

# HISTORY OF THE GREYTOWN TRUST LANDS

## PART I

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### **Early History**

Many people have asked "just what is the Greytown Trust Land - where did it get its land from and for what purpose does it exist?" The Trust Land is really just a continuation of the Small Farms Settlement Association set up to establish a township in the Wairarapa in the 1852-54 period. Perhaps if we delve further into the past when the settlers and immigrants first started coming to this land of promise we will see that the desire to own a piece of land was so important as it was born out of the very necessity to even exist.

In the early 1840's when the New Zealand Company was persuading men and women to immigrate to New Zealand, the company portrayed an attractive new and promising land - even to the extent of offering the immigrating labourer and tradesman a generous pay of 18 shillings per week - wet or fine - if they could not find other employment.

The New Zealand Company at this time had not intended the immigrants of the tradesman's class to be land owners, but to be available mainly for the convenience of the local government, businessmen, and the few land owners. The real truth of the matter was that the New Zealand Company had little money to buy land and what land there was available for that purpose was kept at a high rental to be out of the financial reach of most of the new settlers. Also over fifty per cent of the land sold was to absentee owners.

It was not until after the arrival of Captain Grey, Governor of the Colony from November 1845, that something was done to improve the condition of the immigrants, when a large number of 100 acre

sections at the Hutt, Karori, and Porirua were subdivided and let or leased to labourers, with or without a purchase clause. A large number of the Company's immigrants, who were occupying small sections in the Hutt, Karori and the neighbourhood of Wellington, were to become the more successful small farm settlers of the Wairarapa. Most of these people were, at this time, living on small plots of land, growing their own vegetables, and fruit, and with the surplus sold, wherever possible, they were able to supplement their meagre incomes. In most cases they paid a high rental for their land and others occupied land belonging to absentee owners. It was apparent that many of the immigrants had considerable knowledge of horticulture and farming.

In September 1843 at a meeting of settlers held in Wellington at which it was decided that "the settlers of Port Nicholson require immediately an extensive district in which to depasture their increasing flocks and herds, and that the Company's principal agent be requested to adopt forthwith the measures necessary to render approachable and to open for sale the district of the Wydrop (Wairarapa)." Colonel Wakefield wrote to the Court of Directors on the importance of opening up the Wairarapa valley to settlers by means of a road up through the Hutt. He mentioned in his letter the many persistent requests from settlers for land in this bush and grassland that was "just over the hill". Colonel Wakefield maintained that a small district was of paramount importance.

Despite these moves, nothing was done to carry out these requests until, in open defiance of the law, a number of settlers went to the Wairarapa with their flocks and herds and occupied extensive areas of land under native leases. At the time of the final surrender of the Charter of the New Zealand Company in July 1850, the Wairarapa was occupied by not more than thirty stockowners holding land under native leases.

### **The Birth of the Small Farms Settlement**

In Wellington during 1851, Mr Justice Chapman gave a lecture to settlers on the merits of 'Peasant Proprietorship', and referred to the success that had been obtained by some of the small farm occupiers of Karori and the Hutt. He expressed the hope that the day would not be far distant when the district of the Wairarapa would be dotted with prosperous small farms. After this meeting

Mr Joseph Masters, who had seen the difficulties placed in the way of working-class settlers getting land to farm in New Zealand, suggested the setting aside of a block of land for men of small means.

In 1852 a deputation consisting of Messrs Ludlam, Renall, Jackson, Tocher and Scott, waited upon Sir George Grey with a request for land and for compensation for the unduly high rentals of 5 shillings to 20 shillings per acre per year paid to the New Zealand Company.

Although Sir George Grey promised them he would do all he possibly could, the fact was that he had no land available for this purpose because land purchase agreements with the Maoris had not been finalised. However, the settlers, who had confidence in Sir George Grey, gave him a grand dinner and ball in the Hutt which was largely attended and described as a "brilliant social occasion".

The next morning a deputation waited on the Governor at the residence of Mr Ludlam, and Sir George Grey offered the settlers a block of land for settlement at Pakuratahi (North of Upper Hutt). This was respectfully declined by the deputation as they felt that it would be better to wait and see what success Mr Donald McLean (Government Land Purchasing Officer) had in the Wairarapa.

Mr Tocher had earlier visited the Wairarapa and described it in glowing terms as "a park-like area with grassland beside clear-running rivers". Shortly after this, at a meeting of settlers at the Hutt Bridge, Mr Masters, representing Wellington settlers, and Mr H H Jackson, representing the Hutt settlers, were appointed to visit the Wairarapa and select a block or blocks of land for a small farm settlement.

### **The First Steps to Settlement**

Progress was being made at last. Sir George Grey had kept his word and commenced a movement of land purchase in the Wairarapa, and this was brought to a successful conclusion by Mr Donald McLean, the Land Purchasing Officer. On the 4 March 1853, Sir George Grey reduced the price of rural land (apart from that set aside as one hundred acre "common" grazing land, as in England) from 20 shillings to 10 shillings per acre.

It was not long after the issue of this proclamation that the Small Farm Settlement Association was founded, and the negotiation for the purchase of several blocks of land in the Wairarapa completed. However, before any land could be sold the Constitution Act had to be passed and

Dr Featherston, Superintendent of the Province of Wellington had notice of this gazetted on 1 August 1853. In September of the same year, Mr Domett, Civil Secretary, gave Dr Featherston details of the boundaries of the purchased blocks in the Wairarapa successfully negotiated earlier by Sir George Grey, and requested information in conjunction with the Commissioner of Crown Land, Mr Dillon Bell, on reserves necessary in the district for towns, villages and public purposes. In reply, the Superintendent recommended -

"(1) That for the present, all the land should be reserved as a Hundred, which extended from Burling's at the foot of the Rimutaka Range, to the Waingawa river, in order to give the promoters of the Small Farm Settlement scheme a chance to carry it out.

"(2) That the pre-emptive right of holders to native leases in the Wairarapa be extended from 80 acres to 640 acres".

The first recommendation was completely contrary to the wishes of the Small Farm Settlement group who wished to be able to "purchase" their land at not more than 10 shillings per acre and certainly not have to pay a yearly rental for the land, as had so many had in the past, and were still doing. Sir George Grey immediately noted this trouble and arranged for blocks of land reserved for the Small Farm Settlement Association to be available for purchase to its members at 10 shillings per acre.

### **Settlement at Last**

The two settlements founded by the Small Farm Settlement Association were first Greytown, named after Sir George Grey, and second, Masterton, named after Mr Joseph Masters who was vigorous in its promotion. Other townships were visualised and a committee consisting of Messrs Jackson, Tocher, Masters, and Chew was set up, but no attention was paid to their recommendations.

The settlement of Greytown was to be within the area purchased on and around the Kuratawhiti clearing where 10,000 acres were available. The exact siting was probably agreed upon by Messrs Jackson, Tocher and Captain Mein Smith who was the appointed surveyor. Mr Joseph Masters certainly had no doubts where the other township should be - up near the banks of the Waipoua river. There were several names proposed for the first settlement: Masters proposed the name "Grey" as a tribute to the Governor. Then came the hyphenated name of "Grey-Town", which appeared on Corlett's plan as "Greyton", and from these suggestions they finished with the lasting name of "Greytown".

### **Greytown**

The actual township of Greytown was surveyed by Mr W Corbett who had the 120 town acres carefully laid out from the proposed trunk road by 21 February 1854 - thus the first township was formed and open for selection on the 16 March 1854 - on which day a meeting of interested settlers was held at the Crown & Anchor Hotel in Wellington. Members had to pay into the Land Office the price of their suburban section 20 pounds, and on production of the receipt at this meeting they were entitled to participate in the selection.

The big day arrived, and at the meeting that evening some 80 people were present - more than half being practising farmers from the Hutt and other country districts. Of the 120 people who had joined the association 79 produced the Land Office receipt. Fortynine of these settlers selected their town acres in Greytown and 30 in the second northern village, to be called Masterton. After business was concluded a joyous party, amid songs and toasts, was enjoyed, and confirmed in no uncertain terms the names of both townships.

There were rules and regulations to the purchase of land in the reserves set aside for the Small Farms Settlement Association. Each reserve was divided into a township to consist of not less than 100 acres - laid out in one acre allotments. Immediately adjacent to the town was laid off 100 suburban sections of 40 acres each. The balance of the reserve was laid off so that the purchaser could take any number of acres from 40 to 100, and these were called rural sections.

Another provision in the agreement stated "The township will be purchased from the Government in one block - each end must be surveyed and laid off at the expense of the Small Farm Settlement Association in order to be exempt from the Government regulations for the sale of land in townships. The whole of each township to be vested in trustees who, at the end of 12 months, convey to each purchaser his town acre - providing that such purchaser shall have fulfilled the conditions hereafter required: - that is to say, he must have resided on some portion of his purchase at least three months - or have expended thereon not less than 30 pounds on improvements. Also he must retain his interest in the whole of his property under these regulations or forfeit his right to the town acre. At the expiration of 12 months, as before mentioned, all conveyances will be made by the trustees to the parties entitled to the same, and all town acres remaining unappropriated will be sold by auction and the proceeds applied for the benefit of the town under the direction of the Wardens. Each purchaser under these regulations, will be allowed to select one town acre for which will be charged one pound - also 40 suburban acres at the Governments price of ten shillings per acre. Rural land will come under the same regulations as to price as suburban land, but each purchaser will be allowed to select in addition to his suburban land, any quantity from 40 acres to 100 acres - or a purchaser may select rural land without a town acre - or a suburban allotment. Actual occupiers with families will have the option of taking a rural section for each male child, but the privilege can only be accorded to bona fide occupiers. One pound deposit will be required from each intending purchaser, and as soon as one hundred names are recorded, the order of selection for the town acres and the suburban allotments will be determined by ballot."

#### **Small Farm Settlement Trustees**

The trustees appointed were Messrs H H Jackson, and Joseph Masters, with Mr William Allan as chairman. Mr C R Carter came in as a trustee at a later date. However, some difficulties occurred in that not all the rural and suburban sections were provided, and there appeared to be no legislation under which the trustees could be appointed. Also there was a delay in issuing a clear title to the

town acre selected. Many of the town acres which should have been forfeited were purchased by Greytown residents or other land purchasers within the block for a mere trifle, from one to five pounds, upsetting one of the main conditions of the Association. Had these town acres been reserved as an endowment for the town, Greytown would have had a considerable income for years to come. The town of Greytown originally consisted of 120 acres. Of these, 89 were sold prior to 1860, 15 were then unsold. Two acres were sold to religious bodies and 14 town acres were reserved for public purposes.

Much has been written about the arrival in Greytown in March 1854 of the first settlers under the Small Farm Settlement Association. Certainly the courage and determination of Messrs Kempton, Stevens, Moles, Oates, O'Connor, Meads, Hawke, Hodge and many others, started the development of a promising township. It was unfortunate, but understandable, that in their enthusiasm to establish their homes and farms, the affairs of the Association were neglected. Mr Joseph Masters was too concerned about his affairs in Masterton and was replaced by Mr Renall. Also, Mr H H Jackson was not as active as he could have been - probably because his "Stonestead" holding at Woodside kept him fully occupied. Mr William Allan was left to look after Association affairs but there was evidence of lack of direction from the trustees.

### **The Town Belt**

Another serious problem in the formation of early Greytown was that the land on the east side of the town had not been bought from the Maoris due to an oversight by Mr Donald McLean. Although it was covered in heavy bush with deep swamplands and therefore rather difficult to clear and farm, something had to be done to secure this land. Some 48 acres on the east side, known as the town belt, were purchased, in addition to rural land at Moroa and East Taratahi, which provided farms for the unfortunate settlers who had missed out on holdings adjacent to Greytown. The 48 acres were in addition to the 120 town acres in the first survey. All this land was paid for (80 pounds), except

for eight acres. Thus 160 town acres were purchased by the Association through Mr William Allan on 29 March 1856, the monies being paid into the Land Office. The remaining eight acres were paid for by Mr Charles Rooking Carter in June 1858, who had by this time replaced Mr William Allan as trustee.

The apparent lack of interest in the affairs of the Association left the management to the sole trustee Mr C R Carter, for a number of years, and he, too, left the country for nearly four years. It was not until 1867 when Mr Carter had returned to New Zealand, that the affairs of the Small Farm Settlement Association were again revived. A committee comprising of Messrs Moles, Kempton, Hirschberg and Stevens was appointed to work with Messrs Jackson and Carter. The purpose for which this committee was formed, was to try and transfer town acres for the use of schools, court house, public hall, telegraph office and similar buildings, but it appears that although 14 corner town acres had been pencilled in for these facilities, most had been sold by the trustees, which was within their powers. However, the town belt remained intact and had been leased for the past 14 years. Unfortunately the lease monies had to be shared with Masterton on an equal basis under the terms of the agreement made at the time that the extra 48 town acres had been purchased in Greytown. This was a generous gesture on the part of Greytown and, no doubt, open for debate, as the purchase had cost Greytown 250 pounds in 1884. There was still controversy over the purpose of the Association, but the original regulation stating "... for the benefit of the town" remained valid. Mr Charles Rooking Carter, one of the members of the Association, endeavoured to push the idea of establishing a grammar school, but it seemed obvious that the greatest benefit to the town was through general education.

#### **Formation of the Greytown Trust Lands**

In 1869 Mr Charles Rooking Carter asked to be relieved of his duties as a trustee, and this resulted in a request from most of the members of the Small Farm Settlement Associations of Masterton and Greytown, that an Act, to be known as the Wairarapa Town Lands Management Act, be passed by the Provincial Council in 1870 under which the trust lands of the two towns were vested in trustees; Messrs Jackson, Mole, and Hirschberg for Greytown; and Messrs Renall, Masters and Robert Hore for Masterton. The following year, the Greytown Trust Act and the Masterton Trust Act made



provision for the division of funds between the towns, including those received from the rental of the 48 acres of Greytown Belt. A further Act of 1872 added the final touches to this rather complicated business.

The rural and town reserves of Greytown remaining to be included in the schedule of the 1871 Act were, in addition to the town belt of 48 acres, town acres No's 1,2,9,60,62,89,90,91,92,112,93,119,120 and half each of numbers 61 and 111. A special act was necessary to validate the transfer of Section 32 to the Government for the use as a Court House and Telegraph Office.

The first meeting of the Greytown trustees in terms of the 1871 Act took place on 19 April 1872 when Messrs Mole, Arnot, Lucas, Smith, Walker and Wakelin were appointed the six trustees for the ensuing year. With 200 pounds in hand the Trust might consider itself fairly well started on a long and useful life. The aim of the Trust has always been basic, to promote education and public utilities within Greytown, and throughout the years many dedicated trustees have served this body voluntarily, towards this end.

#### **The Trust Prior to PILA Fire 1896**

Probably the first public service provided by the Small Farms Settlement Association was the site for the first school in the Wairarapa, this being on the corner of Main and Jellicoe Streets on the northern side. In fact, a strip of land on the northern side of Jellicoe Street, from Main to East Street was ultimately provided at different stages. The second site provided was the opposite corner for the Methodist Church in 1864, although this site seems to have cost Mr Hart Udy the sum of 5 pounds. In this same year a section was provided on the corner of Main and Church Streets, on the southern side, for a town hall. Although the Public Hall Company Ltd was set up, indications are that the Small Farms Settlement Association contributed largely to the funds as we find later, the Greytown Trust collecting the rentals for the town hall.

St Luke's Anglican Church site, on the northern side of the town hall was also provided in 1868. The first action of the newly-formed Greytown Trust Lands Trust in 1871 was to provide 200 pounds for the Wairarapa Institute and Library, Dr Welch having provided a site in Main Street,

where the Borough Foreman's house (No. ) stands. This institute was to receive yearly grants from the Trust for the next twenty years or more.

Probably one of the most important gifts to the town was the site for the first hospital - one and a half acres, sections 57 and 58, in 1873. This came after sustained efforts by the Reverend Amos Knell and Doctors Welch, Smith and Pratt, all of whom were citizens of Greytown.

### **The Greytown Trust Lands Trust In Action**

The first 20 or so years of the Trust's records were unfortunately destroyed by fire in the Permanent Investment & Loan Association's offices in early 1896, but records in the Cyclopedia of New Zealand state that their annual grants to the Greytown Public School was 60 pounds; to the Institute 60 pounds; and to the Greytown Borough Free Library 60 pounds. Also, the Fire Brigade received 10 pounds as did the Park, or, Recreation Reserve. In those days, when farthings were still in use, these annual grants were very generous amounts and worth a major part of the Trust's income. Education and public utility remained the Trust's main objective and how broadly they interpreted the term "public utility" may be gauged by the fact that in September 1896 a grant of 50 pounds was made towards the construction of the Matarawa Bridge over the Waiohine River, the object of which was to bring business from the farming community of Matarawa to the township of Greytown. During the same period a special grant of 60 pounds was made to the Greytown Borough for upgrading the reading rooms; also 60 pounds to the school committee to use in its general account. Yet, when the cricket club waited on the Trust for in 1899 for assistance in improving their cricket pitch on the Recreation Reserve, the application was declined on the grounds it was a private subscription club. Two years later the bowling club made application to the Trust for a loan of 100 pounds, but this was also declined on the grounds that "all the trustees played bowls and could therefore be said to have a financial interest in the bowling club". Some instances of humour, perhaps unintentional, occur in the Trust records. For instance, "Chairman Wyeth brought forward a suggestion from the Borough that a bonus be paid to the first man on horseback to give a

fire alarm at the Fire Station." While in 1901, the Fire Brigade's application for assistance to purchase a fire engine was declined on the grounds that "it was beyond the means of the town". In the same year a grant of 5 guineas was made towards the town clock which was built into the tower of the old Post Office on the corner of Kuratawhiti and Main Streets. The Greytown brass band received a similar amount.

In 1905 a special scholarship was offered to the school for the most advanced pupil and the sum of 30 pounds made available. However, this practice was later discontinued as it was felt that more general help in education would prove of greater benefit to a greater number students. In 1906 the Borough Council made application for assistance in building a new town hall and the sum of 300 pounds was suggested by the Chairman of the Trust, Mr D P Loasby, but Mr I D Hargety strongly opposed this as "being contrary to the provisions of the Trust Act" and that "it would ruin the Trust for years to come". This was a strange outlook for a man who had been mayor of this town only two years earlier. However, a special meeting on 13 March 1906 saw the 300 pounds granted and as well as this donation, the Trust Lands gifted the section where the town hall stands.

### **Progress**

It is interesting to note that in 1907 the three acres of recreation reserve (later to be the rugby grounds in East Street) which had previously been administered by the Park Trustees, was transferred to the Greytown Trust Lands Trust, while the balance of three acres, belonging to Mrs Mire Taka Love, a Maori lady of importance, was leased to the recreation reserve trustees.

However, it was the Trust Land Trustees who paid the rent, and in 1911 the Chairman, Mr D P Loasby, negotiated the purchase of this land at 40 pounds per acre, so the Trust owned the entire reserve of six acres.

In 1911 the Borough Council decided that public swimming baths would be a fitting memorial to mark the coronation of King George V, so the Trust came up with 50 pounds and a section approximately 100 yards south of the recreation reserve, on which to build them. The section was

leased to the borough council for a nominal rental of two pounds per year for 21 years.

In today's terms these grants seem small - although the grant to the school was up to 80 pounds - but we must consider the Trust's source of income. Town sections were only worth 100 to 200 pounds, and were difficult to lease out, and when leased out, the Trust was receiving only 1 to 2 per cent on capital value on these sections, so the Trust's income was meagre, to say the least.

### **World War I Years**

World War I during the years 1914-1918 was a grim and testing time for all. The Trust immediately gave 25 pounds to the Empire and Defence Fund and the following year a further 50 pounds to Great Britain and Allied Relief Fund - this was as well as keeping up with their annual grants to the school, borough library, fire brigade etc. During this period they also decided to plough up the Recreation Reserve and grow oats. It is interesting to note that Garrity Brothers' quote for various works; ploughing 12/6 per acre, harrowing 1/6 per acre, dicing 2/6 per acre, cultivating 3/- per acre, rolling 2/6 per acre and sowing of grass seed 2/- per acre.

In August 1915 the Wairarapa Hospital and Charitable Aid Board needed more land, so the Trust provided about 3 acres at 12 pounds per year for 10 years; then 15 pounds for the next 11 years.

One of the more important moves which the Trust made was in 1917 when the trustees decided a person leasing a section for 7 years and wishing to build a residence on such section would be given a 21 year lease at the same ground rental, providing the house met with the Trust's approval.

The site of the Foresters Hall on the corner of West Street and Kuratawhiti Street became available for 45 pounds, so Chairman Loasby thought this would be a grand place for a beauty spot in the town - a tidy garden and rest area. The idea was accepted and the section developed and used as such for many years. Some local people termed it "Loasby's Folly" but for many others it served the purpose for which it was intended and was indeed a "rest spot".

At this point it is interesting to point out the service which Mr D P Loasby gave the town. He served as mayor for 12 years and was chairman of the Trust for 32 years from 1906 to 1938 - an outstanding service record to Greytown.

### **Soldiers Memorial Park**

One of the big efforts of the Trust came in 1919 when a move was made to purchase O'Connor's Bush for a Soldiers' Memorial Park. A sum of 500 pounds was forthcoming immediately - a generous amount considering their income two years previously was only 196 pounds 10 shillings - but the citizens of the town were also enthusiastically behind this project. It is difficult to imagine Greytown without its delightful park, but it must be remembered that this amenity which we and so many others enjoy did not "arrive" of its own accord.

### **Rising Costs**

Following the World War I years Greytown, as with the rest of the country and the world, moved into a prosperous yet restless period. Costs were starting to rise and maintenance on sections and buildings now started to cost much more than before. The aim of many people was to own a motorcar or motorbike. The kerosene lamp gave way to gas, and gas, in turn, to electricity. All at a steadily rising cost. For example, in March 1936 the Trust accepted Mr H C Trotman's tender of 775 pounds for a house in McMaster Street, while 13 years later a similar style house was 2,281 pounds an increase of nearly 300 per cent.

The depression era had an effect on everyone and in the early 1930's people were not able to pay their debts. Many were out of work and others earned only meagre incomes so the Trust had to "write off" many accounts owing to them. However, the grants, though somewhat reduced in value were maintained according to priority, and some new names began to appear on the list of grants: Plunket Society, Cancer Research, Memorial Park, Health Camp and Clinic, but the school and borough library always had first call on available funds.

In 1938 the State Housing Department acquired from the Trust about 10 sections along Papawai Road frontage to Main Street. Also Humphries Street frontage to West Street, for the purpose of

erecting State houses for rental to tenants. These sections were taken by the State Housing Department from the Trust under the Public Works Act at prices ranging from 100 to 230 pounds per section.

### **Pine Plantation in the Town Belt**

In 1939 came the first move by the Trust to plant *Pinus Insignis* trees in the vacant areas in the town belt. Frank Dennes saw the financial gain potential in this project and pursued it over the years. Although always a fire hazard the pines became a valuable asset in a few years.

### **The Nineteen Forties**

The remuneration of the Secretary of the Trust at this time was 52 pounds per annum while the auditor's fee had doubled to 2 pounds 2 shillings for his service.

In the early 1940's grants took on a steady pattern - Borough Library 80 pounds, Primary School 80 pounds, Greytown Fire Brigade 20 pounds, Plunket 10 pounds, Sick and Wounded 25 pounds.

In 1942 the Wairarapa Hospital Board required more land so the Trust provided sections 105, 107, 109 and 51/55 being approximately 8 acres for the sum of 345 pounds.

In 1944 Mr J Kiernan passed away. This kindly gentleman had served the Trust as secretary for eight years while also filling the position of town clerk for many more years.

The year of 1950 was probably the most unusual year of the Trust history being the first year in eighty years that it did not make a cash grant to any organisation. This was due to commitments in building and also to a change in rating, from capital to unimproved valuation. This was to effect not only the Trust but the whole town, as its residents could not build a good home without being rated out of existence. Farmland within the Greytown Borough was protected by the application of the Urban Farm Lands Act.

During 1950 a deputation from the school committee comprising of Messrs H J Farley, B H Bull and G Foote as headmaster, waited on the Trust with an application for financial help in obtaining more land for playing fields at the north end of the existing school grounds. This was favourably considered and implemented the following year.

### **Revision of Rentals**

In 1950 a revision of rentals showed that most rentals currently being charged by the Trust were below the Fair Rents Act, and it was necessary to raise the rentals to a more reasonable return on capital value. Shortly following this move, the grants to the borough and school and other town services started to flow again in ever-increasing values.

### **The Nineteen Fifties**

The period between 1950 and 1960 was a considerable challenge to the trustees. Greytown was developing quickly in property development with an influx of population from other areas. Costs were rising and a great deal of care and foresight was needed to see to that development and policy was for the benefit of Greytown as a whole, with consideration for the growing number of Trust tenants. The aim of the Trust was, as always, to foster education and develop town amenities and it was indeed fortunate that men of the calibre of Messrs H J Nightingale, F J Nichols, F Dennes, H G Carter, P Hammond, W Grigg, and many others, were willing to give their services voluntarily for the benefit of the community.

In 1951 the Trust gave 300 pounds towards the War Memorial Baths, while the Rugby Club received constant assistance with improvements to the recreation reserve - buildings, fencing and landscaping. Two years later the Rugby Club were granted a 21 year lease at 10 pounds per year. The pine belt presented an increasing fire hazard problem, and in 1954 a brilliant save by the Greytown Fire Brigade saved the plantation from destruction.

The year 1954 also saw the start of an intensified housing demand, and sub-division of larger Trust sections into one fifth of an acre was made to help this development. This required a revision of the Trust Land Trust Act to facilitate and simplify leasing. The general yard stick to determine a fair lease was 5 per cent of an up-to-date value of a bare section (unimproved value) - with a minimum of 5 pounds per year.

The Education Board acquired more land for Greytown District High School for additional playing fields at both the northern and southern ends and the Trust was happy to oblige.

In February 1955 the Waiohine River rose some 13 feet above normal and flooded most of the town, several trustees were involved in assisting the Wairarapa Catchment Board to solve this problem.

In October 1956 the new Trust Lands Trust Act came into force and this simplified the leasing of sections for which there was an ever-increasing demand. With the additional leases being taken up, the incomes of the Trust and the Borough increased and 1957 grants by the Trust had risen to 115 pounds for the usual town amenities.

In the year 1958 the chairman of the Trust, Mr T H Warburton, announced the usual grants of 234 pounds, 13 shillings and 4 pence, the highest on record so far. These were school library 25 pounds, Free Kindergarden 20 pounds, Plunket Society 25 pounds, Borough Library 25 pounds, Girl Guides 10 pounds, Boy Scouts 10 pounds plus Scouts Building repairs 25 pounds. Also 50 pounds to Memorial Park for the additional walk-way through the bush area, plus 44 pounds 13 shillings and 4 pence for the painting of the Memorial Baths. A continuing policy of sub-division was also stressed to meet the increasing demand for sections. This demand brought close co-operation with the Greytown Borough Council in extending their services in water, drainage and sealed roads.

### **The Nineteen Sixties**

The Memorial Baths and buildings, had been completed by 1961 but the swimming club needed rooms and facilities for its increased membership, and the Trust gave 500 pounds towards this project. Total grants in that year amounted to 735 pounds. In 1963, Mr Vic Cooke as chairman, announced grants of 235 pounds. He also noted that over the previous 11 years the grants from the Trust funds had totalled 2,185 pounds.

The era of the 1960's proved to be a restless one. The term "inflation" was on everyone's lips. The currency change from pounds to dollars came into operation. Values of land rocketed, and most of all, with the increasing demand for higher incomes came the endless spiral of costs - particularly building costs. Trust sections were in great demand because their relatively low land rental saved the capital outlay on a section for a building site and this money could be applied to the building of a new home.



The Trust rentals again became a problem due to this inflationary trend, and maturing 21 year leases with right of renewal had to rise dramatically. In some cases, previous rentals of 5 to 20 pounds per annum became 60 to 120 dollars overnight, and yet the old yardstick of 5 per cent on current value was only just maintained by these rises.

In 1966 most of East Street was taken up by residential building and a move was made to develop Reading Street - the pine trees had been milled some years earlier, and the stumps removed by Mr "Bunt" Hayes - so these sections were clear and tidy.

### **Mr Frank Dennes**

1966 also saw the retirement from the Trust of one of its most valued members, Mr Frank Dennes. In the chairman's report of that year it is recorded - "It is with deep regret that your trustees received the announcement of the retirement of Mr Frank Dennes as a Trustee. Mr Dennes has held office for a period of 42 years and during his term of office has given outstanding service to the Trust both as Chairman and a Trustee. His knowledge of Trust affairs will be greatly missed and we do thank him most sincerely for his guidance and service given at all times over such a long period. We desire to place on record our deep appreciation of the outstanding service given to the Trust by Mr Dennes throughout his 42 years as a Trustee."

During 1966 Greytown's Order of St John decided to build a hall on Main Street next to the Bank of New Zealand, and the Trust gave them 500 pounds towards this project. They also gave 135 pounds to the school and other organisations that year. At a special meeting in March 1967, the Trust decided to purchase the corner section on McMaster and Main Streets known as the Kempton residence, for the sum of 2,750 pounds and this was done under section 21 of the Trust Land Act 1956. No doubt it seemed a good investment at the time, but in the years to come this property was to become a problem, although the Trust's intentions was to utilise this central commercial site to the best advantage to Greytown.

Later in 1967 the Greytown Jaycees undertook to upgrade the Soldiers Memorial Park and pavilion and also shift the children's playing area to the frontage on Kuratawhiti Street. The Trust gave 800 pounds towards this project.

1967 brought the change of pounds to dollars so while the new notes were nice and crisp the school committee decided to build an assembly hall, to which the Trust pledged \$2,000 over two years. Understandable, due to this commitment the 1968 grants were only \$270.

### **Extensions to Trust Lands**

In looking ahead, the Trustees could see that if the housing demand continued at the present level, there would be a shortage of available sections. Negotiations were started with the Hospital Board for land on the Papawai and East Street frontage which, oddly enough, the Trust had sold to the Hospital Board in March 1942 for 345 pounds. This transaction was to take a year or two to complete because the Hospital Board could not sell for less than the value placed on it by the Ministry of Works which was \$4,000 for just 3 acres.

During 1970 all available sections in East Street were built on and, with the co-operation of the Greytown Borough, services were being laid in Reading Street. The Trust was barely keeping ahead of the demand for leasehold sections.

### **"Cobblestones"**

Early in 1970 the Greytown Jaycees, under Mr Don Knight's leadership, showed considerable enterprise in an ambitious venture to establish "Cobblestones". The idea was to develop Mr Trevor Tully's house and stables which were previously Cobb & Company's coach depot from 1857 to 1877 into a local museum. Cobb & Company provided the main horse-drawn transport within the Wairarapa and over to Wellington during those years. Onto this property was shifted an old pioneer cottage, made available by Mrs Stella Bull. It was shifted from its original site near the St Luke's Church to form part of a museum of the early pioneer period. The Trust was asked to buy five sections on East Street plus two more on Main Street for \$4,500, while the Jaycees purchased the Tully house on a half acre section. The rental of the Trust sections to the Jaycees was fixed at \$224 per year, but for the first two years the Trust donated this rental back to the Jaycees to enable them to undertake further development such as shifting the cottage and setting it up, bringing in period

machinery, shifting and setting up a vintage woolshed and shifting the original Wairarapa hospital building from its site near the Buchanan Ward to the Cobblestones site. An extensive programme indeed and a credit to the Jaycees.

Despite these calls on its income, the Trust was able to donate \$310 for other local grants.

### **Trust Centennial**

The centennial year for the Trust was 1971 and a move was made towards writing a book on its history, and indeed Greytown, but this seemed too costly and the project was shelved. Instead an educational award was set up, called the Centennial Education and Research Awards - making \$200 available to four Greytown students.

The following year the Greytown Rugby Club again renewed their 21 year lease on the recreation grounds but this time at \$50 per year.

The Greytown Borough in 1972 was faced with the problem of extensive repairs and improvements to the Town Hall and asked the Greytown Trust Lands for assistance. The Trust was happy to oblige, having a "grass roots" interest in this building having donated the land and 300 pounds in 1906 for its establishment. The Trust paid \$1,500 being the cost of the front decorative wall, and at the request of the Trustees a bronze plaque was set on this wall as a memorial to the late Mr Frank Dennes who served the Trust and the town for so many years.

The Trustees, in July 1972, decided to celebrate the completion of their centennial year in a practical and satisfying manner. A dinner was held in the Forresters' Arms Hotel on Saturday 29 July, and this relatively small affair, but a very happy occasion marked the Trust Land's centennial. Those present were - His Worship the Mayor Mr F C Yule and Mrs Kath Yule; Trust Chairman Mr J A Hannan and Mrs Joan Hannan; Trustees and their wives - Mr and Mrs G Brunton, Mr & Mrs R M Batty, Mr & Mrs M H Bouzaid, Mr & Mrs T H Warburton, and Mr V Cooke and his partner. Past Trustees present were - Mr Percy Hammond, Mr & Mrs W Grigg. Also present were the Trust solicitor, Mr J K Cullinane, and the Trust secretary Mr T J Morris and Mrs Morris. It appears that the auditors were forgotten.

In the same year a group of Greytown businessmen showed interest in the Kempton residence site on the corner of Main and McMaster Streets. They believed this situation to be ideal for shops and offices. However, there was little growth in the business sector at that time and the interest lapsed.

### **Housing Demand Continues**

The housing demand was still vigorous so the Trust purchased land from H L Gray Estate, and t,his, together with the hospital block, gave over 20 sections for future requirements.

The Trust's Education and Research Awards had six applicants in that year for which the Trust made \$260 available. They also made grants to Kuranui College library, Greytown Primary School library, Greytown Borough library, Greytown Free Kindergarten, Plunket Society, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, St Johns Ambulance, plus a special award to the top student of the Secretarial Course at Kuranui College. The total of these grants amounted to \$335.

The Reading Street subdivision in 1973 provided a further 13 attractive sections but costs and values were also increasing rapidly and a basic rental of \$60 per annum was set for those wishing to take up a 21 year lease.

In the Annual Report of March 1974 the Chairman, Mr J A Hannan, stated that grants to Centennial Education and Research Awards were \$275, and the usual grants to libraries and institutions were \$395, making a total of \$670.

Sub-division during the same year provided a further sixteen residential sections with twenty or more to be available in the hospital block. The Trust had by now disposed of most of its house properties and this money was used for land development. The total assets of the Trust at this period was approximately \$240,000.

### **Growing Public Interest in Trust Land's Affairs**

In 1975 there was a growing critical interest in the Trust's affairs by the general public, and it was necessary to check the roll of eligible voters and the general procedures of Trust business. Yet,

although the electors' list was prepared and a public meeting advertised for 27 February 1975 when objections could be heard, no one arrived, so it seemed that the criticism was not substantiated.

This year saw grants increased considerably. The town hall and special grants amounted to \$346.55 plus a further \$782.50 to libraries and local organisations, making a total of \$1,129.05.

It was at this time, also, that the Ministry of Works required more land to house the teaching staff of Kuranui College, and the Trust provided two more sections in East Street at \$4,000 each.

### **Further Inflationary Trends**

The year 1975 also saw the effects of inflation - the rising cost of living, increases in the cost of building, which had a disturbing effect on people in the lower income bracket many of whom were Trust tenants. With 21 year leases maturing, the rentals of Trust sections were forced up from a nominal few dollars to over one hundred dollars. The trustees were very concerned about the effect on tenants both present and future: but they were also bound to see that the Trust was run in the correct manner. In June 1975, Mr Warburton was able to have passed a resolution that rentals for 7-year terms be assessed at 4 per cent providing that this met with legal approval. A few months later, the Chairman, Mr J Hannan, had this motion amended to 3 per cent, but only on his casting vote. At this time, it is interesting to note, that current interest rates were 9 and 10 per cent.

Costs to the Trust were increasing at the same rate as they were to the general public and it is noted that the secretary's honorarium in 1975 was twelve times greater than that of fifty years earlier, which was indicative of general cost increases.

Despite these financial changes grants were still very important to the Trust. The rugby club had their centennial close at hand and proposed publishing a quality book and to this project the Trust gave \$350. Also the cricket club needed to upgrade their pitch in the Soldiers Memorial Park and were granted \$200 towards the cost of a motorised roller.

The Greytown Borough required finance for sewer extension and the Trust provided a loan. Grants for education and research of \$567.50 were approved, plus an additional \$500 for libraries, boy scouts and others.

## **Trust Elections**

The year 1976 brought its problems regarding election of trustees. It was necessary to prepare a roll of voters, and to hear objections to the roll. In the past, although vacancies were advertised according to the Trust Lands Act, public interest was very limited. In the past when the trustees retired in rotation, they were generally re-elected or, in the case when a trustee retired permanently, an appointment was made to fill the vacancy. However, with growing public interest in the affairs of the Trust it became necessary to hold an election when two sitting members completed their term and became eligible for re-election. As it happened, the two sitting members were re-elected, but the financial cost of the election was \$649. However, a democracy was observed. It was obvious that the Trust Lands Act of 1871 1/2 and its various amendments needed updating to meet the changed conditions of the times, the revision of leases on a shorter term basis, and the introduction of the sale of land to tenants.

The Trustees carefully inspected and considered every clause in the old Act with the assistance of the Trust solicitors, Messrs J K Cullinane and E F R Cooke, with the idea of simplifying procedure. Arrangements were also made to appoint Mr Campbell Young, the retiring Town Clerk, as Returning Officer for the Trust

## **Subdivision Continued**

Early in 1977 the subdivision of the hospital block was completed and serviced and 12 sections became available for rental - several of which were applied for in advance. The question of rentals was decided at 4 per cent of current value which was from \$4,300 to \$5,100 each, although independent valuers had put other rentals at 5 to 5-1/2 per cent for residential sections, with a higher figure for commercial.

The Plunket Society lease came up for renewal in June 1977 and this was again renewed for 21 years at \$10 per annum.

At the 105th Annual General Meeting of the Trust the Chairman, Mr J A Hannan, thanked the Returning Officer Mr Young, on the efficient manner he had conducted the last election when there

had been four candidates nominated to fill two vacancies. He also pointed out the considerable financial benefit to young people with Trust sections when they could build their home without having to encumber themselves with the purchase of a section. Grants totalling \$725 were made to the Borough and local organisations. There was also a feeling that too little was known of the Trust and its work and a decision was made that some literature detailing the activities of the Trust should be available to the public.

### **The New Act**

In September 1977 the draft proposals of the new Act were submitted to the Trustees for verification. The question of election of Trustees, particularly with regard to elections which were proposed to be at the same time as the borough elections every three years, but with only three trustees retiring at a time; and leasing procedure and period of leases for revision, were carefully studied with a view to simplifying the Trust Lands Act to meet present-day conditions.

In October 1977 the Chairman, Mr T H Warburton, directed that a document should be produced detailing the history and activities of the Trust, and Mr B H Bull was delegated to complete this work.

February 22, 1978 saw a special meeting of the Trustees, the Returning Officer and members of the general public to endorse the electoral roll for the annual election to be held in April, when two Trustees were to retire under the rotation scheme.

It was also considered desirable that a meeting with the Greytown Borough Council be held to discuss common aspects of the town and future development. Borough Councillors attended the March 1978 Trust meeting and an open discussion on development, general policies, future housing requirements and what type of development was desired, proved that both parties held a common view.

On April 10, 1978 the trustees had a special meeting with the Wairarapa Member of Parliament, Mr Ben Couch, who was to present the new Trust Land Act to Parliament for its endorsement. Mr Couch showed an alert interest in Trust affairs, having particular concern for tenants of Trust properties. Mr E Cooke, the Trust solicitor was in attendance to explain details and with

Mr T H Warburton in the chair, a very free and helpful discussion took place. It was agreed that tenants should have an opportunity to purchase their sections. This meeting was also significant in that Mrs J Prince, the Trust's first woman trustee, was present, along with other trustees, Messrs J A Hannan, V Cooke, D B Knight, B H Bull and the secretary, Mr L Johnsen.

### **Conclusion**

In looking back over the history of this Greytown it must be concluded that the town is blessed in having an organisation dedicated to improve the educational standard and way of life of its citizens. The prudent members of the Small Farms Settlement Association over a hundred years ago, who created the Greytown Trust Lands, could be justly proud of its achievements. Sir George Grey, too who saw the need for small farm settlement and personally sponsored its development, would add his blessing.

The trustees, past and present, take pride in the knowledge that many students have been assisted towards further education; thousands of children have benefited through grants to libraries and schools; local organisations have been helped financially, and finally, many householders in Greytown have been able to build their own homes on Trust sections.

The Trustees throughout the years, all of whom have given their time and service voluntarily, may surely feel that they have carried out the aims of the Trust Lands, "...to promote education and town utilities", to the best of their abilities.



### **Acknowledgement**

This brief outline of the Greytown Trust Lands is intended to give the reader an appreciation of the Trust's purpose and an insight into the many hours of voluntary work by the Trustees whose job is to prudently distribute Trust funds, within the Borough of Greytown for the purpose of education and town utility. In compiling this history, my thanks go to Mr A G Bagnall for references from his books - Old Greytown, and his Wairarapa History. I also used Richard Wakelin's History and Politics 1851-1877. Thanks also to Mr Laurie Johnson the Trust secretary for ready access to Minute Books, etc, and last but not least, to my wife Iris, for her constant help in correctness and typing.

B H Bull

**Dated April 1978.**

