

Memorial for buried patients

Bestselling author book club guest

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Later, he was told that 'those people wanted to be found', 'they've been waiting to be found' and 'they picked you'.

"I've never regretted being involved," he said.

"But I didn't know what to do and I wondered how I could get more interest in this."

Wanting some support to get plots identified and named; the cemetery landscaped and have a memorial wall erected, he sought publicity through newspapers and radio, eventually securing the much needed sponsorship for these projects.

The first sod, to signal the start of the memorial wall, was turned on Sunday, October 17. St John Anglican Vicar Murray Olson blessed the soil while Hastings man Bob Daniell (formerly Bogdan Rymarczyk, son of Kazimierz Rymarczyk) made the first cut in front of about 10 visitors — most of whom had relatives buried in the cemetery.

"It was so exciting for me," said Mr Daniell.

Having turned up to the event with a shovel in the Polish colours and bearing the Polish eagle he seemed the obvious choice to undertake the task.

Mr Daniell recalls driving back to Hastings from Wellington and hearing Mr Zinsli on the radio talking about the Tokanui Hospital cemetery and how he wanted to build a memorial wall.

"I knew that my father was buried there and I had already been forewarned about there being nothing to mark the graves," Mr Daniell explained.

"My sister had visited the cemetery in 1980 and the people at



TC031115SP05BLESSING

MINISTER Murray Olson blessing the site of the Tokanui Hospital Cemetery Memorial Wall prior to volunteers starting the excavation.

the Waikato District Health Board had also been helpful."

After hearing Mr Zinsli on the radio, Mr Daniell was able to get in touch and they have been corresponding by email ever since — the digging of the foundation being the catalyst for Mr Daniell to make that first visit to the cemetery.

"I was stoked when Mr Zinsli took me to the actual place where my father was lying," he said.

Mr Daniell plans to return to the cemetery for the unveiling and the official opening, scheduled for February next year.

The memorial wall is being fully sponsored by James R. Hill Funeral Directors from Hamilton.

The five-paneled curved wall will be made from black granite and will include an etched design along with the names of all those buried in the



TC031115SP05DANIELL

FIRST SOD: Bob Daniell of Hastings was given the honour of digging the first sod, watched by Te Awamutu RSA president Lou Brown.

cemetery and is intended to blend in with the contours of the surrounding landscape.

The unveiling will be held following the installation of the wall.

In the meantime John Austin Ltd is going to spray the grass before levelling out the lumps and bumps, then resowing and rolling.

Each grave will have its own small headstone and plaque with the name of the person, dates and grave number.

"It will be a fitting gesture — it's the least we can do for them," said Mr Zinsli.

"We will be giving them closure," he said.

■ If you are interested in following the progress of developments in the cemetery go to: www.tokanuihospitalcemetery.weebly.com

In conjunction with the release of her latest historical novel *A Tattooed Heart*, New Zealand's bestselling novelist Deborah Challinor will be speaking at Paper Plus on Wednesday, November 4 at 5.30pm for its book club evening — and you are invited to attend.

A Tattooed Heart is the fourth and final book in Ms Challinor's Convict Girls series and is the 'shocking secret' that has held the whole story together.

Ms Challinor was born in Huntly, and attended Waikato University where she completed a Ph.D in New Zealand military history in 1998.

Originally a writer of non-fiction history books, her first historical novel, *Tamar*, was published in 2002 and has been reprinted six times.

In 1995 she won a New Zealand Returned and Services' Association Military History Scholarship and in 1997 received a New Zealand History Research Trust Fund Award and funding from the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board for the first edition of *Grey Ghosts* a non-fiction title based on the research she did for her Ph.D. on New Zealand soldiers and the Vietnam War.

Attention to historical detail is an important part of writing for Ms Challinor as she bases her novels on actual historical events.

Anyone is welcome to hear Ms Challinor on Wednesday evening and can just turn up to Paper Plus.

You are also welcome to pre-register your intentions to attend and to guarantee a place by contacting Paper Plus during working hours, phone: 871 5257.

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