



Of passing interest: Poet's Bridge, Pukekura Park

Possibly the most recognised feature in New Plymouth's Pukekura Park is Poet's Bridge.

In April 1883 New Plymouth businessman, James T Davis, won £150 on the Auckland Sweepstake when he backed a horse called The Poet.

Davis had been associated with the creation of Pukekura Park from the beginning and had spent many voluntary hours helping to develop it.

Having a bridge spanning the lake had been identified as desirable early on.

The bridge was designed by Henry Vere Barclay and constructed Mr Hooker.

The bridge was formally opened on March 10, 1884, by the Mayoress Mrs Bayly, with a Moonlight Concert.

The Volunteer Band provided the music and singers were on the lake, which according to the newspaper report "made the hills resound with vocal music".

Fireworks and rockets also formed part of the celebrations which raised

£30 17s towards further work in the park.

Seven years later Davis was found dead in the lake near the bridge.

He was fond of swimming in the lake and on his way home on the evening of September 18, 1891, decided to take a swim. It is thought that he suffered from cramp and was unable to make it to the lake edge.

Poet's Bridge was rebuilt in 1938 and the distinctive colour is based on the famous red-lacquered Shinkyo Bridge at Nikko, Japan.