

## LEISURE

# Of passing interest

Historic features in our landscape observed by the director of Puke Ariki, **Kelvin Day.**

South African War Memorial, Taranaki Cathedral Church of St Mary, New Plymouth.

**N**ear the Vivian St entrance to the Taranaki Cathedral Church of St Mary is a large Celtic cross memorial to those Taranaki troopers who died during the South African war of 1899-1902.

The South African war began in October 1899 and was between the Boer South African Republic (Transvaal) along with its Orange Free State ally and the British Empire. During the 2½ years that

the war raged, 10 contingents of volunteers totalling more than 6500 men (plus 8000 horses) had sailed for Africa. There were also doctors, nurses and veterinary surgeons, plus a small number of school teachers. Seventy-one New Zealanders were killed in action or died from their wounds. Another 159 died in accidents or succumbed to disease.

New Plymouth residents began fundraising for the memorial in June 1902, the month the war ended. In February the following year the tender of £57.19 from McNab and Mason, of Auckland, was accepted for the erection of the memorial.

It was designed by Archdeacon Philip Walsh, who had also designed a higher version that was rejected because of the cost. The memorial was unveiled on August 27, 1903 by General James Babington, commandant of the New Zealand Forces. Two sides of the memorial carry the names of seven Taranaki men who were killed. The plans for this memorial, together with others designed by Walsh, are held in Puke Ariki's Heritage Collection.

