

Bolton Street Memorial Park

Cemetery and Graveyard History

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Early Christians believed both in the 'resurrection of the body' and that only martyred Christians were guaranteed entry into heaven.

Burial sites near those of martyrs were sought in order to obtain their protection during the long wait for the Day of Judgement. As martyr's graves were often incorporated into a church, the concept of churchyards began to evolve.



In the 17th century, churchyards were becoming overfull of bodies, and the grouping of graves, often into family units became common.

The primary focus of the graveyard then subtly switched from the meeting of the spiritual needs of the dead, awaiting Judgement Day, to the needs of the living wishing to commemorate and grieve for their

dead. Early in 19th century England, the idea of 'Garden Cemeteries' came into practice.



"Churchyards & cemeteries are scenes not only calculated to improve the morals & taste, and by their botanical riches to cultivate the intellect' The grave plot became an extension of the Victorian home.

In England, the fashion was for planting of evergreen trees, to symbolise eternal life, notably Yew, Holly & Buxus. In NZ, graveyard plantings of the *Sweet Briar* rose were recorded as long ago as 1830.

Early graves were enclosed with wooden markers, perhaps to keep cattle from trampling them. It was only later when wrought iron became readily available that graves had more permanent demarcation. Concrete did not become widely used until the 20th century. There was an early tradition of mass planting of graves with flowers & shrubs, perhaps designed to discourage grave-robbers.



With a transition after the first War of celebrating life, rather than death, and the new fashion of cremation, fashions changed in cemeteries. Headstones became less conspicuous, and with the advent of the lawnmower, graves flush with the ground became popular, and with it the fashion of planting of flowers & shrubs was discouraged.

So there is a tradition of planting flowers & shrubs in and around old graveyards and cemeteries. Old roses are found throughout the world, associated with old graveyards & cemeteries.

The history of roses

Fossil evidence that roses existed 5 million years ago - pre mankind.

Roses are endemic to the holy lands, and widespread through the northern hemisphere, (not the southern hemisphere)

First cultivated roses were

the *Gallicas* (from Gaul) [Romans]

The *Damasks*, the family of fragrance, from the middle-east

The *Albas* were the first English roses. England less significant than European countries.

By the 19th century, roses were well established in Europe, and desirable as garden plants. Napoleon's wife Josephine, was the first obsessive collector of roses. *Souvenir de la Malmaison* commemorated her great garden on the outskirts of Paris. It was introduced in 1843, and would have come to NZ shortly thereafter, and may well have been one of the first roses to be planted at Bolton St.



It's interesting to reflect on NZ's rich botanic heritage, and to realise that we had plant nurseries as early as 1844, with plants finding their way to NZ very soon after their release in Europe. As NZ was being colonised, Europe was becoming obsessed with botany and gardening and it's reasonable to believe that this obsession would have spread to NZ with its pioneers.

Some 200 years later, we have one of the richest and most diverse collections of plants of any part of the world. Not only do we have the native plants that came as NZ broke away from Gondwanaland millions of years ago, we also have a huge diversity of plants from the rest of the world. Our collection of roses is amazing for its breadth and depth. At the recent world conference in Dunedin, it was commented that we have more old roses than many older parts of the world.

The breadth of the genus Rosa

Bushes, shrubs, climbers, ramblers - all shapes and sizes. Wild roses - singles from the dawn of time. Spring flowering Modern roses (Lady Norwood) they have their place, but less so in Bolton St than in the modern and formal lawn settings. Old roses can be seen as foliage plants, valued not just for their blooms, but their foliage and their hips.

Bolton St lends itself to old roses.

The Heritage Rose movement. Ron & Lorraine will address this Heritage roses come in all shapes and sizes. Some of the classic, and most suitable families are :

- Species (wild) roses
- Spinossimas (scots briars)
- Rugosas
- Gallicas
- Damasks
- Albas
- Bourbons

Roses that have their origins before the graves were laid.

- Hybrid Musks (1st World war)
- NOT Hybrid Teas

We are lucky to have Bolton St, which is a world-renowned example of symbiotic planting of old roses in a graveyard setting.

We also have St Albans at Pauatahanui, which is a recently planted graveyard of great interest.

In closing, Trinity Farm is a living rose museum in Otaki. We have 1,500 old roses in three acres. Spring is the time to see them.