



# MT VICTORIA

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## Historical Society News

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## *Eminent Victorians*



A guided walk of Victorian highlights of Mt Victoria

Join us for a tour of some of the highlights of Victorian architecture in the suburb of Mt Victoria. At the same time, you'll hear about the people and the social history connected with them and the links with wider Wellington history.

**Sunday March 13, 2.00 – 4.00 pm**  
**Starting at Crossways on Elizabeth Street**

(Postponement date: Sunday March 20)

For more information, contact Joanna Newman on 385 2254 or Richard Norman on 934 3279

Our Eminent Victorians Guided walk is part of the now well-known Stepping Out Programme promoted by WCC for the month of March. If you haven't got your brochure yet, make sure you pick one up and check out the wonderful walking opportunities.

And the 'eminent Victorian' pictured above is Elizabeth Woodman, after whom Elizabeth Street is named. Born Elizabeth Muir, her family owned a considerable amount of land in that area.

### **Programme for 2005**

On **Sunday, May 15** you can look forward to a talk by Bob McDougall on the value and uses of LINZ land registry and survey records in learning more about family histories. A former Lands & Survey staff member and an historian, Bob will give examples of what you can find once you have some knowledge of the system – the talk will have its serious genealogical aspects and some humorous moments as well.

### **News and Notes**

The Society had a stall at the Clyde Quay Fair at the end of last November to promote MVHS and Mt Vic heritage. Committee members and their families dressed up in historical costumes, Jim Harper cranked up his barrel organ to entertain the crowd and we welcome two new members as a consequence.

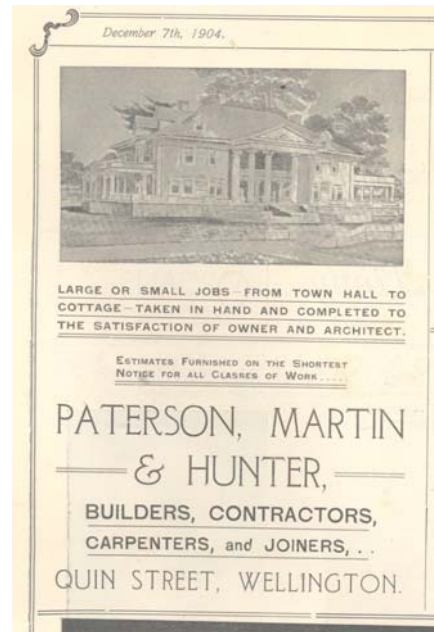
WCC is inviting submissions on the Built Heritage Strategy and your committee will be putting one in, supporting the overall direction but encouraging strengthening of heritage preservation measures and demonstration of real commitment.

## HISTORICAL NOTE

### Paterson and Martin, Builders



Above: (l-r) Paterson, Martin & Hunter on the Town Hall site, with the Clerk of Works  
Right: Advertisement for Paterson Martin & Hunter on opening day of the Town Hall.



John Paterson was a well-known builder in early Wellington, but of particular interest to us because of his strong association with Mt Victoria.

The pinnacle of Paterson's building career has to be winning the contract to build Wellington's Town Hall. On 2 February 1902, the Council let the contract for erection of the Town Hall and Municipal Office Buildings, in accordance with plans and specifications prepared by Joshua Charlesworth, to the firm of Paterson, Martin & Hunter. The Town Hall has just celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and is a monument to its builders as well as a source of pride to Wellingtonian's.

John Paterson was born in Aberdeen in 1860 and educated at the local school. He was apprenticed to a Mr Euenon of Turriff, in the north of Aberdeen. After serving his time, he went to London and improved his knowledge of the trade. He then went to New York and worked at his trade for two years, when he returned to his native land. After a short time, he came to New Zealand by the SS Doric, landing in Wellington in 1884. Here, he was employed by Messrs Barry and McDowall for five years and assisted in the erection of such buildings as the National Mutual Life Assurance Society's office, the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company's premises, and many others.<sup>1</sup>

In 1890, John Paterson was living in Elizabeth St with his wife Ellen and family. They had four sons, Frank, Walter, Jack and Harold, and one daughter, Dorothy Helen Paterson. Dorothy was born in their home in Elizabeth St in 1890. She later went to Clyde Quay School and was in the same class as "Tiny" Freyberg.<sup>2</sup>

When Paterson set sail for New Zealand he was accompanied by James Barry Martin (b. October 1859), also from Aberdeen. Martin started in the building trade apprenticed to Messrs Warwick and Daniel, large builders, of Aberdeen then went to London to work for 18 months. When he arrived in Wellington, he was employed by Messrs Barry and McDowall until he joined Paterson in business. By 1897, the two men had been in business as Paterson and Martin for just a short time. Their business was in Elizabeth Street, probably in premises they built for themselves in 1896.<sup>3</sup> They were described as coming into prominence relatively quickly "owing to the number of important building which have been erected by it". Among the most important buildings they had erected by 1897 were "the Convalescent Home, addition to the Home for the Aged and Needy, warehouses for Messrs W H Green and Co, Mr FC Brailsford, and for the Wellington Woollen Company." Both Paterson and Martin were members of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the Wellington Builders' Association. They were also both Oddfellows, belonging to the Antipodean Lodge. Paterson and Martin were 24 and 25 years old when they arrived Wellington and their lives seem to have run in tandem for so many years that one imagines they must have been close friends.

John Paterson built and lived in two houses in Mt Victoria which still stand. The first was a small, gabled two-storey house which you can still see if you look straight up to the top of McIntyre's Avenue off Hawker Street (No. 9 McIntyre's Ave). He lived here until 1897, when he built 71 Hawker Street (next to the monastery now) and moved there.<sup>4</sup>

The Paterson family returned to Scotland just after the Town Hall was built but, because of World War 1, couldn't come back to New Zealand until 1920. While he was in Scotland, in 1908 John built his parents (and himself) a grand, manor-like house called Wellington House in Turriff, which still stands.

Paterson's wife, Ellen, died in 1932 and he then remarried. He himself died in 1937.

<sup>1</sup> Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, Wellington 1897

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Mackie, grandson of John Paterson

<sup>3</sup> Wellington City Archives, cottage built by Paterson & Martin for themselves, Old City permit 1780

<sup>4</sup> Wellington City Archives 00053:37:2366