a real historical gem; the continuous home of six generations of the Orr family. The house retains its original features and furniture and is an absolute delight to visit.

The house has not generally been open to the public, but following a highly popular opening during the recent heritage festival, the owner agreed to our members visit. It's a very special heritage house so don't miss the opportunity.

Our visit to the house and gardens will be followed by afternoon tea. Cost for entry and afternoon tea is \$40. (An optional extra \$5 can be paid at the house to have a glass of bubbles).

RSVP to Vivienne at wqtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz (maximum 25 people) **by 7 Feb.**

When I have confirmed your place, I will provide our bank account details for you to pay \$40 into. Please note that once we give the house final numbers for catering purposes, we can't offer you a refund if you can't make it. Payments to be made by 13th Feb.



Car parking is on the street or nearby streets. Or it is approx. a 15 minute walk from Epuni Railway Station (Hutt Valley line).

<https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/1326/Listing>

Historic flying boat jetty restored

Last December, heritage enthusiasts together with Wellington City Council, contractors, and mana whenua, celebrated the reopening of the flying boat jetty following a significant restoration project. Located adjacent to Cog Park, the jetty is now safe again for recreational purposes as well as preserving a piece of aviation history.



The project benefitted greatly from support from two of our members, Brian and Sally Hasell, who contributed a significant amount towards the renewal of the jetty, interpretative signage and landscaping work.

“This has been a wonderful project to be involved in, with Wellington City Council and contractors,” says

Brian Hasell, a retired engineer. “Sally and I are both so pleased with the outcome of this work, as part of the coastal wharves upgrade in our city.” Sally adds that the arrival of flying boats in Wellington in 1950 and in Auckland, was a major contribution to reducing New Zealand’s isolation. “We wanted to save that piece of important history.”



The Solent flying boats left Evans Bay and landed in Rose Bay Sydney, over 5 hours later. This service only operated for about five years in the early 1950s and ceased when TEAL acquired new aircraft to cover the trans-Tasman and Pacific run.

Joel de Boer, Wellington City Council’s Project Manager said the Flying Boat Jetty is the latest maritime heritage project to be completed

across the coastal wharves. “It is important to preserve the history of Pōneke so future generations can also appreciate it. The upgrade of these coastal structures also makes a valuable contribution to retaining the character of the city, making it more resilient and to provide an economic benefit through tourism and business interest.”

We encourage you to take a walk – on a fine day! – around Cog Park to Greta Point and look at the various signs along the way. This area is an important part of Wellington’s maritime heritage with the patent slip further along the coast. The Frigate Wellington F69 propeller has also been incorporated into the landscaping. The propeller comes from the frigate scuttled off the south coast of Wellington in 2005 to create an artificial reef. The other two propellers from this frigate are in Houghton Bay and Waitangi Park.



Images: Brian and Sally Hasell with project manager Joel's father who flew in on a flying boat in the 1950s. Historic photo: Evans Bay flying boat base, Leslie Adkin photographer; 16 April 1954, Te Papa: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/131276> Jetty with swimmers and sign, by Vivienne Morrell. Dawn blessing by Mana Whenua representatives, photo by Felicity Wong.

Demolitions Happening and Proposed – Felicity Wong

HPW was astounded to hear Wellington City Council (WCC) is considering demolition of the **Begonia House** at the Botanic Garden given it's not earthquake prone, but in need of maintenance. The Friends of the Botanic Garden have launched a fighting fund campaign to retain the tropical plant house which so many Wellingtonians and visitors alike enjoy. There are always children absorbed by its tropical fish pond and weird plants, and elderly resting in its beautiful, warm, humid atmosphere. It's a much loved, free to visit, quiet and restorative place for everyone to experience, amongst really interesting exotic plant life.

The Begonia House is one of the buildings included in the WCC's Botanic Gardens Heritage area: <https://www.wellingtoncityheritage.org.nz/areas/5-botanic-gardens>

Go to the [Friend's Facebook page](#) to keep up to date and see how you can help.

City to Sea bridge: Days before Christmas a High Court judge ordered WCC not to demolish the City to Sea bridge until the court case being brought by [Civic Trust](#) can be heard (scheduled for April). The bridge is not earthquake prone and is not required to be strengthened [according to the experts](#). It seems WCC want it gone so the way is cleared for new nearby commercial buildings.



Civic Square. 1970. WCC Photo from Old Wellington.

WCC is committed to a very large new commercial building on the site, they refused to

It was disheartening to learn recently that quality developer Willis Bond had asked WCC to base isolate and strengthen the **Municipal Office Building** in Civic Square. Because

consider the greener option of retention and refurbishment, and have begun demolition of MOB. All that embodied carbon is being wasted from what was once an imposing civic office block, and an important part of Wellington's civic history.

HPW unsuccessfully objected to the removal of the heritage status previously covering all the buildings of Civic Square, sought by WCC in the new district plan. WCC take the view it's spent too much on the library and Town Hall already and it wants to offset costs by privatising other parts of the formerly non-commercial space. We fear the result will be a tremendous loss of sunlight and a reduction in the open space of Te Ngakau/Civic Square.

Restoration of Turnbull House one step further



Construction on Turnbull House, a key part of Wellington's architectural and cultural heritage, is officially set to begin. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, leading the Turnbull House Project, has awarded the construction contract to Naylor Love.

The multi-year project aims at strengthening, preserving, and revitalising Turnbull House for future generations.

Turnbull House is a [Category 1 historic place](#) on the New Zealand Heritage List Rāangi Kōrero,

recognising an outstanding level of architectural and social significance to the nation.

Built in 1915–1916 as a residence and library for Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull (1868–1918), one of New Zealand's most renowned collectors and bibliophiles, Turnbull House blends Scottish baronial, Queen Anne, and medieval architectural styles. (Source: Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga newsletter).

Petone Wharf



The Hutt City Council has now appointed structural engineer, Adam Thornton, as the external 'appropriately qualified independent Project Lead' to investigate options for Petone Wharf, provide advice to the Council, and have a continuing involvement in the work as it proceeds. Adam has a long track record of successful involvement in

wharf projects in the region.

The scope of work includes a requirement that remedial work must stay within the \$12M budget (including any further commissioned advice). Consultation with Save Petone Wharf

and the Petone Community Board prior to completing the report is also required. The order of priority which the Council's scope sets out is (1) remediation of the whole existing wharf, (2) remediation of a reduced-length wharf, and (3) demolition. Whatever is retained of the wharf, which we hope will be its retention in full, has to have a 50-year target design life, with no major maintenance requirements for the first 25 years.

(Source: Petone Historical Society Summer Chronicle 2024/5. If you would like to join PHS, please email: petonehistories2@gmail.com)

Past Events

8 December 2024, 2pm: Visit to Massey House, 126 Lambton Quay

Andrew Stewart of the legal firm of JB Morrison gave members a tour of the common areas and floors occupied by JB Morrison, which celebrated its 100th year in Wellington by moving into the top three floors of Massey House in June 2024 (including the original rooftop terrace).

Massey House was the first (partially) curtain-walled building in New Zealand. It was an early and influential example of International Modernism here. Completed in 1957, it reflects key concepts of that architectural approach; including functional design, a lack of adornment, and the use of technologically advanced construction materials and techniques.

Massey House was built for the Meat and Dairy Boards, who were deliberately looking to create a modern statement. Plischke and Firth were hired to create a modern building of high-quality concrete construction. Massey House quickly influenced other Wellington buildings, such as Shell House, Wool House and Manchester House.

A 1967 extension to the building angles to follow the curve of Lambton Quay. The building is actually shaped as a 'C' around an internal light-well on the North side of the building, although this is now hidden from view by the neighbouring building.¹ (Image from National Library², 1957 nearing completion. The internal lightwell can be seen).



The building has been repainted in its original heritage colours (including the cobalt blue free-form lift house).

Our chair Felicity Wong wrote an [article](#) about it for Scoop (click the link to read). You can also read more on the [Past events](#) page of our website.

¹ Laura Jamieson, 2018: <https://discover.stqry.app/en/story/16206>

² <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22726015>