

Symonds Street Cemetery

Hobson Walk

Trail guide for the Anglican and General/Wesleyan sections



Panoramic view looking along Grafton Gully from Symonds Street Cemetery, c1869. [Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 4-319.](#)

The Hobson Walk - explore our oldest public cemetery

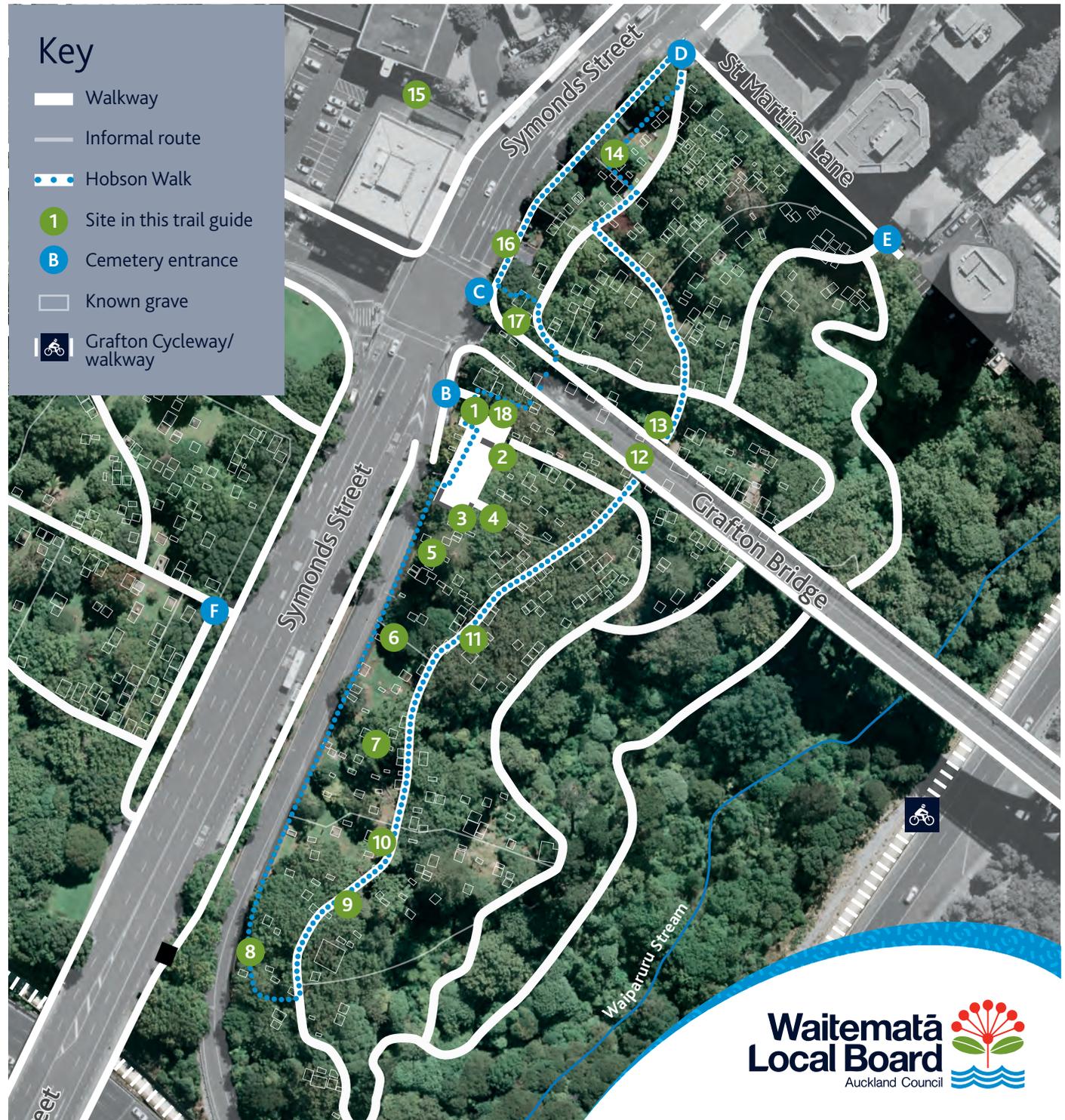
This trail guide will introduce you to some interesting parts of the Anglican and General/Wesleyan sections of the Symonds Street Cemetery. The Anglican Cemetery was the first to be established here, so contains the oldest graves, and those of many prominent people.

To do the Hobson Walk will take about 45 minutes. Follow the blue markers.

Some of this trail does not follow formed paths. Make sure you wear appropriate footwear, especially in winter, and please do not walk across the graves.

From this trail, you can link to two more walks in the lower section of the cemetery and gully - Bishop Selwyn's Walk and the Waiparuru Nature Trail.

You can access more information on our mobile app (see back page).





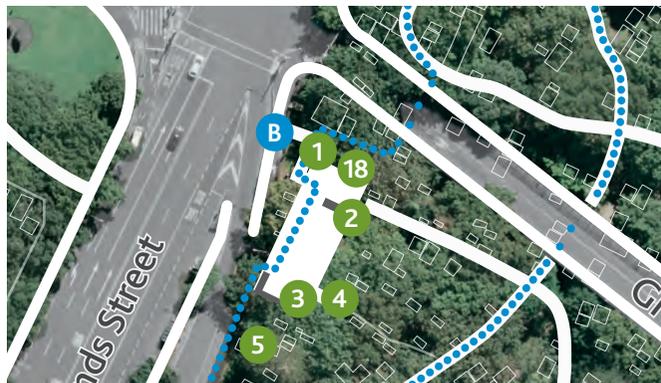
View of Auckland with Māori travelling along a ridge, 1840s. Joseph Merrett, [National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an2948108](#).

Early Māori use of the area

Karangahape (The Call of Hape) is named for the Tainui ancestor who stood on the ridge here and called to his kinsmen on the beaches below as they arrived from Hawai'iiki. Hape, also known as Rakataura, is a significant figure in the histories of many Auckland tribes.

The Symonds Street Cemetery is located in an area of intense Māori occupation and use. Seasonal fishing villages at the base of Queen Street and Grafton Gully allowed Ngāti Whatua, Maratuhu and Hauraki tribes to dominate the produce markets of early Auckland. These markets at Waipapa, now the base of Constitution Hill, were a vital trading link for early Pākehā settlers to the area.

Māori walked up from the coastal villages and along Rangipuke (the Symonds Street ridge) to reach Maungawhau Pā (Mt Eden fortified village), or followed the westwards track along the Karangahape ridge on the long journey to Cornwallis (also called Karangahape) near the mouth of the Manukau



View across the Anglican section of the cemetery, 1860s. John Tremehere, [Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: B-079-027](#).

Harbour. The dense vegetation in Grafton Gully provided birds to preserve and eat, and supplied building materials. At the base of this gully is Waiparuru, a stream named for its murky waters. Across the gully, the Ako o te Tui stream flows from the Domain before joining the Waiparuru, now piped as storm water, out into the Waitematā Harbour beyond.

There are no known Māori burials from the pre-Pākehā era in the immediate area, though nearby is a site called Te Iringa o Rauru - 'the hanging of Rauru.'

Auckland Māori traditionally buried or interred their dead after their own customs, often in volcanic caves, rather than in formal European-style cemeteries such as the Symonds Street. Iwi throughout the region however now maintain urupā, similar to European cemeteries, on their tribal lands.

Anglican Society

The Anglican Church, established in the 6th century, grew to be the major church of England, and expanded with the British empire.

Samuel Marsden, the first Anglican missionary in New Zealand, began work in the Bay of Islands in 1814.

By the time this cemetery was established, the Anglican Church was a dominant force within New Zealand colonial society. Most senior government officials were Anglicans.

Nineteenth century society in New Zealand was structured along denominational lines. Which church you belonged to had a major influence on your status, your connections, and your opportunities. That's why this cemetery was so clearly divided into denominational areas.

The area given to each denomination reflected the ratio of people of different churches in Auckland at the time.

Their influence meant the Anglicans were given what was considered to be the best location in this multi-denominational cemetery site, with the most commanding views of the Waitematā Harbour and Rangitoto Island and beyond.

► This discovery trail starts by the sign near Hobson's Grave.

1 Sidney Stephen



Sidney Stephen monument.

Sidney Stephen was the chief justice on New Zealand when he died aged 61 years on 22 January 1858. He had forged a reputation for standing up for fairness and fighting corruption.

Stephen was born at Somerleage, Somerset, England, in 1797. He was a son of John Stephen, Puisne Judge (a judge of a superior court, but ranked below Chief Justice) at St Kitts in the West Indies, and later a member of the New

South Wales judiciary and acting Chief Justice.

When his father was appointed a Judge in New South Wales, Sidney Stephen moved to Australia with him. In 1852, he moved to Auckland to replace the Chief Justice, Sir William Martin, whose health had broken down.

Stephen's status was reflected in a funeral notice in the *Daily Southern Cross* newspaper which read: "the presence of all Public Functionaries of the Colonial Government is required, and the attendance of all other persons who may be desirous of testifying their respect is requested. The Public Offices will be closed on the day of the funeral."

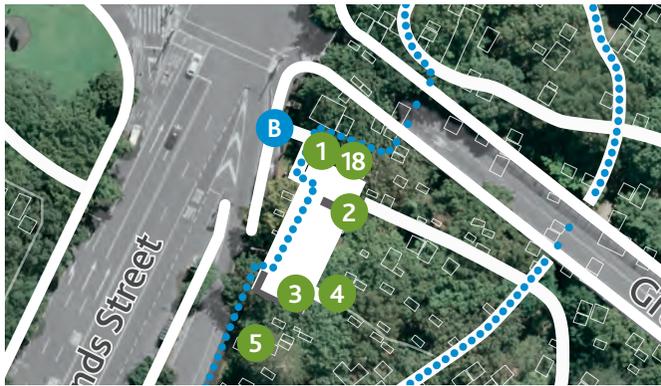
2 Hobson's Grave

First Governor of New Zealand, and co-author of the (English language version) of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi.

William Hobson was born in Waterford, Ireland. He joined the Royal Navy in 1803, at the tender age of ten years, and

William Hobson, c.1913. [Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: G-826-1](#).





was promoted to Commander in 1824. In his active career as a naval officer, he was twice captured by pirates in the Caribbean. During this time, he had yellow fever three times, which left him with severe headaches for the rest of his life.

He met and married his wife Eliza Elliot, on Nassau in the Bahamas in 1827. They had four daughters and one son.

In 1836 he took HMS *Rattlesnake* to New South Wales, Australia, where he became assistant to the Governor, Sir George Gipps. Then, in 1837 Gipps received a request for help from James Busby, the British Resident in the Bay of Islands, where a number of Europeans were living.

Gipps sent Hobson to investigate and he submitted a report to the British Government advising that New Zealand should be annexed as a colony.

Hobson survived a stroke soon after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, as a result (said the surgeon of the ship *Herald*) of "violent mental excitement." Even while recovering, Hobson founded the City of Auckland as the colony's new capital in September 1840, and became the first Governor of New Zealand in 1841, when it became a separate colony.



After this land was exchanged by Ngāti Whatua, Hobson set it aside for use as a cemetery in 1842 – ironically becoming one of the first people to be buried here.

"William Hobson's intelligence and sound education, most of

Ngāti Whatua elder Te Hiko Paora delivering a speech in 1965 at the annual commemoration of Hobson's death. Reweti/Paora family collection.



Hobson's grave has layered symbolism. Tasmanian sandstone (for his career there), Irish granite (his birthplace), marble (top, inscriptions).

which was gained at sea, are reflected in his dispatches and letters. He was of medium height and slender build, appearing prematurely aged from years in the tropics and from the inroads of disease. His private conduct was irreproachable; he was a good husband, father and friend, a gracious host and an entertaining speaker. A firm Christian believer and member of the Church of England, he showed marked tolerance for other denominations. In his official duties he strove to be just, and saw protection of the Maori as a major reason for establishing British rule. He could be obstinate and lacking in diplomacy. He was capable of poor decisions, but the tragedy of his governorship arose mainly from his ill health and inept advisers, and unrealistic Colonial Office policy towards the new colony." - Te Ara, Encyclopedia of New Zealand.

► [Head over to the wall of the Anglican Memorial, where people whose graves have been removed, are remembered.](#)

3 Charles de Thierry: big dreamer

Born in the Netherlands of French parents, De Thierry was educated in England. He enrolled at Oxford and claimed to have transferred to Cambridge University.



In 1820, in England, he met travelling Māori chiefs Hongi Hika and Waikato, and New Zealand missionary Thomas Kendall. He arranged for Kendall to purchase 16,000ha

Baron Charles Philip Hippolytus de Thierry, a colourful character. [Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 7-A11526.](#)

of Hokianga land, for payment of 36 axes. He tried to get the Dutch and French governments to form a colony, and make him Governor. They declined.

With his wife Emily (née Rudge), he travelled to North America and the Caribbean – where he applied for a concession to cut the Panama Canal – before arriving in the South Pacific in 1835.

De Thierry attempted to establish his own sovereign state in the Marquesas Islands (now French Polynesia) and proclaimed himself King of Nikuhiva, the biggest island.

In July 1837, he reached Sydney and recruited colonists, raised money, and sailed for New Zealand on the *Nimrod*. On arrival, his purchase of land was repudiated by Māori leaders Tamati Waka Nene and Patuone, but he was granted 232ha instead. After a riot, his 'colonists' went their own separate ways.

De Thierry continued to press for a French colony led by himself, but this ended with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.

De Thierry moved his family to Auckland. They found it tough going. He sailed to the California gold fields, but didn't make his fortune there either.

Back in Auckland in 1853, he befriended Catholic bishop Pompallier and Governor George Grey, who financed De Thierry's autobiography. He experimented with flax processing, and survived as a piano teacher in Auckland. He died on 8 July 1864. His name is listed on the memorial.

4 Commodore William Farquharson Burnett

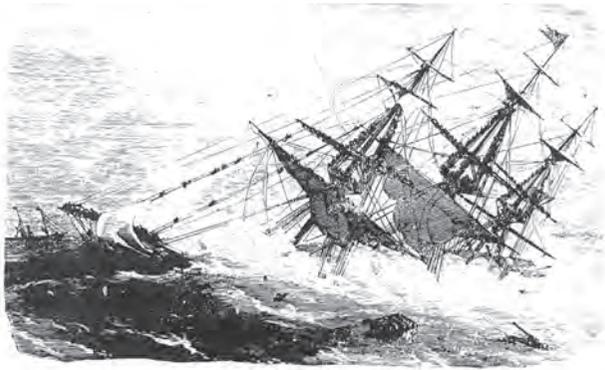
"Britain's costliest day of the New Zealand Wars occurred far from the battlefield." - NZ History Online.

Commodore William Farquharson Burnett, Commodore of the Australian Station was aboard the HMS *Orpheus*, when it was wrecked on the bar of the Manukau Harbour in 1863.



Burnett entered the Royal Navy in June 1838, was promoted to Captain in 1854. He commanded HMS *Tortoise*, and served as Governor of Ascension Island from 1858

Burnett ignored the warnings of a prisoner on the ship, who knew the way into the Harbour. Image from *The wreck of the Orpheus*, R.M. Hetherington, 1968.



The *HMS Orpheus*, shipwrecked off Whatipu, 7 February 1863. *Illustrated London News*. Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: PUBL-0033-1863-437.

until 1861. In July 1862 he was appointed Commodore on the Australian Station.

Burnett died, aged 46, in the wreck of *HMS Orpheus*. Out of a crew of 259 only 70 survived the disaster. The ship's captain, Robert Heron Burton also died.

Men from the *Orpheus* interred at Symonds Street Cemetery: Commodore William Farquharson Burnett, 1837-1863; William Joseph Taylor, Acting Second Master; John Pascoe. Royal Navy Chief Boatswain. Pascoe had been buried about 3km to the north of the wreck, on Whatipu Beach, and his body was exhumed for an inquest.

"O weep then for the brave / the gallant firm and true / Who sleep beneath the wave / On the Bar of the Manukau". – from a poem (anonymous). Burnett is named on a panel on the left.

▶ The next sites on this trail are on the grass walkway that runs along the cemetery wall.

5 Splash of colour

Camellias provide a splash of colour in the cemetery in the winter, being one of the few tree species that flower in the cold weather. Sometimes they are called 'The rose of winter' – which also provides the symbolism of their placement in cemeteries.

These are *Camellia japonica*, the name providing the clue they came from Japan, China,



South Korea and Taiwan. In their home habitat, they grow in forests at altitudes of between 300 – 1000m.

Shipments of these plants were known to have come to New Zealand in the years 1911-1919, and these specimens probably came from this source. Headstones in their vicinity confirm this time frame.

6 Edward Costley

Born in Ireland Costley arrived in Auckland in 1841 and purchased tracts of land at a time when it was empty bracken clad countryside.

For forty years the town of Auckland sprang up around him – to some degree on land owned by him. Although well known as a landlord he never acquired the reputation as a hard person.

After a long, quiet and un-ostentatious life, Edward Costley surprised Auckland society with the size of bequests in his will on his death in 1883, aged 84. On his deathbed he summoned his lawyer, and directed him to divide his wealth among the city charities, seven of these being named. His estate realised £93,000, which was divided between the Auckland Hospital, Costley Home for the Aged Poor, Sailors' Home, Auckland Institute, Costley Training Institute, Auckland Public Library, Auckland Museum, and the Parnell Orphan Home, each of which received £12,500.



Edward Costley never married and he left no descendants.

Edward Costley's monument features a covered urn.

His grave was disturbed by the construction of the motorway in the 1960s, his remains were interred in the vault beneath the Anglican memorial. His monument was preserved and re-erected just to the south of the Anglican Memorial.

7 Oak trees

Symonds Street cemetery has a distinctive urban forest, made up of a range of exotic trees and native plants – both old and regenerating – living together in this inner-city setting.

The deciduous woodland landscape originally created in the cemetery had a similar atmosphere to the extensive English Landscape School gardens created in Britain during the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

These oaks, at around 150 years old, are becoming old and vulnerable in Auckland – but could be solid, mature trees in a European setting.

Other deciduous trees from the northern hemisphere in the Grafton Gully are Holm oaks, Japanese elms, and poplars. In the past, weeding operations have removed sycamores, Trees of Heaven, Privet and Port Jackson figs.

The old European oak trees in the cemetery pose a challenge to arborists. They are becoming vulnerable to rot, and to toppling over in storms.

Arborists say it's difficult to identify why some of the oak trees have declined. There could be many factors – including the trees' age, differences in water supply to their roots from the concrete coverings/drains, and most importantly, changes in the nature of the underlying water table.

Oaks can grow very quickly in New Zealand conditions – but these in the Symonds Street Cemetery haven't done so, perhaps because of the poor soils (for them) in this location.

Symonds Street Cemetery is located in an area of 'sterile clay soils', as identified in an important 1859 geological map by Ferdinand Hochstetter. These soil conditions probably accounted for the fact the ridge line was then covered only in scrub, with the thicker bush confined to the watered gully.

The oaks were planted to remind colonists of their home countries, and to symbolize strength and continuity in their new land.





Fallen oak, winter 2015.

8 Affront of the motorways

About a quarter of the Anglican section of the cemetery was destroyed when the motorway was built through the gully.

The most favoured parts of the Anglican part of the cemetery – the graves up high with the best views, and right next to Symonds Street and the access carriageway alongside it and so on the flattest ground – were heavily affected.

About 2000 Anglican graves were exhumed, the remains cremated, and then re-buried under a concrete slab at the Anglican memorial, near Hobson's grave.

The roadworks also affected the Catholic section, with a similar number of graves disturbed. Both cemeteries were separated from their adjoining churches by the motorway.

▶ Turn left along the footpath.

9 Support system

The Grafton Gully before the motorway was built, c1937. Whites Aviation Ltd, [Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: WA-44313-G.](#)



Oaks can be self-grafting (unlike pōhutukawas). Where branches rub up against each other, without too much movement, the tissue of the two branches can grow together again, to form this lattice-like structure. This can work to strengthen the tree. This is most visible in winter when the leaves are absent.



10 William Godwin

William Godwin was a 20-year-old fireman, who died from injuries in an accident at the fire that broke out at the Rising Sun Hotel on Karangahape Road, "by the upsetting of the underwriters fire patrol and salvage corps conveyance on the morning of 16 January 1878."

The headstone was erected by the members of the Auckland Fire Brigade corps of which he was a member and also "by his intimate friends who were members of the Oddfellows and Foresters" friendly societies.

His monument is notable for the sculpted fireman's helmet and axe.

11 Frederick Maning

Frederick Maning arrived in New Zealand in 1833, after spending his robust, outdoorsy teenage years in Tasmania.

William Godwin memorial.



He published *Old New Zealand* in 1863. In the book, his descriptions of his first arrival, being greeted by Moetara of Ngāti Korokoro, and his wrestling match with a Māori man who tipped him into a river, seem authentic. He bought land at Kohukohu on the Hokianga in a deal that stymied another Tasmanian Henry Oakes and an English visitor Edward Markham. Markham later described Maning as 'a low-minded savage' and 'a double faced sneaking Thief', who 'would have done Honor to the back Woods of America'.



Frederick Maning. [Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries Ref: 7-A5049](#)

In two sojourns on the Hokianga, Maning lived as a 'Pākehā-Māori', avoiding the missionaries. He lived with a Te Hikutu woman, Moengaroa, and they had four children. For much of the 1850s, he was a significant kauri timber and gum trader.

He spoke out against the Treaty of Waitangi, believing it would be difficult to enforce British law among Māori. He was active in the campaigns against Hone Heke, helping supply Maori allies of the colonists; and he witnessed several battles. In 1862, he published *A history of the war in the north of New Zealand against the chief Heke*, a "well-crafted account" according to Te Ara, the online encyclopedia of New Zealand.

In later life, he became a judge in the Native Land Court, but was noted for "strong class as well as race prejudices."

Manning died in England on 25 July 1883, and was brought back to New Zealand for burial in December.



12 Grafton Bridge

The deep, forested valley of the Waiparuru Stream divided the upper parts of Auckland, until a walking bridge across it was built in 1884. Then the soaring arch of the Grafton Bridge was completed in 1910, changing the gully forever. See the app and the lower walks trail guide for more about the bridges.

13 Crime of passion

▶ Just next to Grafton Bridge, on the left, is the grave of Emily Keeling and her parents.

Seventeen-year-old Emily was shot and killed in King Street, Archhill, on her way to Bible study at the Primitive Methodist Church in 1886, by Edward Fuller a (possibly jilted) young man who then killed himself. At an inquest to the tragedy, letters between them dating from two years prior, were read out.

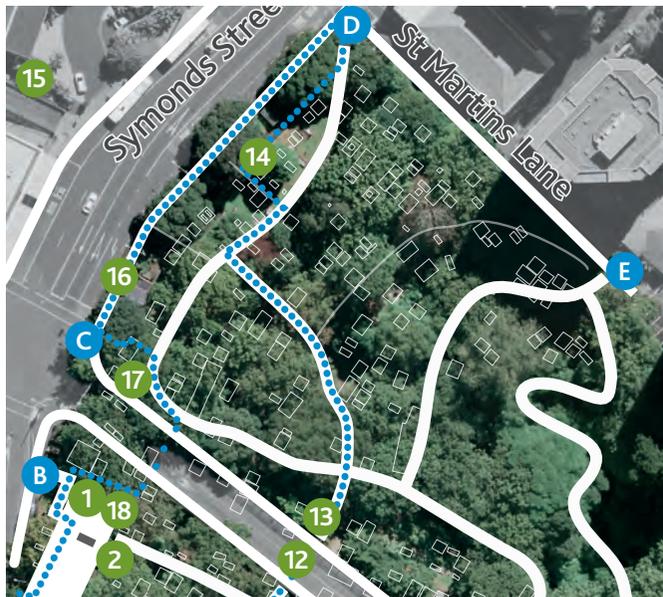
The people of Auckland were deeply moved by her story: it was estimated that between 5000 to 10,000 people attended her funeral.

Mr D Goldie, superintendent of the Alexandra Street Primitive Sunday School raised subscriptions to pay for her tombstone.

▶ Head up the path towards entrance D (St Martins Lane).

14 Charles Southwell 1814–1860

An intelligent but naughty child, Charles Southwell grew to be an all-round rabble-rouser – a freethinker, lecturer,



newspaper owner and editor, and actor. He could speak Latin, French and Greek, and loved melodramatically reciting Shakespeare. He could speak extempore (off-the-cuff) for hours on end.

In England, he was jailed for a year in 1841 and fined £100 for blasphemy, for an article about Biblical inconsistencies. In Melbourne, Australia, he campaigned for election (but withdrew when his past was exposed), and gave Shakespeare recitals at the Bendigo gold fields.

He arrived in Auckland in January 1856, with WH Foleys' Theatrical Group. He acted briefly at the new Theatre Royal, but "quarrelled with the company and left" (Te Ara). Later he leased the theatre to run it as a ballroom.

Southwell lectured on subjects as diverse as Napoleon III, phrenology (the study of skull measurement) and universal secular education (he was a lifelong advocate). He kept trying to enter politics, never successfully. Southwell again turned to publishing, with the weekly *Auckland Examiner*, "a weekly muck-raking paper which lampooned rivals and corrupt local officials" (Te Ara). He ran the paper with the help of his third common-law wife Elizabeth Edge.

His failing health led to the collapse in July 1860 of the *Auckland Examiner*. On the 7 August 1860 he died of pulmonary tuberculosis, a disease he had refused to acknowledge. He was only 46.

▶ Exit the cemetery at entrance D (St Martins Lane) and turn left past the bust stops.

15 Partington's Mill

It was an Auckland landmark, until 1950, when it was torn down. Partington's windmill, located high on the ridge to get best advantage of the wind, ground corn and wheat for the Auckland market.

In 1847 the newly-arrived Charles Partington ventured into partnership with John Bycroft and together they took over the Epsom Mill in St Andrews Road.

In May 1850 Partington purchased for £200, two sections on Symonds Street near the intersection with Karangahape Road, adding a third property three years later.



Southwell's memorial.



Partington's Mill, c1905, Photo: William Price. [Alexander Turnbull Library Ref 1/2-001160-G.](#)

He asked Henry White to build a six-storey windmill, from bricks of clay dug from the site, at a cost of £2000. The walls were 685mm thick, made using special wedge-shaped bricks.

In August 1851 the first flour was advertised for sale. The company advertised as the Victoria Flour Mills and Steam Biscuit Factory. During the Land Wars of the 1860s Partington secured a very lucrative contract to supply government troops with biscuits.

Many professional photographers took panoramic shots of Auckland from the mill. The mobile app features a great collection of photos taken between the 1870s and the 1960s.

Charles Partington died in 1877, leaving his business affairs in disarray. He is buried in the General/Wesleyan section under Grafton Bridge.

16 Historic tram shelter

This facility – a waiting room and toilet – was built in 1910, reflecting municipal architecture of the era. The combination of brickwork with corner and arch 'rustication' (the appearance of big masonry blocks) is intended to show solidity and permanence. For many years it was at the centre of a busy transport hub.

▶ Take the steps back down into the cemetery.



The tram shelter in action, c1930s. [Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 7-A11030.](#)



17 Goldsworthys

The lives of John and Elizabeth Goldsworthy are a saga encompassing much of early colonial life in New Zealand.

John Goldsworthy was born in 1810 in Cornwall, England. In 1833 aged 23 and employed as a miner, he married Elizabeth Richards, aged 18 at the Crowan Parish Church.

John and Elizabeth migrated to the proposed new colony at Port Nicholson (now Wellington) with three children as part of Colonial Wakefield's New Zealand Company's colonists.

While the Goldsworthys were at sea on a 152-day voyage on the *Bolton*, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, and New Zealand had become a British Colony.

After only one month in Port Nicholson they and 12 other Cornish families lost all their possessions in a fire. Within a few months the Goldsworthys headed for Auckland arriving soon after the establishment of the new capital.

John Goldsworthy worked as a labourer for the Colonial Government, helping erect the new Government House.

John and Elizabeth Goldsworthy had 9 children, born over a 16-year period between 1835 and 1851. Anna Maria was one of the earliest

Goldsworthy family headstone.



Pākehā children born in the new capital of Auckland: the first born only 15 days earlier.

Copper was discovered on Kawau Island in 1841, and the Goldsworthys moved there for a short time in 1844. Then, for reasons unknown, they quickly moved on to the copper mines at Great Barrier Island. By 1849, John's occupation was described as 'sawyer,' involved in milling kauri timber.

One morning, with John away the family was surprised by a Māori war party doing a haka. One warrior held a tomahawk to Elizabeth's head, while another took the thatched roof from their house to make a whare. A warrior took clothes off their clothesline, but this was too much for Elizabeth. She rushed out and pulled a man's shirt from his hand. Still the Māori men took away the family's clothing, and their geese, plucking them alive.

John and his son, John junior, aged about 15, travelled Bendigo and Ballarat in Australia for the Victorian gold rush in about 1852. After their return the family lived in St. George's Bay, in Parnell. At this stage (1855), John described his occupation as 'labourer.'

In early 1855 Elizabeth died of consumption at her daughter's home in Shortland Street, aged only 40. John then bought for £250.00 a 71ha coastal farm property near Mullet Point, Matakana. He also owned a sailing cutter, the *Elizabeth Ann*.

In early 1863 John married Jane James, aged about 35, in Wakefield Street, Auckland. He died in 1865 of a 'disease', probably cancer, of the liver and lungs, aged 55. He was buried with Elizabeth. John Goldsworthy's signature in his will as a simple 'X' confirmed that he had remained illiterate.

► Carefully cross under the Grafton Bridge, avoiding the graves, then turn right.

18 Major General George Dean Pitt

Lieutenant Governor of the Province of New Ulster (New Zealand's North Island) and a Knight of the Hanoverian Order – a title very rarely awarded.

Pitt was one of the major military figures in early colonial Auckland. His son and two of his sons-in-law were also military officers in Auckland in the 1840s.

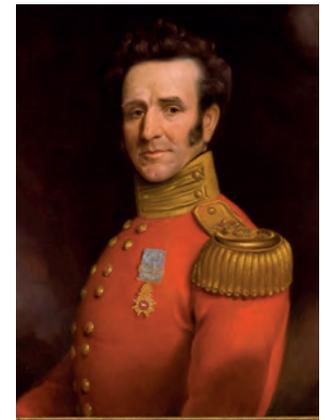
"The deceased had seen much service, having been engaged at the capture of the Danish West India Islands in 1807, and of Martinique in 1809. He served also in the Peninsula from 1811 to 1814, and was engaged in the most memorable operations of those eventful years, including the battles of Albuhera, Vittoria, Pampeluna, and the Pyrenees, and also the siege of

Badajoz." – *The New Zealander*, 11 January 1851.

Pitt, his wife Susan and eight children arrived in Auckland in October 1847, aboard the barque *Minerva*. They lived in a house in nearby Grey Street next door to Sir George Grey's residence on Karangahape Road. The house was demolished in 1944 for the new Central Fire Station.

Pitt (who died in 1851) and his son Lt William Augustus Dean-Pitt (1833-1890) lie directly adjacent to William Hobson's grave in the Anglican sector.

► Head up to the steps to complete the loop walk.



George Dean Pitt, 1851.
Wallpole Antiques, London, UK.

More stories

Our free mobile app (on the STORY platform) has many more fascinating stories about graves of interesting people, and social, historic and ecological themes.

Scan this QR code to download.



More trails

There are two more trail guides for Symonds Street Cemetery, you can download these guides at aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Grave database

Detailed information about the location and names of the people interred in this cemetery can be found in the Digital Library on the Auckland Libraries website.