

## Relocation, relocation, relocation

The Tucker household has relocated. Well, not physically you understand – it's just we've suddenly discovered we may not live where we thought we did.

Our "relocation" began with a footpath conversation involving Lofty, who's lived in our area for 25 years, and might at a stretch be dubbed the mayor of Lower Vogeltown. Except he may have lost his constituency now, because he's just learned "Lower Vogeltown" could in fact have a different name.

Really? When it mentions a suburb, our mail says "Lower Vogeltown". So does the postal codes guide on the internet, and our address in the phone book. The Real Estate Institute lists it as such. And Trade Me, and Google maps, and...well, you get the idea. We're Lower-Bloody-Vogeltown.

Who or what, then, is Struan Park?

It's a bit of a mystery, because although we know about Struan Ave - a short no-exit street off Carrington St - and Struan Walkway - a bush-clad path running alongside a stream that comes out of Vogeltown Park and feeds into the top end of Pukekura Park – at first we're at a loss to find Struan Park named on any common map, including those held by the New Plymouth District Council.

So, who's calling us Struan Park? Well, just Parliament. And the Statistics Department, or more exactly the StatsNZ people who do the census. They split New Plymouth into nearly 30 sub-districts for census purposes, and Struan Park is one of them. They even have a map, which shows it as a narrow strip running the length of what the rest of us call Vogeltown, from about Shortland St to the city limits on Carrington St.

It covers suburbs better known as Lower Vogeltown, Brooklands and Upper Vogeltown, and is roughly bounded by Brooklands Park on the east and the Huatoki River valley on the west. The official website for Parliament refers to it in the pages detailing the New Plymouth electorate.

It shows up in a couple of other odd places, as well (so far as I could find). One is something called the "index of deprivation", which basically says how poor an area is, with 36 suburbs rated from 1 (wealthy) to 10 (deprived). You can imagine how that pans out; perhaps surprisingly, Struan Park isn't doing that well with a ranking of 6 (all us poor pensioners, I suspect).

The second mention is in a Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry biodiversity report done in 2006, which strangely pinpointed Struan Park as a hotspot for oil and gas exploration and extraction, and for something called "services to the water transport industry".

Before I lose you in dull data, here's the interesting part: who was Struan when he was at home? It turns out the avenue (and likely the walkway and the "park") was named by the man who subdivided an area to the east of Carrington Rd, Colin Robertson, in the early 1930s. He chose the name to honour the traditional Scottish title given to chiefs of the Clan Robertson.

According to a 1974 newspaper obituary, Robertson (who died aged 83) was a cheesemaker born in Southland. He moved to Taranaki in 1905, and New Plymouth in 1917, and from 1919 was a stalwart of the Vogeltown Bowling Club, which backs on to Struan Ave. Thanks to helpful research by Puke Ariki's Mike Gooch, we know that a subdivision plan was drawn up (presumably for Robertson) in 1931, showing Struan Ave flanked by about a dozen sections.

Colin's son, also Colin, lived there near his dad, and today his daughter still does. There are also a number of Robertsons in New Plymouth.

Equally helpful research by staff at the district council's property office show it is unlikely early settlers to New Plymouth had any hand in naming Struan Park. A map from 1862 drawn by surveyor Frederic Carrington shows the area we now know as Pukekura and Brooklands Parks was first called Victoria Park.

A plan prepared by surveyor L.K. Skinner in 1889 shows a 100-acre subdivision extending inland from Holsworthy Rd and bounded by Carrington and Brooklands Rds. A Department of Lands and Survey plan in 1910 depicts the area as Tironga Town. Nowhere is Struan mentioned.

JT column for July 8 - relocation

So, it seems somewhere in the city's administrative records, or those in Wellington, there are documents that explain why StatsNZ decided to call Vogeltown something few of us living here are familiar with. Lofty probably needs to put up a sign to prevent further confusion.