

Monumental Inscriptions as Records

Chris Gousmett

Corporate Information Manager, Hutt City Council¹

Inscriptions on monuments form an important record in their own right.² They provide information of various kinds and reflect the concerns, interests and perspectives of the period in which an inscription was written. The question arises then, if an inscription on a monument is a record, how does that record function in terms of evidence? What is it evidence of? Inscriptions can be evidence in at least two ways. Firstly, with regard to the event, person or location which the inscription describes, it provides information which it was considered important enough to have captured in a permanent, public form, and presents that information for consideration, remembrance and guidance in understanding. Secondly, it provides evidence of the viewpoints, perspectives, priorities and convictions held by the creators of the monument. This raises a variety of questions such as: who decided to commemorate this person, place or event in this way? Were they seeking to promote a particular viewpoint in the form, the text and the placing of the monument? Why this particular commemoration and not others?³

When considering such questions, we also need to consider the perspective of the questioner: what leads someone to raise questions about the nature, text, siting, and selection of a monument? Is it curiosity, wanting to learn more stimulated by their encounter with the monument (surely a prime purpose of a monument)? Or is it scepticism about the motives of those who placed the monument? Is that scepticism justifiable or is it form of a post-modern suspicion towards all metanarratives? I take a position which could be described as a “hermeneutics of trust” rather than a post-modernist “hermeneutics of suspicion” so that a monumental inscription, for instance, is initially to be taken at face value while taking care to assess the quality of the evidence which it presents, and that of which it purports to provide evidence. It could perhaps be summarised as “trust and verify.”

Sometimes it happens that issues are raised around monumental inscriptions, and at that point we then need to follow through and verify the perspective which the monument seeks to present to us. And

when the accuracy and appropriateness of inscriptions are challenged in later years, this raises issues around whether the inscriptions should be altered, updated or replaced, with a new inscription reflecting the concerns, interests and perspectives of a subsequent period.

One monument in Lower Hutt, erected in 1925, has met with its fair share of controversy over the years. This is the memorial to the British soldiers who died on 16 May 1846 in the "Battle of Boulcott's Farm."⁴ This battle ensued when around 200 Māori of the Ngati-Haua-te-Rangi tribe from Whanganui attacked the stockade at Boulcott. Six British soldiers who died in the attack, and another who died from his injuries in the days following, are commemorated on this memorial, along with two other locals who died in other circumstances around the same time. Another soldier who died from injuries received in fighting (Pte. French) is also commemorated, but his death came as a result of separate action at a later date.

There are several files on the memorial at the Hutt City Archives,⁵ and an extensive file on the memorial kept by the Department of Internal Affairs (which incorporated the War Graves Division), is now at Archives New Zealand.⁶

It is interesting to note the sequence of events which led to a monument being erected 79 years after the event which it commemorates. While it is not mentioned explicitly in the documents relating to this monument at the time, there were many memorials being erected commemorating the fallen of the Great War (First World War). This may have heightened interest in remembering those who had died in earlier conflicts. The main War Memorial in Lower Hutt was constructed during 1922 and was unveiled on ANZAC Day 1923, and the prevailing public mood may have sparked interest in a formal memorial for the battle at Boulcott's Farm.⁷

A stone had been erected in memory of the fallen shortly after the action. This is generally understood to have been placed on the grave of Sgt. Ingram, but according to one source it was placed in the Wellington church.⁸ By the 1920s this stone had been removed from its original location (wherever that may have been) and was stored in the cemetery chapel. The inscription on this stone read:

Sacred to the memory of Sergt. Ingram and the men of the 58th Regiment who fell on the morning of the 16th May 1846 whilst gallantly defending their post at the Hutt against a desperate attack made on it by the rebel natives.

This stone is erected by Lieut. Page and their surviving comrades of the 58th Regiment.

Lieutenant Page was the commander of the troops of the 58th Regiment based in the Hutt, and author of the official report of the battle.

The Mayor of Lower Hutt, Mr William Thomas Shand, had discovered this stone in the chapel at the Bolton St cemetery and requested for it to be moved to Lower Hutt because of its local significance. At its meeting on 13 November 1922 the Lower Hutt Borough Council received a letter from Wellington City Council agreeing to the relocation of the memorial. It was agreed to store the stone pending a decision on a site where it would be re-erected. At their next meeting on 27 November 1922 the Council agreed to a proposal from a monumental mason to repair the lettering on the stone, providing that this was done in gold leaf. According to a report in the *Evening Post* of 29 December 1923 (Local and General, page 6) this work was carried out.

The relocation of the stone was then objected to by the Early Settlers and Historical Association. The Minister of Internal Affairs, the Hon. Richard Bollard, in a letter of 11 January 1924 raised with the Council their objections with the Council, and asked whether the Council would object to the original memorial stone being returned, to be replaced with a standard memorial stone as was then being used for all war graves.⁹ In his letter to the Council the Minister refers to the proposal of the Council to erect the stone "on the spot where the last stand was made". The inscription would assist in "drawing attention to the site of Boulcott's farm, the rebellion of 1845-46, and the names of those who lost their lives during the fighting in the Hutt Valley."¹⁰ The Minister also says that the forthcoming Budget would include funds for renovating war graves in Sydney Street Cemetery (and elsewhere), including the re-erection of any stones which have fallen down "and the stone to Sergt. Ingram and the men of the 58th Regiment is a case in point."¹¹

When this offer was accepted, the Minister offered a block of granite with a suitable inscription, with assistance from the Early Settlers and

Historical Association for costs.¹²

A motion to acquire the triangle of land on the corner of Old Military Road (now Military Road) and Main Street (now High Street) was passed by the Council on 26 February 1923, and the title was transferred to the Council.¹³ Local residents had collected £60 for the purchase of the land,¹⁴ which is still owned by Hutt City Council as a part of the road reserve. There is no clear date when the memorial was erected, but the contract was let in April 1925 with work to commence immediately,¹⁵ and at the Council meeting of 18 May it was reported that it was to have been completed by the 14th of May. The memorial was funded by donations and funds from Lower Hutt Borough Council and the War Graves section of the Department of Internal Affairs. The Hutt Golf Club contributed £25,¹⁶ the Council agreed to contribute up to £30,¹⁷ while the Early Settlers and Historical Association contributed £5-5-0.¹⁸ The final cost was £84-13-6 divided between the Department of Internal Affairs (£49-13-6), Lower Hutt Borough Council (£25-0-0) and the Early Settlers and Historical Association (£10-0-0).¹⁹

The official opening of the memorial was initially proposed for ANZAC Day 1925, but the memorial could not be completed in time. The Department of Internal Affairs enquired whether an unveiling could be scheduled for the 16th of May, the anniversary of the battle. The Governor-General, Sir Charles Fergusson, was invited to perform the ceremony. Unfortunately this letter was discussed at the Council meeting of the 18th of May, hence too late for the anniversary. However, the Council also requested that the unveiling be postponed until the Mayor returned²⁰ – he was absent in Sydney on family business. A letter from the Hutt Golf Club of 10 July 1925 offered the use of the club rooms for the afternoon tea following the unveiling “subject of course to the function taking place on some other day than Saturday or Sunday.”²¹ The Council wrote thanking them for their offer.²² The Town Clerk wrote to the Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs on 12 August 1925 reporting that the Mayor had suggested delaying the unveiling in the hope of better weather for an outdoor gathering.²³ The unveiling was then scheduled for 20 January 1926, but again cancelled due to the illness of Mr Edwards, Secretary of the Early Settlers’ and Historical Association (who worked with Mayor Shand and Mr L E Scott of the War Graves Division of the Department of Internal Affairs to oversee the setting up of the memorial). It was then proposed to hold the unveiling in early April, but in March Mr Edwards suggested a date towards the end of April as he was still unwell. On 15th March 1926 further correspondence from the DIA suggested “any

date after Easter” at a convenient time.²⁴ The *Evening Post* reported on 9 October 1926 that the unveiling was to be held “quite soon”. There is no further correspondence on this matter in the DIA file, or in the newspapers of the period, and we may be justified in assuming in the absence of any indication to the contrary that no formal unveiling ever took place.

The guest list for the proposed unveiling included (in addition to the Governor-General, Sir Charles Fergusson), the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. R F Bollard, his wife and daughters, Sir Heaton Rhodes,²⁵ Minister of Defence, and Lady Rhodes, the General Officer Commanding NZ Military Forces, war veterans, Early Settlers and Historical Association executive members, the President of the South African Veterans’ Association, President of the RSA, Executive of the Womens’ National Reserve, Mr Scott of the War Graves Division of the DIA, and the Under-Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, the press, and the spouses of the various people invited.²⁶ Subsequently it was suggested that Mr Glover, the monumental mason responsible for erecting the memorial, should also be invited.²⁷

Shortly after the memorial was finished Mr W B Hardy asked for an iron fence to be erected around the monument. The Council meeting of 6 June 1925 deferred a decision until costs could be determined and also sought an estimate for a suitable wrought iron fence around the War Memorial in the Recreation Ground.²⁸

A Mr P J Huthnance (a resident in Old Military Road) wrote on behalf of himself and other residents to the Council suggesting that placing a railing or fence around the memorial “recently erected” would not improve it, enclosing a photograph.²⁹ He suggested that “if the railing is designed to keep the boys from sitting on the memorial it will need to be somewhat spikey and about 10 feet high to keep the boys from climbing over, that is Lower Hutt boys, who are so healthy and full of life.” It was further suggested that boys would still see any fence as a challenge to climb “unless to do so is to trespass on private property” – remarkably law-abiding junior citizens! Council agreed in their meeting of 27 July 1925 not to erect a fence,³⁰ and also decided that the inside of the memorial enclosure should be concreted³¹ – the contract specifications had required it to be filled with soil “free of weeds” and sown with “best lawn grass.”³² The photo provided by Mr Huthnance shows the original soil base (which it must be acknowledged would be difficult to keep neat), while the photo in the DIA file shows the base concreted in (see the photo on following page of the memorial as it is today).



A previously unknown photo of the memorial taken by Mr Huthnance in 1925 was discovered during search of the Hutt City Council Archives for information for this article. A very similar photo was found in the DIA file, which showed the ground around the plinth concreted in, while the photo above shows the memorial as per the original plan for the ground around the plinth to be filled with soil and grassed.

Over time the memorial suffered from vandalism, so in 1963 the Council commissioned a report on the monument, which stated that replacement plaques were necessary as the marble plaques had deteriorated. The report said that “a large number of letters are loose” referring to the original style where the inscription was made of letters of lead inset into the stone, and that repairs would be uncertain, hence the recommendation to replace the plaques with granite incorporating engraved wording.³³ These are the plaques still in place on the monument.

Recently there has been renewed objection to the wording on the plaques, with suggestions that changes are in order to correct names and other details.

But should inscriptions on old monuments (dating from 1925) be changed to reflect current sensibilities? Can this be done without destroying the historical integrity of the monument, let alone to correct mistakes? By “historical integrity” I mean here only that a monument should perhaps remain unaltered and intact as a product of its time, even if later sensibilities would prefer that inscriptions had been otherwise worded. But from the outset this monument incorporated errors of fact



The memorial as it is today. Compare the white marble plaques in the earlier photo with the granite plaques which replaced them in 1963. Plans in the DIA file indicate that the bottom of the stone is rounded, similar to the top, and it therefore sits in the base something like an egg in an egg-cup.

or ambiguous wording. Monuments should not simply be accepted at face value as there may well be bias or censorship (real or unconscious) involved in its construction – not just in text but in images or other portrayals – without closer scrutiny. “Trust but verify.”

Investigating the history of this monument brought a number of interesting facts to life.

I will not go into the historical details of the battle itself, as these are more than adequately covered elsewhere.³⁴ Here I shall confine myself to discussing the wording on the plaques and what errors these may contain, and other matters relating to the history of the monument itself and how it came to be.

This is where archival research comes into play to ascertain how the monument came to have the inscriptions it did and what issues may arise as a result.

The wording on the plaques was drafted by the War Graves division of the Department of Internal Affairs and approved by the Minister at the time, Hon. Richard Francis Bollard.³⁵ The wording for the plaque as reported by the *Evening Post*³⁶ from a Council meeting of 28 August 1924 was:

To the Glory of God and in memory of the men of the Imperial and Colonial Forces who fell in the Hutt Valley, 1846. Killed in action on Boulcott's farm on 16th May, and whose bodies rest near this stone: Lieut-Corporal James Dockrell, Privates William Allen, Robert Brett, Thomas Bolt, J McFadden, T Sonham. 25th May, 1846, died of wounds: Lieut. Sergeant E Ingram (all of 58th Regiment); Private French (99th Regiment). Accidentally killed: Sergeant Hicks, Armed Constabulary, Private J Swan, Hutt Militia.

The wording as recorded in the newspaper account of the meeting differs slightly from that now in place, with Sergeant E Ingram being given as S Ingram. Each of the men of the 58th Regiment mentioned on the memorial are noted in the Muster Roll as having been killed in action on 16th May, with the later date of death for Edward Ingram.

So then, who are the people commemorated on the monument and what errors might need correcting?

While a single plaque was approved, the memorial was eventually built with three separate plaques. Possibly this was due to the change from the original intention to have a single granite block to a boulder backed by a concrete wall.³⁷ According to the DIA file, the original plan was for the memorial to be constructed of a large block of rough Coromandel granite to be sourced from Auckland.³⁸ Subsequently the decision was made to use a stone from the property of a Mr William Cottle on the hills above Belmont (with no record found of the reason for the change – possibly since a local stone would be less expensive to move).³⁹

The centre plaque mounted on the stone itself reads:

To the Glory of God and in memory of men of the Imperial and Colonial Forces who fell in the Hutt Valley during the Maori War – 1846.

The initial draft of the text as documented in the DIA File had “men of the 58th and 99th Regt.” This was crossed out and “men of the Imperial and Colonial Forces” substituted,⁴⁰ probably to recognise that those accidentally killed did not belong to either Regiment.

The inscription on the plaque mounted on the right-hand side of the rear wall reads:

Killed in Action at Boulcott's Farm	
58th Regt.	
L/Cpl Jas Dockrell	Pte Thos Bolt
Pte Wm Allen	Pte J McFadden
Pte Robt Brett	Pte T Sonham
Died of wounds and buried at Wellington	
L/Sgt E Ingram	Pte Jas French
58th Regt.	99th Regt.
Accidentally Killed	
Sgt Hicks	Pte J Swan
Armed Consty.	Hutt Militia

The latter two men were buried at the Bolton Street Cemetery in Wellington.⁴¹

The plaque mounted on the rear wall on the left hand side has an inscription as follows:

This stone marks the site of Boulcott's Farm stockade, the most advanced post of the regular troops in 1846. Here 200 Natives on the 16th May under Rangihaeata's orders and led by Te Karamu of the Ngati-Haua-Te-Rangi Upper Wanganui were repulsed by a garrison of 50 men of the 58th Regiment. The bodies of six Imperial men who fell, rest nearby.

The draft text also included the ascription: "Erected by Hutt Borough Council, Early Settlers Assn, and NZ Government." This was ultimately omitted from the memorial.

Two differences between the inscriptions and the record of the proposed inscription as given above are worth noting. Firstly, the monument does not state that the "bodies rest near this stone" but that they rest "nearby." The actual location of the burial is unknown, but it is fairly certain that it is on the Golf Club grounds, at least some 400

metres away. A newspaper report at the time states that "The slain were buried on Sunday on the field of battle."⁴² In 1924 it was reported that "From information obtained from time to time from old residents the graves are said to be beneath the Golf House."⁴³ Secondly, the centre plaque adds that the memorial commemorates those who fell "during the Maori War – 1846."⁴⁴

More issues arise in connection with the accuracy of names and ranks as given on the monument. A number of the names can be considered correct in that every source consulted gives identical spellings.⁴⁵ These are:

L/Sgt. E Ingram: Lance Sergeant Edward Ingram, regimental number 1839. Born Weymouth, enlisted 1 August 1842. Died of wounds on 24 May 1846 and buried in the Bolton Street Cemetery,⁴⁶ although there is no record of the location of his grave. There have been suggestions that he did not hold the rank of Sergeant, as the Muster Roll for instance gives his rank as Corporal. However, newspaper reports at the time give his rank as either Sergeant or Lance Sergeant, while the New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian (27 May 1846) reports that he was buried with military honours, with his cap, sword and sash on the coffin borne by four soldiers, preceded by a firing party with arms reversed, and the pall supported by four sergeants. Also, the memorial commissioned by his commanding officer, Lieutenant Page, and subscribed to by the men of the 58th, gave his rank as Sergeant. It would be unlikely that a commanding officer would approve ceremonial honours or the erection of a memorial which inaccurately attributed this rank to him.

Pte Wm Allen: Private William Allen, regimental number 1222. Born Godshill, enlisted 17 December 1839. Private Allen achieved posthumous fame when reports of the battle claimed that he continued to blow the bugle to raise the alarm even while being cut down.⁴⁷ The bugle was subsequently recovered from an abandoned Ngati Toa camp although it has subsequently been lost.⁴⁸ There was a piece of poetry honouring Allen's memory: "The bush is gone from vale and mountain range / White men and brown clasp hands – their feuds are o'er / Old landmarks vanish, old conditions change / But Allen's name shall live for evermore."⁴⁹

Pte Thos Bolt: Private Thomas Bolt, regimental number 1151. Born in Portsea, enlisted 21 October 1839.

Pte. Robt Brett: Private Robert Brett, regimental number 1153. Born Shalfleet, enlisted 21 October 1839.

The names and ranks of three of the men have been questioned. These are:

L/Cpl Jas Dockrell: Lance Corporal James Dockrell, regimental number 1893.

Pte J McFadden: Private James McFadden, regimental number 1061. Born possibly in Templemore, enlisted 2 February 1839.

Pte R Sonham: Regimental number 1479. Born Naas, enlisted 18 August 1841.

The different sources for the names of three of the men indicate considerable confusion.

Memorial Inscription	L/Cpl Jas Dockrell	Pte J McFadden	Pte R Sonham
Official Report by Lt. Page, 16 May 1846 marked (Copy) ⁵⁰	L. Corpl. James Dockerell	Pte J McFadden	Pte T Souham
New Zealander, 20 June 1846 reprinting the official report	Lance Corporal James Dockrell	Private J McFadden	Private T Southam
Wellington Independent 20 May 1846 Page 3 column 2	Corporal James Dockerell	Private James McFadden	Private T Sougham
Wellington Independent 20 May 1846 Page 3 column 4	Lance Corporal James Dockrell	Private James McFadden	Private T Southam
New Zealand Spectator and Cook Strait Guardian 23 May 1846 reprinting Official Report	Lance Corporal James Dockrell	Private James McFadden	Private T Sonham
Regimental Muster Roll April-June 1846 ⁵¹	Private Joseph Dockrell	Private James McFadyen	Private Thomas Soughan
New Zealand Journal, Vol. 6, p. 267 Reprinting NZ Spectator	Lance Corporal James Dockrell	Private James McFadden	Private T Sonham
New Zealand Journal, Vol. 6, p. 282 Column 1 Reprinting Wellington Independent	Lance Corporal James Dockerell	Private James McFadden	Private T Southam
New Zealand Journal, Vol. 6, p. 282 Column 2 Reprinting Wellington Independent	Corporal James Dockrell	Private James McFadden	Private T Southam
War Medal Roll	Pte. Joseph Dockrill	Not mentioned	Not mentioned

As can be seen from the details above, the sources vary only slightly for Private McFadden, as the Muster Roll for April-June 1846, which records the names of all men currently paid as members of the regiment, gives the only variation in his surname.

J Dockrell has various spellings for his surname (Dockrell, Dockrill and Dockerell), his first name given mainly as James but as Joseph in the Muster Roll and the War Medal Roll, and his rank varies between Private, Lance Corporal and Corporal.

There are multiple versions of the name for T Sonham. About the only agreement between the sources is that he held the rank of Private and that his first name was Thomas; his initial on the monument (R) is thus erroneous. There is no way to be definite about the correct spelling of his name without further research in the military or other records in England. The variations in these sources, even ones close to the event concerned, indicate the risks of relying on newspapers for proof of information. I suggest that Lieutenant Page should be given the benefit of the doubt and until further evidence emerges, we could assume that the names and ranks in the official report should be considered correct, except probably for the name of Private Thomas Sonham.

Others commemorated on the memorial include:

Pte Jas. French: Private James French, a member of the 99th Regiment.

He was born about 1820 in Paisley, Scotland, and joined the 99th Regiment in 1837. A casual observer of the monument might think that Pte. French was also a casualty of the battle at Boulcott, but in fact he was injured in a subsequent fight on 19 June at Taita.

“During a skirmish between the troops, militia, friendly natives and the rebels on the Hutt Road, near to Taita on 16 June '46, one officer and four men were wounded. One Private French – 99th Regiment, died from wounds on June 25th, buried at Sydney Street Cemetery June 26th 1846.”⁵⁰

Apart from this note from the Early Settlers and Historical Association, there seems to be no recognition in the DIA records that Pte. French died after this later skirmish, leading to the mistaken impression that he died as a result of the fighting on 16th May 1846. However, in a Memorandum sent to the Minister of Defence by the Minister of Internal Affairs, inviting him to the unveiling, the memorial was said to be in honour of “those who fell in the attack on Boulcott’s Farm on 16th May, 1846, and also those men serving during the Maori War who died in the Hutt Valley”⁵¹ – presumably Hicks and Swan (and possibly inferring

French as well).

Pte. French was aged 27 years. There is no record of his burial in the Wellington City Council cemetery database. Private French is also commemorated on the memorial of the 99th Regiment in Hobart, Tasmania.⁵²

Sgt. Hicks, Armed Consty: Sergeant Hicks of the Armed Police Force (the correct name of this organisation at the time of his death), died on 28 April 1846. There is no record of his burial. Newspaper articles give his affiliation as the Hutt Militia. He was killed while on a foray into the bush “to drive out any natives who might be lurking there.” One of the other members of the party tripped over a stump and his musket discharged, injuring Sergeant Hicks who died the following day.⁵³

Pte J Swan, Hutt Militia: Private John Swan, of the Hutt Militia. He was lying on the upper floor of the stockade at Taita when the musket of one of the men below discharged and killed Swan instantly (on 20 June 1846) aged 22 years. He was buried with military honours near the Hutt Bridge (the exact location is unknown).

So there appear to be some corrections required in the details of the men listed on the inscription. But is that the only issue?

There was also a civilian who was injured in the Battle of Boulcott who is not commemorated here or elsewhere. This man was **Thomas Hoseman**, from Essex, UK, who arrived in Wellington on 6 November 1841.⁵⁴ He died of his wounds several days later on 21 May 1846, aged approx. 25.⁵⁵

In addition to the men who died, the report of the battle lists four men wounded. In addition to Sgt Ingram, there were three other members of the 58th Regiment, Private Thomas Taylor, regimental number 1988, Private Patrick Bevan, regimental number 1532, and Private John Ward, regimental number 1522.⁵⁶ They have notes against their names in the Medal Roll to indicate that they were wounded in “the action at the Hutt” in 1846.

Another name which could have appeared on the memorial is that of **Private James Connors**, regimental number 452 of the 58th Regiment. He drowned in the Hutt River on 20th August 1846 when attempting to cross the river in a canoe after a drinking session at the Aglionby Arms. “The parties present endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, but he persisted, and entered the canoe. He was shortly after seen to fall into the water, and though every effort was made by the parties

on shore to rescue him, he unfortunately met with a watery grave."⁵⁷ There is no record of a burial and it may be possible that the body was never recovered, and the statement about a "watery grave" was to be understood literally. It was suggested that his name should be added to the memorial, but unfortunately the tablets had already been completed. The monumental mason, Mr Glover, was instructed to add his name but he indicated that this would be impossible due to the lack of space on the stones, and an additional tablet would be required. He was instructed not to proceed in the meantime, but there is no further mention of Pte. Connors. It would have been possible to add his name when the plaques were replaced in 1963 but it appears he had been long forgotten by then.

If we are to address errors in the information provided on the monument, then Thomas Hoseman also need to be listed, as well as James Connors.

There were suggestions in some sources that a number of Māori were also killed in action on 16 May 1846. This is based on the claims of some eyewitnesses who saw several Māori fall in the fighting.⁵⁸ A contemporary source [within a week of the battle] states "The loss on the part of the rebels has not been correctly ascertained, as they carefully carried off every man who fell in the engagement. Two were known to have been killed, and several were wounded very badly. It is believed that the total number of their killed and wounded is thirteen."⁵⁹ Without conclusive evidence this cannot be confirmed one way or another. While various historical studies state that a number of Māori were killed, the evidential trail in each case comes back to this newspaper report and the report by Lieutenant Page on which it is possibly based, and thus provide no independent verification. We have only the report of Lieutenant Page to go on. The Waitangi Tribunal Report on the Wellington District states that Māori casualties were not confirmed.⁶⁰

This point is important as there have been suggestions over the years of racial bias in that only European casualties of the conflict are commemorated, and the Māori who died were purposefully omitted.⁶¹ However, as there is no conclusive evidence that any Māori died, or how many, or their names, it would seem that no deliberate omission has occurred. Nor could we expect that the names of those who at the time were seen as enemy warriors (also often referred to as "rebels") would be included on the monument, even if they were known when the inscription was drafted.⁶²

There have been objections to the reference of the Māori War with current convention being to refer to the conflicts as the Land Wars. This was raised by a visitor to Lower Hutt in 1972 who wrote to the

Council stating that she found the tone of the memorial offensive, with reference to the Māori warriors as “natives” (as is the case with the Ingram memorial at St James Church), whom the writer assumed were locals fighting to regain land they had lost to colonists. The Council referred this to the Lower Hutt Historical Society for comment before consideration of the matter by a committee of Council. The Society replied pointing out that there had been no previous complaints about the wording, and stated that the Society “has no wish to disturb an ancient monument and as the inscription was in the idiom of that time makes it all the more interesting. If we were writing it today, possibly the wording might be different.”⁶³ The Council agreed with the views of the Society and the Town Clerk replied to the complainant advising her of this decision, also pointing out that local Māori have never objected to the wording, and that the local Māori fought against the invading Māori and none of the local Māori were killed.⁶⁴

A newspaper article in the Hutt News in 1977 at the time of the screening of the TV series *The Governor* mentioned that one scene depicted the killing of a bugler as he sounded the alarm, a reference to the events at Boulcott Farm. The caption to a photo of the monument then states “In the spirit of the times, the memorial commemorates only the white soldiers who were killed. More modern thinking might suggest that Māori too, should have their memorial.”⁶⁵

Again in 1983 a correspondent wrote to the Mayor objecting to the “audacious and biased [sic] wording” on the monument. Again it was suggested that re-wording so that “Maori defenders get equivalent honour and acknowledgement.” The Mayor, John Kennedy-Good [later Sir John], replied suggesting that this was an overreaction to the wording which “while typical attitudes of a past era are not representative of contemporary thinking.” He also said that “In all my long association with the Te Atiawa people, there has never been any suggestion on their part that thought be given to re-wording the inscription.” He concludes “I am unable to agree that history should be re-written by altering the inscription on the memorial stone.”⁶⁶

Another correspondent in 1977 advised that the name of the Māori chief should be Te Mamaku and not Te Karamu, citing the *Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, p.380. The Town Clerk replied that according to the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Te Mamaku took other names, including Te Karamu, and so the inscription is correct.

In 1979 another article appeared in the Hutt News states bluntly on the caption to a photo of the memorial “The information on the plaque

is wrong.”⁶⁷ This is in reference to the statement on the inscription that the memorial “marks the site of Boulcott’s Farm stockade,” which is now generally understood to have been some distance away.

Some interesting information relating to the stockade emerged unexpectedly from the DIA File.

Given the length of time since the battle occurred in 1846, it was a surprise to find correspondence in the DIA file from 1944, almost 100 years later, with claims that part of the Boulcott Farm stockade still existed. This was located on a property at 1 Fry Street (also known as 51 Boulcott St), some 390 metres from the Golf Club building, which was thought to be closer to the presumed location of the stockade. The owner, a Mrs M Driscoll, was using the structure as a washhouse. This was noted in a letter to the DIA of 3 February 1944 proposing that the structure be acquired and preserved, a move the letter writer noted was supported by the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, in conversation with him, as a matter of urgency.⁶⁸ The DIA then discussed it with the Mayor, Mr J W Andrews, who advised that the matter had already been discussed by the Council, but had demurred as Mrs Driscoll wanted a new washhouse built at Council expense as compensation for losing the structure, and the council did not feel able to agree to this condition.⁶⁹ When the DIA advised that further discussions with Mrs Driscoll disclosed that it could be had for no cost of replacement, the Mayor advised that the Council could reconsider. The Mayor and several councillors then made an inspection of the structure with a view to removing it for preservation.⁷⁰ However, there the matter rests and there is no further documentation in the DIA file and no trace of any action by the council in this regard.

However, there may well have been doubt as to the correctness of the claim that this structure at 1 Fry Street was part of the original stockade. The descriptions of the battle indicate that the soldiers were based at the stockade at Boulcott’s farm.

Half the soldiers at Boulcott’s Farm were quartered in Boulcott’s barn which had been stockaded. The remaining soldiers were housed in small slab-built outhouses and tents located outside the stockade fence. Lieutenant Page was resident inside the stockade in Boulcott’s cottage, with Boulcott himself occupying a smaller house adjoining this.⁷¹

The claim can fairly be treated with scepticism given the distance (approximately 400 metres) between the presumed location of Boulcott’s farm house and the site at 1 Fry Street.

Boulcott's Farm and Memorial Sites



A – General location of Boulcott's Farmhouse and stockade in the vicinity of Golf Club rooms.

B – Mrs Driscoll's house and claimed remains of stockade.

C – Boulcott Farm Memorial, corner of High Street and Military Road.

The structure at 1 Fry Street could then have been an early farm building of some kind, which would be more consistent with its use in 1944 as a washhouse, but we can be fairly certain that it was not part of the stockade, or at most, it could have been part of the stockade but had been relocated at some point.

Why then was the memorial placed where it was? In the DIA File there is a memo from the "Inspector" (only initials are given over the position title) reporting on a meeting with the Mayor and Mr Edwards from the Early Settlers and Historical Association, seeking to resolve the dispute over the removal of the stone from Bolton St Cemetery. Mayor Strand was reported as saying that the land purchased at the corner of High St and Military Rd was "believed to be on what was Boulcott's farm."⁷² That was also a stretch, as the nearest boundary of Boulcott's farm was at the south side of the Golf House, some 350 metres away

(if we discount the possibility of the location of the stockade on Mrs Driscoll's property). The draft inscription had initially the text: "This stone marks the site of Boulcott's Farm a military outpost in the defence of Wellington and the last resting place of those killed in action on 16th May 1846." This was amended to read "Boulcott's Farm Stockade" and the reference to the stone marking the "last resting place" was amended to read that the deceased rest "nearby" – although that is still confusing given the likelihood this is about 400 metres away. Another document held by Archives NZ states "The site of Boulcott's Farm Stockade was at what is now the corner of the Main Hutt Road and the Old Military Road... In 1925 a Memorial was erected at the corner of the Main Hutt and Military Roads to mark the site of the stockade ..."⁷³ So around the time when the memorial was erected there was general agreement that it was on the site of the stockade. This appears not to be the case, but it helps us understand why the memorial was placed at that location and not near the Golf House which would have been more appropriate (but also less visible to the passing public).

Conclusion

The wording on the inscriptions has been criticised from a number of angles over the years, and I anticipate that this may continue. The details of the text also reflect the attitudes and perspectives of the period as much as it presents information for public display.

I do not believe that the inscriptions on the monument should be replaced; there is no virtue in trying to re-write history. Instead, interpretive boards could be erected to give more of the background and the significance of the battle and the monument itself, with corrected and expanded details as appropriate. These interpretive boards could point out how attitudes and sensitivities have changed since the monument was erected, although this should also take into account that there were no changes suggested to the text in 1963 when the plaques were redone in granite. Perspectives and attitude changes are more recent, and in considering that, we need to be aware also of how our perspectives will be viewed in the future. Whatever we say now about the events of 1846 and 1925 will not be the last word: further information may come to light putting a different perspective on the monument and its texts, and perspectival changes in the future may well be critical of our current views. This is yet another reason why we should not change the monument itself, otherwise we invite perpetual tampering and to what avail?

The plaques as they now stand are themselves part of the history of the area. There is ample material available in archival sources to enable a better understanding of the people and events commemorated. The monumental inscriptions are now themselves a part of that record and should remain untouched, but interpretive boards should be provided to aid in understanding.

Sources

Minutes and other archival sources in the Hutt City Council Archives. Identified by the code ARCH. Department of Internal Affairs file "Boulcotts Farm & Māori War Memorial in the Hutt Valley," now held at Archives NZ. R12333694. Original file reference: 32/1/75.

Various records held at Archives NZ. Identified with a number commencing with R.

Newspaper reports from PapersPast, National Library of New Zealand website.

Other sources from websites as given in the endnotes.

Endnotes

1. My thanks to Wendy Adlam, Archivist for Hutt City Council, for her assistance in accessing material for this article.
2. The Public Records Act s.4 defines a record to include text "in written form on any material" which would include text engraved on stone tablets.
3. This is relevant for instance in archaeological research where monumental inscriptions may be the only textual evidence surviving from a particular period or culture, or which provide essential significance and context for other documents or artefacts.
4. Now the site of the Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Club.
5. Civic Centre – General. ARCH65418. General Correspondence – DIA. ARCH24871. Military Road War Memorial. ARCH55522. This file for the Military Road memorial is now available online at <http://portal.huttcity.govt.nz/Record/ReadOnly?Tab=30&Uri=4412156>
6. Archives NZ. R12333694. Original file reference: 32/1/75. Referred to subsequently as "DIA File."
7. Ewan Morris discusses this in his article "The Boulder and the Bugler: The battle of Boulcott's farm in public memory." *Journal of New Zealand Studies* NS 20 (2015) 57-58. See also the discussion in Chris Maclean and Jock Phillips. *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*. Wellington: GP Books, 1990.
8. New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian, 9 December 1846, page 3. Wellington City Archives holds a map of the Church of England portion of the cemetery dating from the 1860s but there is no indication of graves for Sgt. Ingram, Pte. French or Thomas Hoseman. These may lie outside the area mapped or were unmarked and thus the location was lost. This would indicate that if the grave for Sgt. Ingram was in this area that the stone had already been moved.
9. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 21/1/1924. ARCH63157.
10. Letter of 20 March 1924. HCC Archives, ARCH24871.
11. HCC Archives, ARCH24871. This seems to confirm that the stone was originally on the grave but may not be conclusive. The stone stayed in the Lower Hutt Borough Council store, rather than being returned to the Bolton St cemetery as requested. Eventually in 1933 it was moved to St James' Church at Lower Hutt and erected there, being formally dedicated at a service on the 13th of August 1933. Hutt News, 18 August 1933, page 4. Memorial services were held for some years on the Sunday closest to the date of the battle, with scouts and others parading at the church and then gathering at the memorial outside after the service. See Evening Post 21 May 1934, page 14 (which erroneously states that Sunday May 20th was the anniversary of the dedication of the memorial, rather than of the battle), Evening Post 20 May 1935, page 10, Hutt News 20 May 1936, page 5. I have not found records of services in subsequent years. Unfortunately the church service registers were lost in the fire which destroyed the church. Wreaths were also laid on the Boulcott memorial in later years on the anniversary of the battle, at least until 1937 – there is a photo of this wreath laying in Archives NZ with the Mayor, J W Andrews, his wife laying the wreath, former Mayor W T Shand, and Walter Nash in attendance. R23696720. AEFZ 22625, 3103/0329-0330. The stone was damaged during work around the rebuilding of the church after it was destroyed in a fire in 1946. A new stone was created with identical wording and this is now in the churchyard of St James' Church. There is a photo of the original stone in Ewan Morris. The boulder and the bugler: The battle of Boulcott's farm in public memory. *Journal of New Zealand Studies* NS 20 (2015) 61. Note the reference to "a desperate attack" by "rebel natives."
12. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 23/4/1924. ARCH63157.
13. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 10/12/1923. ARCH63157.
14. DIA File, Memo of 14 February 1924.
15. DIA File, Letter of 28th April 1924.
16. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 10/12/1923. ARCH63157.
17. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 11/8/1924. ARCH63158. It was subsequently asked to contribute £25 by the Department of Internal Affairs. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 10/8/1925. ARCH63158. This was in addition to the purchase of the land.
18. DIA File, Letter of 22 April 1924. The Committee agreed to contribute £5-5-0 and any further

- amount the members of the Association should more be required.
19. DIA File, letter of 31st July 1925, which erroneously referred to the contribution from "Hutt County Council" which had no involvement in the memorial.
 20. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 18/5/1925. ARCH63158.
 21. Miscellaneous Correspondence HU-HZ, 1923-1927. ARCH28364.
 22. Hutt Borough Council Minutes 23 July 1925. ARCH62158.
 23. HCC Archives, ARCH24871.
 24. HCC Archives, ARCH24871.
 25. As a result of the repeated postponement of the unveiling, Sir Heaton Rhodes responded to a memo confirming the date of 20th January 1926 with a hand-written note to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Richard Bollard, saying "I gather that my resignation will be accepted on Monday next in which case I shall at once make tracks for home [Canterbury]. I suggest my successor in office be substituted for me on the date named." His resignation took effect on the 18th of January 1926. DIA File, Memo 4th January 1926.
 26. DIA File, Invitation List. Not Dated.
 27. DIA File, Letter to Mr Strand, 23rd December 1925.
 28. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 8/6/1925. ARCH63158.
 29. Letter of 6 July 1925. Miscellaneous Correspondence HU-HZ, 1923-1927. ARCH28364.
 30. The photo of the memorial from ca. 1925 was attached to this correspondence in the HCC Archives. Miscellaneous Correspondence HU-HZ, 1923-1927. ARCH28364.
 31. Lower Hutt Borough Council Minutes, 13/7/1925. ARCH63158.
 32. DIA File. Not dated.
 33. Letter from H Glover and Sons, Monumental Sculptors, dated 24 December 1963. ARCH55522.
 34. Ewan Morris, The boulder and the bugler: The battle of Boulcott's farm in public memory. *Journal of New Zealand Studies* NS 20 (2015) 51-71. See also the Archaeological Assessment Report for District Plan Change 35, Hutt City Council, relating to a proposal to build a rest home on the site. <http://portal.huttcity.govt.nz/Record/ReadOnly?Tab=3&Uri=4188822>
 35. DIA File, letter dated 28 April 1925. It is uncertain what sources were used when the initial wording was compiled. No mention of this was found in the DIA file. It is probably that it was based on a letter from Mr W A Edwards, Secretary of the Early Settlers and Historical Association, giving the names of those who died, commenting "I do not think the full list is on record in the War Graves section of your department." DIA File. Letter dated 8 January 1924.
 36. Local and General, *Evening Post* 26 August 1924. The text was not included in the Council minutes.
 37. DIA File, Letter from Under-Secretary to District Engineer, Public Works Dept., 3rd October 1924. "It was originally intended to have but one marble tablet, that being on the stone as shown in your plan, but it has now been decided to place two marble tablets on the wall behind the stone..."
 38. DIA File, letter of 28/3/1924.
 39. DIA File, letter of 1/8/1924. This file also includes the blueprint for the memorial as constructed, using the large boulder.
 40. DIA File. Not dated.
 41. Both died from the accidental discharge of the guns of their fellow soldiers, which raised questions about the age and condition of the firearms issued to troops.
 42. *New Zealand Spectator* and *Cook's Strait Guardian*, 9 December 1846, page 3. The bodies were disinterred and reburied further from the river when the graves were threatened by erosion. Both the original and the new burial locations are unknown.
 43. DIA File, Memo to the Under-Secretary, dated 14 February 1924.
 44. In the DIA file there are a number of references to the "Rebellion of 1845-46."
 45. Newspaper sources are available through Papers Past, National Library website.
 46. In the 1920s some claimed that he was buried in the Sydney Street Cemetery although records of burial in either location are lacking.
 47. See Ewan Morris, *The boulder and the bugler*, for details of his posthumous career as a boy hero (even though he may have been as old as 23 years).
 48. Ian Wards. *The shadow of the land*. A study of British policy and racial conflict in New Zealand 1832-1852. Department of Internal Affairs Historical Publications Branch, 1968, p. 267 n. 1.
 49. Cited in *Evening Post* 5 March 1927 in an advertisement for sight-seeing tours of the Hutt Valley which included the "site of Boulcott's Farm." I have not been able to locate a source for this poetry and it is unclear whether that is the whole poem or just a selection from it.
 50. DIA File. Information provided by the Secretary of the Early Settlers and Historical Association, Mr W A Edwards, with a letter dated 8 January 1924. The other men wounded were Lieut. Herbert, Lance Corporal William Negas, Private John McHull and Private Henry Pollicott. *New Zealand Spectator* and *Cook's Strait Guardian*, 24 June 1846, page 2. He was buried with full military honours, the service being conducted by Rev. Robert Cole. *Wellington Independent* 27 June 1846, page 2.
 51. DIA File, Memo of 4th January 1925.
 52. Lyndall Ryan and Jeff Hopkins-Weise. Memorializing Britain's Imperial Wars in New Zealand in the 1840s. *New Zealand Journal of History* 49 (2015) 2:160-175. The authors suggest that this memorial holds a special place in military history as it is the first memorial to list by name those other than officers who died in battle (compare the inscription for the original stone in Bolton Street Cemetery which list "Sgt Ingram and men.")
 53. *Wellington Independent* 29 April 1846 p. 3.
 54. Two possible candidates are listed by this name in the English records: one born 26 July 1818 in Wanstead, Essex, England; the second around February 1819 in West Ham, Essex, England. See http://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=r_21197559800 and <http://search>.

- findmypast.co.uk/record?id=gbrs%2fb%2f962032401%2fl.
55. Thomas Hoseman also appears in contemporary records as Thomas Houseman or Thomas Osman, but his will, signed by himself, gives Hoseman, which I suggest is most likely correct. Archives New Zealand. Wellington Probate files [first sequence]. R22206854. AAOM 6029 7.
 56. Neither Patrick Bevan or John Ward are listed on the Roll of men who served in New Zealand 1845-1847.
 57. *Wellington Independent*, 22 August 1846, page 2.
 58. This claim seems to be based on the report by Lt. Page on the day of the battle that "Several of the Enemy were killed but carried away by others directly they fell." Archives NZ R24445715. ACFP 8217 NM8/9 1846/260. *New Zealander*, 20 June 1846. James Cowan in *The New Zealand Wars*, Vol. 1, p. 109 states: "The losses of the Māoris were not accurately known, for all who fell were carried off, but two were seen shot dead, and ten or more were wounded, some of them severely." This seems to be based on the report in the *New Zealander*. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/new-zealander/1846/6/20/3>. However, Cowan's comment goes considerably beyond the evidence in the report by Lt. Page.
 59. *New Zealand Spectator* and *Cook's Strait Guardian*, 9 December 1846, page 3.
 60. Te Whanganui a Tara me Ona Takiwa. Report on the Wellington District. Waitangi Tribunal Report 2003 (WAI 145). Wellington: Legislation Direct, 2003, p. 215. This report cites Ian Wards, *The shadow of the Land*, pp. 266-267, and Joy Hippolite. Ngati Rangatahi Report commissioned by WAI 366 Claimants, Jan 1967, p. 39. This report cites Cowan, pp. 104-109, who in turn cites the report by Lieutenant Page. This then remains the only source for the claim that some Māori were killed or injured.
 61. Letter from Ava Hounsell, Frederic Wallis House, 12 Military Road, dated 6 October 1987. ARCH55522.
 62. The European soldiers injured in the attack are not named on the memorial.
 63. J T Williams, Secretary, Lower Hutt Historical Society, 10 Sept. 1972. ARCH55522.
 - 64.
 65. *Hutt News* 18/10/1977. Copy in ARCH55522.
 66. John Kennedy-Good, 25/1/1984. ARCH55522.
 67. *Hutt News* 22/5/1979. Copy in ARCH55522.
 68. Mr W Toomath, 3 February 1944. DIA File. There is an Index card for Council correspondence recording that Mrs Driscoll had written to the Council about the "blockade" (presumably a misreading of "stockade") on 17 and 24 June and 8 July 1943, but these letters appear to have been destroyed some years ago.
 69. The letter from Mr Toomath of 3 February 1944 says "I quite thought the local authorities would take the necessary steps but apparently they are quite apathetic." This could be an indication that there was some doubt about the veracity of the claims that this was a part of the stockade, or reluctance to proceed on the basis of funding a replacement structure for Mrs Driscoll to use as a washhouse.
 70. DIA File. Memorandum to the Under-Secretary. 9/2/1944
 71. Victoria Grouden. Archeological Assessment Report. Summerset Retirement Village Development, Boulcott, Hutt City, Wellington (Lot 1 DP471677). August 2014, p. 14. Available at: <http://iportal.huttcity.govt.nz/Record/ReadOnly?Tab=3&Uri=4188822>
 72. DIA File. Memo to the Under-Secretary. 14 February 1924.
 73. DIA file. "Folder of notes and papers relating to Māori War and Historical Cemeteries, Graves and Memorials." R22250338. ACGO 8398 1/1. Section 120 – Boulcott's Farm, Lower Hutt.