



Petone Historical Society Inc.

June 2012 Chronicle

Welcome to the June Chronicle

We have been having a busy time lately. The committee has been working on a number of fronts. President Nik has been gathering new members and at present we have added 19 to our numbers. This means that we are at last becoming a more viable society. We have close to 64 paid up members out of a total of 69. If you have still to pay this year's subs it would be nice if you could attend to that as soon as possible.

We have also been busy preparing submissions to council over their proposals for the west end of Petone. We are not against development but believe that it must be well planned and of good design as well as being in harmony with the character of the village. Council should realise that part of our economic development should include Heritage and the number of people who are attracted to Petone because of its heritage value. The number of tourists visiting Petone is very high when compared to other parts of the city. We believe that council should be promoting our heritage values rather than trying to diminish them.

Note from President June 2012

Welcome to my first column as President of the Petone Historical Society. It has been a great honour to accept this role following on in the footsteps of a great Pitonian Vera Ellen. I have accepted the Presidency recognising two key things:

1. Due to the extraordinary dedication of its founding/early members, the Petone Historical Society has for a long time "punched above its weight" in terms of its achievements since its inception in the early 1980s.
2. Through lack of renewal in its membership base, however, continuing the level of outputs and achievements of the past is now in jeopardy.

My first commitment, therefore, is to expand our membership base to secure a sustainable future for the organisation for the next 30 years. I have been busy signing up new members as the opportunity arises and I invite you to think about friends and acquaintances who may be interested in joining our group. If you know of anybody who may be interested, please contact me on nzang@xtra.co.nz or 589 4413.

.Future Activities

1. On the last Thursday in every month there is a discussion on some aspect of Petone History. In the Community House from 2 p.m to 4 p.m This year we are talking about decades. March 29 was the 1940's and the arrival of the marines; Petone during the war;

. April 27th was the 1950's. May 31st will be the 1960's June 28th will be about "What we did when we were young to fill in time" - sport, dancing,

At present we get between 6 and 12 people. It would be great to get more. Last month Vera met an old school friend from West School. Talk often gets sidetracked but that doesn't matter as it is always about Petone past Anyone, member or not, is invited to come the Petone Community House 2 p.m. until 4 p.m and have a talk along with a cup of tea. Cost \$2 for tea and hire of room.

2. **June 8th** our society joins with Lower Hutt Historical Society at the Horticultural Club rooms behind the Horticultural hall in Laing's Road. Plenty of free parking in the car park. Robyn Lambourn (yes one of the Petone Lambourn's) will speak on "Memories of Southern High Street" High Street in Lower Hutt is not what it used to be mainly because of the Queensgate Mall. It is a good opportunity to hear what High Street used to be like. Petone must be vigilante with the proposed plan change 29 for the west end of Petone, our shopping centre is in danger

3. **Basil has booked 15 seats on the bus for the FREE trip from Centreport on the Wellington wharves on Friday 27th July. That is the first available date. So far we have seven seats booked so we want another 8 to fill our quota. (Ring Roy 5686449 to book)**The bus trip lasts one hour from 12 noon to 1 p.m. People who have made the trip say how great the experience is. Those going have to provide a photo ID as there are some parts of the tour that are behind security Drivers licence or passport will do.

Using your gold card this whole trip is free for seniors. Others have to pay their way to Wellington. There is a walk from the station up the concourse and across the overhead bridge but It is possible to travel by car. There are a few parks by Centreport. Basil and Zandra are the organisers and if you are interested ring Roy and he will pass on the message. Dates are Friday 27 July, at midday and the trip lasts one hour.

What else is coming up?

1. Roy has just published his upgraded book on Petone's "Walk of Champions" which is on Jackson Street. To date there are 131 plaques featuring Petone New Zealand sporting representatives and Champions from some 29 different sports. The book is not only a guide to the plaques and a short story about each one but it contains a number of greats who as yet do not have a plaque, At the launch of the book we gathered enough donations to fund another plaque. The book is given to all who give a donation of \$20 or more towards new plaques. Thanks to all those who have contributed.
2. We must start organising our activities for Heritage month which will be during September. The theme "Heritage & Our Stories" is a good one. We have already got a large number of

memories of 20th Century Petone which we hope to build a book but we still need photos from your home albums to illustrate it. Photographs will be acknowledged. There are other activities that can be built up. A display of a photo of something of our Petone Heritage with a short story about it would make a good display for the library. What about having a story teller especially for children? Any other ideas? Email me back. We have to register our activities by July.

Membership

While we need new and active members we value our existing membership. We have decided at the AGM that while our financial year is still the calendar year, our subscriptions will be from March 31 to the beginning of March 2013. We would appreciate early payment. If you haven't yet paid for 2012 please complete the following form and send to: **Joan Hewson Treasurer Petone Historical Society 143 Esplanade Petone**

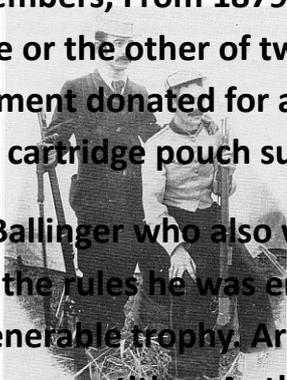
A STORY FROM OUR LOCAL HISTORY – Our First Sports Club

Sport has been a great influence in Petone ever since the first race meeting in New Zealand was held on Petone beach in 1842. It wasn't until the coming of rail to Petone in 1874 brought industry and a tremendous surge in young families coming to live in Petone mainly because of work in the Railway Workshops; the Gear Meat Company and the Wellington Woollen Mills, that sport began to feature in the life of the town. Petone was a young family town and they needed outlets to relax after work. Travelling was difficult so they made their own activities and sport and music featured strongly.

Probably the one group that sponsored more sport than they thought were the Petone Naval Artillery Volunteers. They like many similar groups around the country was formed to repel a perceived Russian Pacific Fleet attack. Since the Crimean War in 1855 there had been fears of a possible Russian Invasion. Some activities of the Petone Naval Artillery Volunteers involved sailing cutters and rifle shooting as well as practice with heavier artillery. The rifle section was issued with out of date Snyder rifles. They were given the alternative of either ceasing to exist or purchase their own rifles. They took up the challenge and formed a club called the Petone Martini-Henri Rifle Club. They shot on a range along the eastern foreshore sand dunes. In 1902 they changed their name to Petone Rifle Club and they shared the Trentham Rifle range.

. Among the shooters was a family from Wellington called the Ballingers

“The oldest sporting trophy in New Zealand, the symbol of the utmost prowess in rifle shooting owes its existence to a member of the Petone Rifle Club. A Wellington family, the Ballingers were among the prime movers in the formation of the Club and foundation members, From 1879 until 1907 the N.Z. Rifle Championship was won by one or the other of two Ballinger brothers on five occasions, In 1873 the Government donated for annual competition a black leather belt with a silver ornamented cartridge pouch supported by a shoulder strap.



It was won in 1893 by Arthur Ballinger who also won it twice more, the third occasion in 1907, when under the rules he was entitled to retain it. The belt was then 34 years old, already a venerable trophy. Arthur donated it to the National Rifle Association for perpetual competition. As the “Ballinger Belt” it has been put around the shoulders of every national champion until this day.

The Ballingers were keen supporters of the Volunteer forces and joined the Petone Naval Artillery Volunteers – as well as the Wellington Guards.

While Arthur’s wins in 1893 and 1907 occurred during his membership of the Wellington Guards he was at that time an active member of the Petone Club

The Belt has been held by the Petone Club on nine occasions:



Arthur Ballinger 1893; 1897, and 1907

William Henry Ballinger 1879, 1895

R.H.Nicholl 1932, 1934

J.Hand as runner up to Australian J.Cooper 1972

K.Meade 1989

The Belt and Arthur Ballingers telescope Club

sourced from internet and Petone Rifle

Some years ago the Petone Rifle Club shifted its premises to Messines Road Trentham so it could be closer to the Trentham Range. The Club still exists and it is still called the Petone Rifle Club.

