



Paddy the Wanderer

Paddy was a ginger and brown airedale terrier who became a waterfront identity in Wellington in the 1930s. It is believed he was originally called Dash, the pet of a girl whose father was a seaman, and became familiar with the wharves on family trips to meet the father's ships. When the little girl died of pneumonia in 1928 Paddy (as he became known) took to wandering the wharves, perhaps in search of his lost playmate.

He was a familiar sight on the wharves in the 1930s and began to feature in newspaper articles. He was loved and cared for by the watersiders and harbour board workers, seamen and taxi drivers; these groups taking it in turn to pay his annual dog licence. The taxi drivers took him for rides all over the city, and up country as well, and he made sea voyages to New Zealand's coastal ports and to Australia. He was said to have good sea legs and 'a really keen nose for impending storms'. In December 1935 he even made a flight in a gipsy moth biplane and apparently enjoyed the experience of flying in an open cockpit.

When he was about 13 years old Paddy showed signs of old age and refused to travel far - he was usually to be found on the Tally Clerks' stand inside the Queen's Wharf gates. When his health deteriorated he was given a sickbed in a shed on the wharves and attended by a vet, with people calling to see him and enquiring about his welfare.

Paddy died on 17 July 1939 and obituary notices were placed in the local papers. A fleet of black taxis accompanied by a traffic officer formed a funeral cortege to carry his coffin from Queen's Wharf to the city council yards for cremation. One of his best friends on the wharves was quoted as saying 'I'd give a month's pay to have Paddy back. I've had dogs but never one with the brains that Paddy had'.

His memory is recalled by a drinking fountain on the wall of the building on the opposite side of Queen's Wharf gates to the museum. The memorial features a brass plaque with a good likeness of him and includes 2 drinking bowls for dogs. Built in 1945 using stones taken from Waterloo Bridge in London, it was paid for with funds raised by the many friends of Paddy the Wanderer.

