

# Hunt for relatives of graves' occupants

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By KIM BATCHELOR

NEW PLYMOUTH'S Fitzroy Methodist Church will begin the hunt for the relatives of two people whose remains were unearthed during construction work last week.

On Friday, workers who were constructing a driveway beside the church uncovered the two skeletons, which are believed to be those of a 19-year-old woman and her nine-day-old son, both of whom died in 1864, said church member Mel Sutton.

"We will have to advertise to find the relatives of these people."

Though three grave stones stood on the land earmarked for the driveway, research by the church suggested the bodies had been buried in a different area, he said.

"We were treading cautiously, but we thought we wouldn't find any remains."

Police were called to the site on



**RESTING PLACE:** These three old headstones mark the site where the graves of two people were found by contractors beside New Plymouth's Fitzroy Methodist Church on Friday. Photo: GLEN FERGUSSON

Friday, the remains were recovered and construction work was put on hold.

Church officials would meet funeral directors today to decide what should be done, said Mr Sutton.

There was a possibility further remains, belonging to a 22-year-old and an 18-year-old, named on the two other grave stones, also lay nearby, he said. "It's fairly common — a lot of churches had their own graveyards in the old days."

In December 1991 the remains of two pioneering families were exhumed at New Plymouth's St Mary's Church to make room for planned extensions.

Those remains — of five people — were reinterred nearby.