



Next event

Sunday 23 April at 2.00pm
Friends' Meeting House, 7 Moncrieff Street, Mt Victoria

The life and work of Suzanne Aubert (1835-1926)

Presented by archivist and historian Sister Josephine Gorman

Sister Mary Joseph or Mother Aubert devoted her life to helping others and has been described as “a woman truly ahead of her time” whose vision, innovative approaches and can-do attitude challenge us all to live lives of compassionate action. Last year she was declared ‘venerable’ by the Catholic Church, a milestone on the path to her canonization as New Zealand’s first-ever saint.

Atkins family reunion at Etrick Cottage

In February, five descendants of Samuel Atkins, accompanied by five family members, came to Wellington from the United States, England and Australia for a family reunion at Etrick Cottage to commemorate the centenary of his death in 1917, aged 92. A reception was hosted by current tenant Kate Foot for Atkins family members and invited guests, including nine MVHS members.

Kate has compiled a shared folder of articles about the cottage, historical photos and Atkins family shots, and photos from the event – go to

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BwHOjch0b06rNGtKYTJxdFUzZHc>



L. Descendants of Samuel Atkins outside Etrick Cottage: David Best, Graham Harding, Jim Atkins, Darcy Atkins Eades Rohre, and Brandon Cadd.

R. Samuel and Marion Atkins with their daughters Alice and Marion (May) on the verandah of Etrick Cottage, c.1901.

Samuel’s great-great grandson Jim Atkins, who made his first trip from the United States about five years ago to see the home of his forebears, commented that “This reunion is very meaningful - I’m a sentimental kind of guy.” Although all of Samuel Atkins’ known descendants are living overseas, Jim is hopeful that there may be relatives living in New Zealand:

We have a missing branch of our family tree. Like most families, there was a “black sheep” in ours. Samuel’s oldest son, Samuel Jr., joined the family in 1875 after serving in the US Army Calvary for five years, and first returning briefly to the UK. Interesting, at least to us, was that he arrived aboard the Edwin Fox, the floating

museum ship in Picton.

*Upon arriving in Wellington on 18/4/1875, Samuel met and married a young woman, **Annhora Kershaw**. It is believed he met her through a shipboard traveling companion, William Kershaw. The couple was married 6/10/1875 in St. John's Presbyterian Church, Rev. James Paterson presiding. Witnessing for Annhora was **Thomas George Kershaw**, whom I presume to be her father. He listed his occupation as shoemaker, and there was a Thomas George Kershaw with a shoemaking establishment on Lambton Quay at the time.*

Some time in 1876, Samuel Jr. did a runner, abandoning Annhora (nee "Annie") and their newborn child. It is known that he went to Fiji, but his tracks vanish after that. As for Annie, it is known that she applied to the Resident Magistrate's Court in September 1877 for a "married woman's protection order" against her husband. It seems that a Mr. Buckley appeared on her behalf, so he may have been a solicitor.

We do not know anything further about Annie or the child ... We would be thrilled to learn that there was still family in New Zealand.

If you have any information to add to this story, Jim would very much appreciate it if you would email him at jgordon.atkins@gmail.com.

The Atkins family is concerned that the cottage will be torn down or moved again to make way for a second tunnel. Ettrick Cottage is on land leased from the New Zealand Transport Agency. In an article about the family reunion, the DomPost reported Neil Walker, NZTA Wellington highways manager, as saying that the Mt Victoria tunnel duplication project and other previously planned major projects had been put on hold while the *Let's Get Wellington Moving* transport initiative was progressing. If leased land owned by NZTA was needed in future, it would, "where appropriate", work with building owners on the relocation of their buildings.

Discover vintage Wellington with Recollect

The *Wellington City Recollect* website is a database administered by Wellington City Libraries of heritage photographs, films, books, maps, postcards and other ephemera reflecting the Capital's past. It includes a guide with tips on how to research local and New Zealand history and a selection of recent books about local history. <http://wellington.recollect.co.nz>

Researching your heritage house

I recently attended an excellent seminar on *Researching your heritage house*, organised by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga at Antrim House. Heritage New Zealand may hold similar seminars in future, so do watch out for them. Topics covered were:

1. **Land records** such as deeds and certificates of title, presented by Jonathan Newport, Archives New Zealand. Through these documents you can find out how your property was shaped and the people involved. Certificates of title are still used today, and are cross-referenced to the older Deeds system. Archives New Zealand may also hold site plans, and aerial photographs.
2. **Street directories and local histories**. Gabor Toth, Wellington City Libraries, showed how you can use *Stone's* and *Wise's* directories to build a picture of what was happening at your house and in your neighbourhood. Like telephone books, these directories contain lists of residents' names and professions, street names and numbers, and annual statistics.
3. **Online resources**. Emerson Vandy talked about how to get the most out of the National Library's digitised content such as *Papers Past* and *Timeframes* by using the sorting tools to narrow the number of search results – important as *Papers Past* has 62 million pages.
4. **City Council records**, presented by Adrian Humphris, Wellington City Archives. He talked about the wide range of City Archives records, including rating & valuation books, and construction specifics about your building – architectural plans, building consents, drainage, electricity supply – and who was involved. You can make a start via this link to the Council's website page *Historic Thomas Ward Maps*:
<http://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/archives/whats-in-the-archives/historic-thomas-ward-maps>
Click on the link *WebMap* under the sub-heading *View Thomas Ward maps* to see Ward's 1892 Survey map and aerial photos taken since 1996 (use the button at top right).
5. **A villa study**. Christine MacKay, Victoria University School of Architecture, gave some informal information on her study documenting villa alterations.
6. **A case study** by Elizabeth Cox, Heritage Consultant, showed how professionals use all the tools to put together rich stories and pictures of buildings' archaeological, construction and social histories.

- Sue Watt

MVHS Committee

At the 2016 AGM, the following members were elected to the Committee: Barry Chisholm, Jane O'Loughlin and Sue Watt. David McCrone remains on the Committee as the immediate past Convenor. Sue and Jane were subsequently elected by the Committee as Co-Convenors for 2016/17.