



Preservation Post

Newsletter of the
Christ Church Preservation Society (Inc.)

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Issue 56 – June 2016

“Looking to the future to preserve our past” **Christ Church Taita**

Annual General Meeting – 20 April

There was the usual small attendance at our AGM, resulting in the current committee being re-elected for the 2016 year. The financial situation shows a loss of \$4,168.45 income over expenditure for the year – necessitated by the need to complete the outside painting of the Church.

We are aware that many members live outside the Hutt Valley and are therefore unable to be in a position to help. We really appreciate the positive comments received about the work undertaken by the committee.

162nd Annual Service – 15 May

It was wonderful to see descendants of Sidney and Mary Hirst at our annual service this year. It was an opportunity for Maureen and Harold Horner, who had travelled from England, to meet the NZ side of the family.

Maureen has written about Harold's connection to Sidney and Mary Hirst and their visit to Christ Church. . .

Christ Church, Taita, Lower Hutt, Wellington

'A Journey into the Past'

Some time ago I discovered that my husband's mother, Hilda Sykes, was a first cousin four times removed of Mary Sykes who was married to Sidney Hirst, a journeyman carpenter, on the 18 December 1836 in Huddersfield, Yorkshire. They had two children born to them in Yorkshire - Susan or Susannah b. 4 March 1839 and George Henry, b.27 October 1841 (Mirfield, Yorkshire) and emigrated to New Zealand on the George Fyfe in 1842, landing, I believe, in Petone, Wellington on the 7 November 1842.

They had nine (?) more children in NZ all born in the Wellington area. A large family indeed! Mary Sykes' and Hilda Sykes' common ancestor was George Sykes b. about 1765. He had a two sons, George b. 1789, and Richard b.1781, in addition to several more children. Mary's line is descended from George 1789 (her father) and Hilda

Sykes' line from Richard 1781, Marys uncle.

So we set off on a journey into the past which brought Harold and me to the other side of the world having decided to visit Taita, and Christ Church built 1853, and see just what Sidney and his accompanying settlers, then a brave and relatively small community had experienced and achieved in deciding to make a new life for themselves, and in building this church.

On Saturday 14 May we visited the church, and explored the graveyard finding not only the grave of Sidney and Mary but, amazingly, the graves of many other relatives. The weather was beautiful, and we so enjoyed its peace and tranquillity, wandering through history. Janice Henson, kindly met us and opened the church so we spent an hour able to appreciate this lovely building, so reminiscent of stone built chapels in the UK, yet having a unique life and personality of its own, a Kiwi church indeed. We were able to imagine how important the church must have been for these pioneers - not only as a place of worship, but a place to mourn, to celebrate, and to share their lives drawing strength from each other in what must surely have been a hard and demanding life.

We had arrived in time for the annual service of thanksgiving on the 15 May and met other Hirst (Sykes) relatives for the first time who made us so very welcome. We now have contact with many NZ relatives - wonderful! The service was led by Rev. John Daysh, whose pioneer descendant John Ings Daysh donated the wood for the church: the theme (aptly) one of building which emphasised for us again how important the church must have been in uniting these early

settlers, and how important it must have been for them to make the time to build when they were labouring so hard to build their own homes. We tried to imagine what the first community must have felt attending their own church for the very first time - their sense of achievement, and the feeling that they had actually begun to make a place for themselves in New Zealand. We've taken away memories and created new connections of our own 150 years later.

Christ Church, Taita is still a living church, despite its troubled times, and will, we are sure, remain a testament to the early pioneers, including our own Sidney and Mary Hirst.



Maureen Horner & Rev John Daysh

Proposed Heritage Visitor Centre/Cottage Museum – progress

A separate Charitable Trust and bank a/c for the Christ Church Cottage Museum has been set up to secure the

section adjacent to the church and an application for funding was recently made to the Hutt City Council.

The Trust was delighted to receive news that the Council has agreed to \$40,000 seed funding which will enable it to secure the section.



Architect's concept drawing of the Heritage Centre

For further information or to make donations to the Trust, contact John Daysh, john@unicef.org.nz; Ph.04 815 9370 (Wk) or 04 977 2055 (Hm)

Heritage Roses

Our green-fingered gardening guru Mary Stevens is keen to grow more heritage roses in the Church grounds and is seeking cuttings. She can come and take them this winter anywhere in the Wellington/Hutt Valley area. Please contact Mary on phone (04) 476 6247 or mhrstevens@gmail.com.



Heritage Harris Rose – growing happily alongside the Harris grave at Christ Church

Grounds Clean Up – April

On 21 April, committee members John and Mary Stevens and Janice Henson, together with a group of willing workers from Contact Energy and our PD team held a working bee to clean up the area on the easement under the trees on the south side of the Church. The weather was fine and sunny and we managed to fill a large skip with green rubbish, together with a number of bags of plastic, tins etc.



Janice Henson with a Contact Energy volunteer filling the skip

Boundary Fence on northern side and paving around the Toilet/Utility block

We have received a grant of \$5,000 from Pelorus Trust to erect a new boundary fence on the northern side of the grounds adjacent to the neighbouring flats and the proposed Heritage Centre and to pave the dirt area outside the Utility/Toilet block. The grant covers just half the cost, but will enable us to start the work.



Weddings

5 March

Andrea O'Neill to Ben Goggins

12 March

***Elizabeth Ashton to Matthew
Hutchinson***

13 March

Hannah Mawley to Stefan Rijnbeck

19 March

Gayle Thompson to Rob Ryan

Bequests for Christ Church Taita

Including a bequest for The Christ Church Preservation Society is a wonderful way to honour those who have gone before us and to ensure that we can continue to preserve and develop Christ Church. Our vision is to enhance Christ Church Taita as a heritage centre by establishing a colonial house and shed as a museum to celebrate our pioneers. If you would like to talk about how you may be able to support this vision please contact our President, John Daysh, email john@unicef.org.nz; Ph.04 815 9370 (Wk) or 04 977 2055 (Hm)

We mentioned notification of a bequest in the November 2015 newsletter. There has been a claim on the estate which is delaying any payment to Christ Church. However, we are hopeful of receiving some funds within the next 3 months.

Ashes Wall

A niche in our Ashes Wall costs just \$750.00 plus GST. Contact Janice Henson, Secretary, for further details.

Janice-klaw@xtra.co.nz



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