

NEWSLETTER

No. 56. May 2026

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EVENTS

30 May – Elizabeth Cox talk on Mr Ward's Map book

28 June – Terrace villas walk and visit (details TBC)

16 Aug – our AGM and speaker Redmer Yska

Wellington region's fourth Blue Plaque – Sanderson House, Paekākāriki

Recently, on a sunny day, Felicity Wong and Sally Hasell (HPW committee) helped unveil the fourth blue plaque in Wellington – on the Sanderson Cottage grounds, Paekākāriki. About 25 people attended. It was organised by Dave and the Paekākāriki Museum folks.

(Photo: Felicity Wong)



The house was built in the early 1930s for Captain Eugene Valentine Sanderson (1866-1945) – known as Val, he served in the Boer War, and for a short time in WW1 by understating his age.¹ In the early 1920s he was concerned that nothing was being done to protect flora and fauna on Kapiti Island, and he formed the Native Bird Protection Society, which became Forest and Bird Protection Society in 1935.

Not much is currently known about who designed and built the house, but it has a sturdy arts and crafts appearance, somewhat reminiscent of the Truby King House

¹ <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4s4/sanderson-ernest-valentine>

in Melrose, but on a smaller scale. It has a stone chimney and a gable roof with deep eaves extending over the entrance porch.



The blue plaque was made in 2023 for the 100th year celebration of Forest & Bird, but the cottage was sold and now a sympathetic and generous new owner lives in it and cares for it – a happy ending indeed.

The other three blue plaques are at Randall Cottage, St Peter's Church and Ngaio Town Hall.

(Photo: Vivienne Morrell)

Adaptive Reuse Seminar: Friday May 15 & Saturday 16

This symposium, run by the Architecture Centre, responds to Rachel MacIntyre's essay [The Architect as repairer: the retrofit imperative](#). Focusing on her suggestion that "a cultural shift among architects" is required, "embracing imperfection, revealing the junctions between old and new, and

prioritising reused or low-impact materials."

Our symposium asks: When does adaptive reuse produce better architecture than new building? Countering assumptions that 'mending' buildings is just making-do with what we already have, and that retrofit is merely a concession to energy, carbon &/or economic austerity.

There are many 'adaptive reuse' buildings in Wellington – The Bond Store that we featured in our last newsletter and the Terrace Villas serviced apartments – see 'upcoming events' – being two examples.

For further details about the symposium and bookings (koha) go to:

<https://architecture.org.nz/2026/04/18/adaptive-reuse>



Local History: Finnimore House

A couple of months ago, I was walking in Vogeltown and saw a large house from across the valley. I was intrigued, as I had no knowledge of it. I asked architectural historian Geoff Mew if he knew about it. He was obviously intrigued too – and with long-time collaborator and city archivist, Adrian Humphris, did some research and wrote the following: (Photo: Vivienne Morrell)

THE ORIGIN OF 2 DRANSFIELD STREET, VOGELTOWN, WELLINGTON. (KNOWN AS FINNIMORE HOUSE). **Geoff Mew & Adrian**

Humphris, March 2026.

2 Dransfield Street is an Italianate two-storey timber bay villa with a corrugated iron roof situated on a ridge in the suburb of Vogeltown. Currently a bed and breakfast, the house tends to attract attention because of its design (unusual in this area) and apparent age. According to its website (Finnimore bed & breakfast) it is believed to have been designed by William Clayton for Julius Vogel, Premier of New Zealand from 1873 to 1876.

ORIGINS OF VOGELTOWN

Prior to 1877 the area now known as Vogeltown was part of Goathurst Farm, owned by J F E Wright. The farm was in Melrose Borough and sat between Newtown, Mornington, and Brooklyn, partially bounded by the Town Belt. In 1876 it was suggested the area should be named Vogelville, (*Saturday Advertiser* 8 July 1876 p.11) but this was soon changed to Vogeltown, a compliment to the then Premier, Julius Vogel.

In August 1876 tenders were being called to form the 'Hutchison Road to Vogeltown', which would run between John Street and 'the projected township of Vogel' (*New Zealand Times* 24 August 1876 p.8), and the first sale of sections in the township was held on the 15 February 1877 (reported in the *Evening Post* of the 16th p.3). The average price paid was about £15 per quarter acre section. Further advertisements of sales followed over the next few months, with prices gradually rising to about £35. The advertisements suggested that, after an initial sale of more than 100 sections, remaining sections were in short supply, but demand was clearly falling and it is not clear how truthful the claims actually were. Many people appear to have bought sections for speculative purposes rather with the intention of building and living in the area.

LAND PURCHASES BY JOSEPH MCGIFFERT CLELAND

Joseph Cleland was a private land agent and investor who lived much of his life in Tinakori Road, Thorndon with his wife and family. The certificate of title in his name for property in the Vogeltown area (CT 3/243) indicates that he owned 12 lots there in June 1877, but by 1894 these had been reduced to four, Sections 291 to 294 (Lots 291-294 DP 52). The house at 2 Dransfield Street is located on Lot 293.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSE ON LOT 293 DP 52

The earliest Melrose Borough rate book held by Wellington City Archives is from 1892. It records Joseph Cleland paying rates on a number of Vogeltown properties (Lots 262, 263, 272, 283-286, 291-294 in Vogeltown and Lot 149 in Brooklyn; all on Deposited Plan 52), with a combined annual rateable value of £1250. Comparing the value to other properties suggests there was a building on Cleland's property in 1892.²

The presence of a house on Lot 293 can be confirmed from the earlier date of 15 May 1889 (*New Zealand Times* p.3) when Cleland and others petitioned for a reduction in rates; Cleland got a reduction from £1400 on a house and 3 acres to £1200. Another landowner with one section got a reduction of £5 on a £50 bill.

A chance find using PapersPast links the house to the location of 2 Dransfield Street. Advertising to drive more property sales in the area (*Evening Post* 22 October 1877 p.4) inserted by J F E Wright refers to the "large and handsome private residence of "J S M'Clelland (sic), situated in Evelyn Terrace and Dransfield Street." Evelyn Terrace is now Finnimore Terrace, the reference suggesting the house was located on the corner of the two. It suggests the house was built c. 1877.

THE ARCHITECT

Only a single architect has been found calling for tenders to build houses in Vogeltown between 1877 to 1900. This was Charles Tringham, a well-known Wellington practitioner. The first tender notice was in the *New Zealand Times* of 6 April 1877 (p.3) and the second in the *Evening Post* of 17 September 1880 (p.3). The first refers specifically to a residence for J M Cleland Esq. in Vogeltown. The second, three years later, just refers to a gentleman's residence in the same township. While

² Rates were levied on the annual value; a property's estimated annual rental income rather than its capital value. Whether there was a building was not separated out or recorded. This means it is not possible to confirm a dwelling existed, but comparing the rateable value and section sizes between properties can infer the existence of a building.

the first is a positive identification for the designer of 2 Dransfield Street, the location of the second house has yet to be found.

Charles Tringham (1841 - 1916) was one of the top three nineteenth century architects in Wellington with over 330 designs to his credit (Mew & Humphris 2016). Almost two-thirds of his commissions were for houses, including Westoe near Marton for Sir William Fox and Oroua Wharo in southern Hawkes Bay. Many of his houses were in the Italianate style. Three Tringham designs:



Westoe

List No. 156 | Historic Place Category 1

Kakariki Road, Westoe Farm,
KAKARIKI



Queen Margaret College Tower Building

List No. 1419 | Historic Place Category 2



Orouawharo

List No. 1048 | Historic Place Category 1

379 Orouawhara Road, TAKAPAU

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

Joseph Cleland attempted to sell or rent the house several times during 1882, firstly in August and again in November. An advertisement in November (*Evening Post* 3 November 1882 p.3) describes it as being nearly new, having 11 rooms and coming with three acres of land. His contact address for the sale was Tinakori Road. The house did not sell as it was still in his possession when he died in 1901. According to the certificate of title ownership passed to his trustees, his widow Annie Cleland and James Samuel Jameson on 13 May 1902, but by early October of the same year it was in the ownership of one James O'Sullivan. A large number of owners followed and were documented in a conservation plan prepared as a student exercise by Kirsty McPeake of Victoria University, a copy of which is held by Wellington City Archives (00736-59).

Local History: Ōtaki Family Hotel – Christina Mackay



Photo: Christina Mackay

The Family Hotel is longstanding in Main Street, Ōtaki but its life story is not so well known. At the March AGM of the Friends of Ōtaki Rotunda, Christina Mackay (HPW committee member and

Adjunct Research Fellow, Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University) shared 2008 research into how over a century of changing licensing legislation determined every alteration and addition. Today, the building fabric tells the story.



Detail of a postcard of Main Street Otaki showing Family Hotel on right (c1883) Photography Otaki Historical Collection

The family friendly 'fine establishment', was built by Fredrick and MaryAnn Bright in 1882. An 1883 postcard shows the corner entrance to a small standing room only 'tap room', where beer was dispensed to the public. More genteel clients and families used the adjacent main entrance. Ōtaki did not vote for prohibition, but 6 o'clock closing banned barmaids and the public bar was enlarged and positioned to conceal the 'swill' from public view. In the 1960s, company ownership permitted NZ Breweries Ltd to create a furnished lounge bar to woo woman back to drink to 10 o'clock.

Today, visitors are welcomed to enjoy this lively 144-year-old hotel and its foods and beverages. Its age and story are worth celebrating. Perhaps a 150th street party?

*

Upcoming Events

Saturday 30 May, 2pm "The Fashionable Street: The Terrace in the 1890s" – Elizabeth Cox

Venue: St Peter's Church Garden Room, 211 Willis St (access to the Garden Room is off Ghuznee St). **Refreshments** will follow. **Copies** of the book will be available to purchase.



Elizabeth Cox's book *Mr Ward's Map: Victorian Wellington Street by Street*, which uses the 1891 Thomas Ward map of Wellington to trace the form of the city and its social history in the 1890s, has opened many fascinating conversations about heritage in Wellington. It has been shortlisted for the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards.

In this talk, Elizabeth will talk about the process of writing the book, what the map has to tell us about Wellington, and in particular about what the map shows us about some of the large houses on the Terrace in the 1890s, including Mr Ward's own house.

The venue, St Peter's, Willis Street, is a very appropriate place to hold the event as St Peter's is of course drawn on the map, and its parish and community had a very important part to play in the city of the 1890s.



This image shows St Peter's Church from the garden of one of the large houses on The Terrace – Fern Hill (shown in *Mr Ward's Map*, p. 215). C. 1895.

(Turnbull Library.
[/records/23074078](#))

RSVPs to Vivienne:

wqtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz



Sunday 28 June, afternoon (details to be confirmed) – visit and walk around some of the large villas on The Terrace. This will include some [Terrace Villas](#) - five separate heritage houses located on The Terrace that have been serviced apartments for many years. Elizabeth's talk on 30 May will give us some good background for this event.

I am taking expressions of interest at this stage, and will give further details closer to the time. Please email Vivienne at:

wqtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz

Sunday 16 August, 2pm: We will hold our AGM in St Peter's Church Garden Room, followed by speaker Redmer Yska on a topic relating to Alexander Turnbull. Further details will be in our August newsletter.

Other events:



2 May – 10 May 2026

Wellington Events

There are some interesting talks, and a walk, for Archaeology Week. Please click the links for further details -

[“All seems so lovely because all is home” – The Archaeology of Home with Mary O’Keeffe.](#)

3 May 2026 @ 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

[“Mapping Wellington: Mr Ward and the Other Chaps”](#)

4 May 2026 @ 5:30 pm

[Short and Sharp Archaeology!](#)

5 May 2026 @ 5:00 pm

[The Archaeology of Turnbull House](#)

8 May 2026 @ 5:00 pm

[Walking Tour of Ngati Toa Domain](#)

9 May 2026 @ 10:30 am

Tuesday 19 May, 5:30pm (at National Library or online): *Looking backward and forward: Turnbull House enters its second century*, Jamie Jacobs from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga will give a talk to Friends of Turnbull Library. Visitors welcome. More information here: <https://natlib.govt.nz/events/looking-backward-and-forward-may-19-2026>

Past Events

Sunday 22 March 2026: Felicity Wong & Vivienne Morrell led about 18 members on a walk **on the theme of “Stories and remnants of old Te Aro”**. We covered a few blocks between Cambridge Terrace and Taranaki Street that were once crowded with small cottages mixed in with some factories like Bryant & May matches, and [Frosty Jack](#) makers of Eskimo Pie ice creams. The former Frosty Jack ice cream factory is still in Tennyson St; it is now apartments. (Click the link for some history and photos).

We began at the Queen Victoria statue (see article below) and finished at Moore Wilson’s – former site of Thompson Lewis soft drinks and the Dominion Hotel.



Interior Chinese Anglican Mission Church (former). Burns Upholsterers building c1878



Local History - Queen Victoria Statue, Kent & Cambridge Terrace – Nigel Isaacs

Queen Victoria died on 22 January 1901. The New Zealand response was an outpouring of grief, including an “immense assembly at Parliament House Grounds” on Saturday 2 February 1901. Wellington thoughts soon turned to an appropriate memorial with a “Queen’s Statue Fund” set up with a goal of raising £3,000. Two committees were established – the Women’s with Lady Stout as president, Miss Hustwick as initial secretary and mesdames Hogben; Fitzgerald, Findlay and Eden (*NZ Mail* 7 Feb 1901) and the Men’s chaired by the Mayor of Wellington (Mr. J. G. W., Aitken) with Rev. T. H. Sprott, Rev. H. V. Van Staveren; Messrs. A. R. Atkinson, J. Duncan, W. Booth. A. D. Riley, A. H. Miles and C. Collins (*Evening Post* 19 Jan 1903, (Ward 1929, 293)).

Although it was suggested that New Zealand had art schools and good colonial artists, by the end of 1901 the job had been given to the English sculptor, Mr Alfred Drury (1856-1944). Just two years after Victoria’s death, £1,766 had been raised with the statue to cost £1,800. On the statue’s base were to be four panels representing “New Zealand,” “Science and Invention,” “Fine Arts,” and the inscription (*Evening Post* 19 Jan 1903).

The statue was unveiled near Post Office Square on 22 April 1905 by the Governor, Lord Plunkett who commented that it “*proclaims to the anxious, weary immigrant, as he arrives upon your shores, that besides the better material prosperity he has been led to expect, he has come among a loyal-people, and is under the British Constitution, with the freedom which every British subject enjoys, and which is the envy of every foreign nation.*” The Mayor, Mr J. G. W. Aitken noted that this was the “*first monument erected in Wellington which belonged to the city.*” The statue was 10 ft (3 m) high on a 13ft 6in (4.1 m) pedestal. (*NZ Times* 1 May 1905).

The statue became the “*open-air pulpit of the Socialists, and, to a less extent of, Parliamentarians, evangelists, and others,*” but by 1910 it was considered to be “*an eyesore and an obstruction to traffic*” and the Council agreed for it to be moved. Options included Parliament grounds or in front of the Municipal Library in Victoria Street. (*Dominion*, 22 April 1910). But these were not to be, and it was moved to its current site.

The statue continued to be of public interest, notably in 1925 when it was varnished, obliterating its “*graceful lines of drapery and the features,*” giving it the “*appearance of a piece of cast iron*” (*Dominion* 1 Aug 1925). This coating was removed in 1934 for the visit of Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, while in 1947 the Council painted it gold to hide blemishes (*Dominion Post - 150 Years of News*, 2015). In June 2020 the statue, along with three others representing colonialism were blindfolded in a peaceful protest. Now in the 21st century it has been given a clean-up to continue in its role reminding Wellingtonians of their past history.

(Photo of statue when undergoing maintenance recently: Felicity Wong)