

NEWSLETTER No. 10 DECEMBER 2023

KUMEU ANGLICAN CEMETERY HISTORICAL SUMMARY

While the original section for the Kumeu Cemetery was formally donated in 1884 by Thomas Weare to the Church of England trustees (the Bishop of Auckland the Right Reverend William Garden Cowie, Reverend Robert Burrows, Henry Brett, James Dacre, James Dilworth, John Dickenson Jackson, Theophilus Kissling, George Patrick Pierce, and John Henry Upton), it had been in use for at least two years prior to the date of the deed.

In June 1882, John Bowes was found dead at a gumdiggers' camp near Kumeu. The English-born military veteran who, as the subsequent inquest conclusion puts it, "died from natural causes,"



was "deposited in the burial ground, Kumeu, with due respect," but without a marker.

The cemetery's site is part of the 12,868 acre Maori-owned Taupaki Block, which entered the deeds system on 7 February 1867 as "a parcel of land at Waitakere in the district of Kaipara ... called or known by the name of Taupaki ... certified to Paora Tuhaere, Te Keene Tangaroa, Te Wiremu Reweti Te Whenua, and Watarauki Tawhia."

The following month, on 8 March 1867, half of the block was put up for auction by Samuel Cochrane; the *NZ Herald* in August that year described the land that had been sold as being in "a very forward state of settlement" with "houses dotted here and there, and fencing and ploughing carried on with such rapidity that its late owners are quite bewildered at the transformation; and

what was lately in its natural state, grazing only a few head of cattle for the favoured few, will become the home of many a happy family." The remainder of the first part of the Taupaki Block was offered for sale in 1870.

Lot 9 of the first sale was purchased in February 1868 by Charles Thaxter for £173. He sold the property four years later in 1872 to Thomas Weare for £175, and it was Weare who donated a small part of his land to the Auckland Anglican representatives of the Church of England. The stated pose was "upon trust as a site for a Church for the celebration of divine service according to the rites of the church of the Province of New Zealand commonly called the Church of England and as a Cemetery for the burial of the dead." A right of way was also granted over part of Weare's land to serve as an access to the site.

Aside from John Bowes in 1882, another early burial was that of a bushman and gumdigger named David Powers, who was found drowned in the upper Waitemata Harbour off Riverhead in August 1883. Like Bowes, Power's grave is unmarked, and it isn't clear where the two graves are in relation to the two known burial sites on the property.

The settlement around Kumeu had advanced considerably with the construction of the railway line through to Helensville from the late 1870s to 1881, so provision of a cemetery, along with other facilities such as a school and stores near the Kumeu Hotel, renamed the White Horse Hotel, was seen as a necessity. Access to the cemetery was improved from the mid 1890s by work undertaken by the Waitemata County Council, and in November 1917, when a succeeding owner to Weare, Thomas Bell, transferred the right of way between the cemetery and the public road to the Anglican Diocese in 1917. This brought the total area up to two and three-quarter acres.

The increase in area came at a time when the cemetery had 150 burials, but was also "overgrown with fern and Manuka ... the tall slender pine trees surrounding the two-and-a-half acres by no means added anything to the beauty of this sacred spot." Local residents were asked by a Mr Boucher, agent for the Helensville diocese, to step up and help beautify the grounds, which was done. To ensure that the cemetery was properly managed, the Kumeu Cemetery Board was brought into existence in 1924.

There are a number of graves at the cemetery for returned servicemen, but one is under the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, that of Leading Aircraftman William Newton Ford, born at Kaukapakapa in 1884, who joined the RNZAF in 1942 and died from natural causes at Whenuapai 1 March 1944.

Between 1966 and 2003 there were some slight boundary readjustments between the cemetery's site and the adjoining property on Farrand Road, ultimately narrowing the cemetery's Farrand Road frontage somewhat to accommodate a right of way access to part of the neighbouring subdivision.

By 2006, the Rodney District Council saw that the cemetery would soon reach full capacity, so they moved to purchase land on Station Road to become the new cemetery for the area. This was because land adjoining the old cemetery was said to have been unavailable, and had been set aside due to Treaty of Waitangi claims. However, nothing further was done to form a cemetery at the new site. In 2009, local families apposed the solution, preferring that the existing cemetery be enlarged by purchasing adjacent land from private owners. The owner of the 6.4 ha adjoining property, the Casey family, said then that they were willing to sell land for cemetery purposes. Rodney District Council said that 2.8ha of this extra land could be used as part of the cemetery, extending its life and serving the Huapai, Kumeu and Taupaki areas for another 50 years, while the remainder could become a community facility and be used as a chapel for funeral services.

But the District Council felt that the new site on Station Road would better serve as a cemetery, and sought public submissions in September 2009.

By 2012, still nothing had been done, and by then, the old cemetery was said to have had space for only another 100 burial plots. The Kumeu Cemetery Board urged Auckland Council to buy adjoining land to add to the cemetery, but the issue remained that the cemetery belonged to and was administered by the Anglican authorities, and wasn't a Council-owned site. A spokesman for the Council did say that they were undertaking a study of the capacity of Council-owned cemeteries across the city, and would discuss issues with those organisations administering private cemeteries at a later date.

The cemetery was still accepting burials as at December 2021, and there has been no progress with regard to expanding the site.

PHILIP PARKER, NOV. 2023

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THE KUMEU ROTARY CHRISTMAS PARADE 2023

NorWest Heritage Society was well represented with individuals on the Committee bringing their own classic and vintage vehicles. With Huge crowds, the Parade was a very BIG success!



We provided two 1960s tractors.





1951 Jowett Jupiter
Owner: Bunty Condon

1930 Baby Austin 7 RG
Owner: Don Blyth



YOUR HISTORIC PHOTOS

Do you have any historic photos, with some description?
Or a memory or story from the early years in these districts?
Or would you like to share and learn more about the history of the area?
If so, we would love to hear from you.
Please contact the Secretary: 027 440 0044 or info@norwestheritage.org.nz



MERRY CHRISTMAS to You ALL
And Very Best Wishes for 2024 !

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