



# MT VICTORIA

## Historical Society News

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### No. 60, April 2012

#### World Heritage Day Saturday, April 21 - 12.30 pm at the Mt Victoria Lookout

Join us at 12.30pm on Saturday April 21 at the Mt Victoria lookout for a Victorian picnic to mark World Heritage Day.

We're celebrating the role of local communities in heritage by commemorating Mary Taylor's walk to the top of Mt Victoria in 1848, to look for a ship to take a letter to her friend Charlotte Bronte. If you don't already know the story, come and join us to hear about it – and bring a copy of *Jane Eyre* to read your favourite excerpt.

Come in your finest Victorian picnic garb, with rugs, tiffins and teapots, to picnic at top of Mt Victoria.

*[Cancelled in the event of bad weather]*



#### World Heritage Day

The International Day for Monuments and Sites (known as World Heritage Day) was first celebrated in 1982 by ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites).

This year, UNESCO has chosen the theme *World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities* to mark the 40th anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, which was adopted in 1972.

With heritage loss a hot topic this year, following the earthquake in Christchurch, Mt Victoria Historical Society is taking the opportunity to highlight the importance of local heritage with a Victorian picnic. Our own city has a rich built heritage from the Victorian era.

Picnic, Wellington, between 1895-1916  
[ATL 1/4-121338-G]

To inspire your picnic preparations, check out the photograph above for appropriate attire, and the following recipes for culinary inspiration – or conduct your own internet research into Victorian picnics.

Potted Salmon, from Mrs Beeton's 1861 Book of Household Management:

*When you have any cold salmon left, take the skin off, and bone it, then put it in a marble mortar, with a good deal of clarified butter, season it pretty high with pepper, mace and malt, shred a little fennel very small, beat them all together exceeding fine, then put it close down into a pot, and cover it with clarified Butter.*

Victoria Sandwiches, from Francatelli, Chef to Queen Victoria:

*Cut thin brown bread and butter, and between two slices place alternate layers of thinly sliced hard boiled eggs, small salad or American cress, the cleansed fillets of anchovies; divide these slices into small squares or oblongs and serve them on a napkin. . .*

**Date for your calendar: Saturday, June 23 at 4.30 pm** at the Film Archive, a special showing of Gaylene Preston's film, *Mr Wrong*, featuring Mt Victoria as one of the principal characters.

## HISTORICAL NOTE



Bernard Freyberg, 1916. [ATL 1/2-112438-F]

He became one of New Zealand's heroes and several landmarks in Wellington are named after him, but when Bernard Freyberg arrived in Wellington on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1891 with his parents and four older brothers he was just a toddler of two and a half years old.

Bernard was part of a second family for his father, who was 64 years old when they emigrated from England – the children ranged in age from 2 ½ to 10 years old. James Freyberg had little money when they arrived. His fortunes had been in decline for some years and he had been in a business partnership in London which went bankrupt. The family went to live at what was then 40 Hawker Street, then moved to No. 60 in 1895.

McDonald Wilson, a neighbour and the same age as Bernard, describes how, when they were young in Hawker Street: “. . . we youngsters did not enter one another's homes very much, and mothers who had large families did not encourage their children to bring additional youngsters into the house. Consequently we boys tended to play either in the yard, the street, or on the open hills. In those days apart from the odd butcher's or baker's cart that came along we had the street to ourselves for playgrounds.”

Unfortunately, 60 Hawker Street burned down in the great fire of 1901 and, amongst other things, the family lost all the precious family records and photographs they had brought with them. After this, they moved to 27 Hawker Street (now No. 43), which looks almost the same as it would have in 1901 when they moved in.

Bernard's father's work in Wellington was variously described as a timber advisor to the government (until he had a row with the Prime Minister, Richard Seddon), a surveyor and a land agent. He seems, however, to have been a difficult man with a violent temper.

Bernard was nicknamed Tiny as a boy – no doubt because he was the youngest and smallest in a tall family. Even though he grew to be six foot one and a half, he continued to be called Tiny by New Zealanders, even when he was a general. The five Freyberg boys were a tight-knit group and distinctive as they grew older because of their stature and strong physiques. They were good athletes, particularly swimmers, and keen sailors.

Bernard's mother refused to let them attend Clyde Quay School because she mistrusted state education and felt that she could give them a better primary education than anyone else. She had attended university in Scotland or England, although she didn't have a degree as it was not possible for women in the mid-1870's to study for degrees. Bernard was taught at home until he was eight, in 1897, then he joined the first form at Wellington College. He never excelled academically, however – his passion for swimming dominated his school life. The description of one of his contemporaries at school shows how at home he was in the water: “his movements were seal-like, in fact he reminded one very much of that animal. Rather clumsy and awkward on land, but given a few feet of water, immediately transformed into a body of grace and vital activity and flowing movement.” When he was 16, he went to Australia to represent New Zealand in the Australasian Championships and in 1906 he was swimming champion of New Zealand.

In December 1904, however, Bernard suddenly left Wellington College. His authoritarian father had decided he should be apprenticed to become a dentist. Legislation was about to be introduced abolishing apprenticeships and requiring four-year degrees to practice but this would not come into effect until 1 January 1905. Clearly, Bernard's father was keen to get him in, and earning, under the old system. It so happened that a well-known dentist, J S Fairchild, lived in Hawker Street so, at the age of 15, Bernard was an apprentice dentist. He remained a member of the dental profession until he left Wellington nine years later.

Bernard lived mainly for swimming, though. One of the principal attractions of the apprenticeship for him was that it allowed him to continue living at home in Hawker Street, close to the Te Aro Baths for swimming and water polo and to Oriental Bay for sailing. He was also interested enough in military matters, however, to join the Corps Volunteers when he left school.

In 1908, James Freyberg retired and the family moved to McDonald Crescent.



c.1906 [ATL 1/2-044404-F]