



Fairfield Memorials

Take a pleasant stroll through Fairfield Park, formerly one of Nelson's first cemeteries created in 1851. The park has a number of heritage trees and more recent plantings of camellia groves. The Park closed for burials in 1910 and this walk highlights some early settlers graves with legible gravestones as well as later memorials added to the Park. Council's cemeteries database lists all persons originally buried here.

For more stories, and other heritage walks go to www.thePROW.org.nz or www.nelson.govt.nz





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1 REVEREND CHARLES SARDA, a missionary, died at the Catholic Station at Nelson on 22 October 1867 aged 28 years. On travelling south, he developed rapid consumption. Father Garin described this as the first “natural death” of a Roman Catholic priest in New Zealand, as all earlier deaths had been from drowning.

2 FRANCIS OTTERSON drowned in the Wairau River in 1854. He was very active in local politics, being a JP, and a member of the Provincial Council. He was strongly Roman Catholic. Some of his family had different religious persuasions. Permission was granted to have half the family memorials in Protestant section of the cemetery, and half in Catholic section. Francis had sufficient initiative and capital to establish a flourishing mercantile business.

3 ROBERT SHALLCRASS was a Nelson police chief and gaoler. He was praised for his ‘untarnished, honest and faithful’ service in these roles. He played an important part in bringing the Maungatapu murderers to justice. He came to Nelson in 1856 and worked first as a printer for the Nelson Examiner newspaper. He built Merton cottage in Brougham St and lived there with his wife Annabella who died in 1893. She and other family members are buried here.

4 WILLIAM GORDON BELL came to Nelson in 1840 from Scotland after working as a plantation manager in the West Indies, where he married Alziere Cervantes. James their son became a surveyor for the New Zealand Company and William (aged 56) and extended family came to New Zealand together. William settled on land which is now Lower Queen Street, Richmond. On his death in 1864, the Nelson Examiner remarked how “the clear ringing voice and vice-like grip of the hearty old Lowland farmer” was missed, and “His work as a man and a colonist will be conceded by all who knew him: and any country which can boast a number of men of the same stamp may justly feel proud.”

5 THOMAS BLICK a master weaver from England, came to Nelson with wife and seven children in 1842 on the *Indus*. He produced much needed hardwearing cloth and leather for the new colony. “Blick” cloth (tweed and flannel) was in great demand and used for constabulary uniforms. When Blick died one son continued the successful tannery.

6 NATHANIEL EDWARDS, was 22 when he arrived in 1845 and went on to be a successful business man and politician, and one of Nelson’s wealthiest men at his death in 1880. His Nelson Steamship Company was the first truly successful local shipping line and their steamship *Lyttleton* was operating from 1863. This was the forerunner of the Anchor Shipping Company. Some of his 16 children are buried here with him.

7 JANE CHING (maiden name Harris) married Richard Ching in England, and nine days after their marriage he set sail for New Zealand on a survey expedition. Her husband was one of the first Englishmen to set foot in Nelson. Jane came on *The Lloyds* in 1842, which held the record for the greatest number of deaths on an immigrant ship to New Zealand. The couple had four sons before Jane died in 1855. Richard established an orchard in Stoke, and the family became prominent in the area.

8 SIR JACK NEWMAN built the pagoda memorial and planted a camellia grove here in memory of his wife Myrtle, who he married in 1926. Jack joined his father’s coaching transport business, starting as a driver, and eventually becoming a Director. He expanded Newmans to include tourism, rental cars, freight. Sir Jack was a founding member of Cook Strait Airways and an outstanding sportsman.

9 MICHAEL ALLISON, has a colourful mosaic memorial around a fountain. The Shakespearian sonnet on the plaque was chosen as a reminder of the mountain ranges around the Cobb Valley.

10 Project Butterfly is a community project that celebrates children’s lives that might have been. The information on the children that have died is recorded on www.ProjectButterfly.co.nz

11 ALEXANDER AND CATHERINE MCGEE and children came out on the *Martha Ridgeway* to Nelson in 1841. Alexander was a shoemaker turned publican, a lucrative occupation at the time. Charles his son followed his example. Central city hotels the family ran or owned included the Marine Hotel 1859-64, Anchor Inn, and the Royal Arms. The latter Charles rebuilt in 1865 only to have it burn down in the spectacular fire of 1866 of Bridge and Collingwood Streets. The replacement Royal Arms was the site of the famous public meeting to form the Nelson Rugby Club in 1868.