



Chronicle October 2014

Welcome to our October Chronicle . The last Chronicle for 2014. The months seem to have gone by much faster than they used to. Is that just a sign of aging? There is still a great deal going on. Just prior to Heritage Month some of us attended the presentation of the historical mural on the wall in the street next to the Fitzherbert Street toilets. It certainly added to the appearance of that area. Painted by WELTEC students it brought another group of people aware of the Petone experience.

HERITAGE SOCIETIES ANNUAL FILM EVENING Do you remember “Doctor in the House” from the 1950’s a real old fashioned comedy. We have booked it as a special treat and will show it at 6.30p.m on Monday 10th November . We have 100 seats to sell at \$14 each. This will include a light supper plus coffee or tea after the film. Tickets are available now from Roy & Joan at 143 Esplanade. Phone 5686449. You can order online and pay to our Gmail account. petonehistsociety@gmail.com and make your payment to **Westpac 030543 0101318 00** First in first served. Money with order please. Friends are welcome.

	<p><i>The Lower Hutt and the Petone Historical Societies invite you to join them for a special screening of</i></p> <p>DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE</p> <p>MONDAY 10TH NOVEMBER, 6.30PM SHARP LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE AFTER THE FILM LIGHT HOUSE CINEMA, 52 BEACH ST PETONE</p> <p>Dirk Bogarde plays the wide-eyed innocent medical student Simon Sparrow arriving at St Swithin's Hospital. He falls in with a crowd of students who are all senior to him but have been kept down in the first year. With them he must master the problems of patients, teachers, nurses and an over-friendly landlady's daughter. Starring kenneth More and Dirk Bogarde. Directed by Ralph Thomas, 1954.</p> <p>SINGLE ADMISSION \$ 14.</p>
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Obituary. Petone and Petone Historical Society lost another proud Petonian in Alice Pollock, who died on 21st July. She was a member of the very well known sporting Pollock family. Alice worked for many years as a “postie” and was a long term member of the Petone Workingmen’s Club. She was an original member of our Petone Historical Society. We will miss her attendance at our many functions and her great social knowledge of Petone, although she has not been able to attend over the past months. Rest in Peace Alice

What happened in Heritage Month.

- ① Opening of heritage month was held at Expressions Gallery Upper Hutt on Sunday 24th August ,. Petone had a good muster along with people from all over the region. A highlight was the chance to view the gallery which showed “ In the Footsteps of Trentham Camp WW1” – This was an exhibition with drawings, photographs and displays including a mock up of an actual tent. Well worth a look.
- ① Our Heritage walks on Sunday 7th attracted 24 people and they were divided up and went in three directions. Marianne took a group to the East, Pam took her group around central Petone and Roy took his group west . Two hours is a long walk!! But it seemed successful
- ① Some of us attended the Lower Hutt Historical Society meeting at the Anchorage (this was the last meeting at that site as it is being redeveloped) . Hilda McDonnell spoke about her her book on “Publicans of the Port Nicholson District: Inns and innkeepers of the area,” including Coglan’s at Petone, Burcham’s on the River Hutt and Buck’s at the Taita, 1840-1855. An interesting talk by a very experienced researcher
- ① The Walk of Champions continued to be a successful project with about 30 + friends and supporters attending both the dedication and the morning tea afterwards. A new innovation this year was Riki Flutey organising his friend, Tautoka Ratu, to give the plaques a Maori Blessing. It was great.

*Leslie and Michael Watt uncovering his plaque. Michael represented New Zealand at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972
In target shooting.*

- ① For those who have not visited the businesses in Jackson Street with their stories and photos in the front window, make sure you see them soon. They are most interesting.
- ① Another place worth visiting is Alfred Memelink’s Art Space on Petone Foreshore. His current exhibition depicts much of our local heritage. If you haven’t been to visit you really should go.
- ① Our bus trip around Petone was successful ,although several people, who said they were coming did not turn up, we had 25 people on Board which covered our costs. We were lucky in having such a fine afternoon. Being such good weather The beach was crowded and the traffic heavy but we saw most of the places we wanted.

NEW BOOKS

Here are a couple of very interesting local history books recently published. I think all will be in the Library. These fit well with Hilda McDonnell book on the **Publicans of the Port Nicholson District in the Colony of New Zealand**

The Knights of Cornwall. By Elaine Bolitho This is a well put together family history of the very large and diverse Knight family. Their name lives on in both Knights Road and Penrose Street. I found the first half of the book most interesting as it dwelt with coming

out from England on the Duke of Roxburgh 1839/40. The story of the journey out shows just how hard life was especially those families in steerage and what happens when one person cannot get on with everyone else as well as those of differing religious faiths. It also has a great account of early days in Petone and the "Cornish Row" fire.. There were some 20 people from Cornwall on the Duke of Roxburgh. Among the passengers were such notables as Samuel Parnell the 8 hour day proponent; the future mayor of Wellington George Hunter and a number of others who made their name in New Zealand..

Echoes of the Past edited by Alison Carey. The diary and notes Lance Hall got from his father George, and used to write his 1940 centennial Story of Lower Hutt. George Hall's Memoir edited by his granddaughter Alison Carey, gives a great firsthand insight into life in the "River Hutt in the late 19th Century

Our local History THE HUTT RIVER.

One of the major influences in the Hutt Valley is the Hutt River. It is somewhat tamed now but its early history shows how it has changed.

I took the following information from an extract from the **1973 Stage one Reports on –Lower Hutt River landscape and recreational study.** It is a long report and I only have room for the first section detailing the historical impact and the ecology of the river. You can judge for yourself if the river is as healthy as it was said to be in 1979.

"The Hutt River has changed dramatically since the time when the Maoris knew it as Heretaunga (mooring place). The river flowed through a thickly forested valley to an extensive swamp stretching inland for up to one and a half miles at the river mouth. At that time the river was much deeper, narrower and irregular in its configuration and longer due to meandering. Settlement of the Hutt Valley began in 1839 and from that time the river has changed as a result of urban development. Prior to 1850 floods had been a problem, however, during the 1850's and aggravated by further bush clearances they became disastrous. The flood of 1858 was particularly bad and involved the loss of 9 lives. *{There is no mention of the effect of the 1846 and 1855 earthquakes}* In 1879 after further severe flooding the Hutt District River Board was set up. Having achieved little the Board went into recess in 1887. The 1890's proved to be a decade of phenomenal flooding. The bush had been milled from the valley floor and milling was occurring on the surrounding hills. Increase runoff and erosion resulted in vast deposits of soil and shingle along the lower reaches and at the mouth of the river. A new authority, The Hutt River Board, was gazetted in February 1899 { NB Dilnot Sladden was appointed Chairman in 1997} The long term policy of the Board involved the construction of stop banks along the river and a programme to deepen the river bed by the controlled removal of shingle.

The construction of stop banks with two and a half miles on the western side of Hutt River from estuary to Melling, and about three and a half miles on the eastern side

from estuary to the Hutt Golf Course changed the image of Lower Hutt and helped boost growth as the lower valley became safe from flooding. Further stop bank work occurred in 1969 with the extension of the stop bank along the river frontage of Avalon Park. In association with the stop bank construction the development of Strand Park and other riverbank areas was carried out by the Hutt River Board. In 1973 the recently constituted Wellington Regional Water board, among other things, assumed responsibility for the Hutt River Board.

The Wellington Regional Water Board has jurisdiction over the water resources of the region, taking over the functions of the Hutt River Board and the Hutt Valley Underground Water Authority. As a result of river protection, flood control, management of both the underground and surface water supply and the ownership of a considerable amount of the riverbed are now in the hands of the Water Board. The Board in addition is actively pursuing a policy of river beautification and encourages recreational use of the river berm area.

Ecology.

As a consequence of urban development and subsequent river training and protection work there has been significant changes in the ecology of the river. The river has been known to support a wide variety of fish including 18 of the 27 New Zealand fresh water species as well as some marine species such as yellow eyed mullet and Kahawai. Periodically brown trout are released into the river. The first release was in 1874. A variety of fish species are still found in the river. Most of the fish species follow migrating patterns and except for brown trout, must pass through the estuary as some stage of their life cycle. Prior to 1974-75 river pollution was having a detrimental effect on fish populations, however, since that time efforts of the Regional Water Board, The Lower Hutt City Corporation and the adjacent industries have all resulted in a cleaner and more healthy river.

Below Melling the river is tidal and displays the typical and ecologically sensitive estuarine mudflat development. Crabs, worms, shellfish are the main species including some mullet, flounder and Kahawai found in this section of the river. The area between Melling and the Taita Gorge has a meagre animal and aquatic plant life.

The small area of the tidal mudflat at the mouth of the river provides a useful local habitat for birds mainly oyster catchers, stilts, banded dotterel and other wader.

Occasionally Godwits are found feeding in the area. Marine bird species are fairly common and tern's kingfishers and shags can be seen nesting and feeding along the river banks. AS well as using the river as a habitat some birds use the area as a corridor for access inland."

Direct copy from the September 1979 report. I am not an expert on the health of the river today but to me it appears desperately short of flow most times as more and more water is taken for human consumption. The amount of logs and rubbish coming down the river seems to be greater than ever. Nevertheless the Hutt River remains an important feature of the growing city...