



David Musker is pleased a new memorial has been put in place at Pukearuhe to commemorate missionary John Whiteley.

Photo: CAMERON BURNELL

New Whiteley memorial erected

By LEIGHTON KEITH
leighton.keith@tnl.co.nz

A MEMORIAL marking a piece of Taranaki's history has been restored.

A group called Save Our Sites has erected a new monument at Pukearuhe to replace the 83-year-old stone cairn dedicated to slain missionary John Whiteley.

The cairn was dismantled by New Plymouth's Methodist Church in October 2006.

The original had been erected in 1923

and marked the place where Methodist missionary Rev Whiteley and seven other settlers were killed by a Maori war party in 1869.

SOS spokesman David Musker was pleased with the new memorial.

It's a stone's throw away from where the cairn stood on land which was returned to Ngati Tama in a Treaty of Waitangi settlement in 2003.

The church agreed to remove the memorial, which Ngati Tama regarded as insensitive to Maori.

"We felt it was an important part of

of local history and as such we were disappointed that it was removed," Mr Musker said.

The new monument is a large boulder, set in the ground, with an embossed brass inscription plaque.

It stands in front of a pond and a tree-lined hillside on private land. The work was made possible with the support of volunteers and donations.

SOS member Kinsley Sampson said history needed to be recognised.

"I think that it was wrong that it was demolished.

"As a society we shouldn't walk away from our history, whether it is good, bad or indifferent," Mr Sampson said.

Ngati Tama iwi manager Greg White said he was not aware of the new memorial.

"They can do what ever they want on their own property, I suppose," Mr White said.

The Reverend Alan Upson said the church was still waiting for an appropriate time to relocate the original plaque in New Plymouth's Whiteley Memorial Church.