

Heritage Today

The JUNE 2013 issue of the Wellington Region Heritage Promotion Council (WRHPC)



Visitors enjoy Christ Church, Taita's Heritage Garden Party (see story pg 2)



Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Heritage Today*, the bimonthly newsletter of the Wellington Region Heritage Promotion Council. We believe

the change to a newsletter will create better opportunities for our members and supporters, by raising awareness of the exciting projects we are engaged in to support and promote heritage in the region. Our members' organisations represent a wide range of heritage promotion activity, and we hope that *Heritage Today* will also inspire others in the community to become involved in what we do.

We have an outstanding legacy from the input and dedication of our early members, so let's build on that to increase our circulation, and really boost the promotion of regional heritage. We welcome your feedback and contributions to help make *Heritage Today* a useful and interesting read. Thank you all for your support.

**Philip Vallance, Chairman
Wellington Region Heritage
Promotion Council**



Members influential at council hearings

Commissioning officers complimented the record 250 submitters and noted their "passion" in advocating for heritage at the recent hearings on the Hutt City Council's Plan Change 29, which proposed opening up to development areas to the west of the Jackson Street Historic Area. The Petone Historical Society and Historic Places Wellington played an active part and are claiming progress: "We understand the need to resurrect this area but it was clearly emphasised that there is a danger in destroying the heritage shopping area by allowing more small retail shops along Jackson Street, between Victoria Street and the Railway station," says Roy Hewson, Secretary of the Society. "The lack of urban design and the intention of allowing high rise buildings which may not suit the character of Petone was also an issue." New recommendations include size restrictions and consideration of the economic impact of new retail developments on the heritage precinct. The public has until 21 June to comment on the revised document.

Public input sought on Titahi Bay Hall

As we went to press, the Porirua City Council has decided to call for community input on the ailing, water damaged Titahi Bay Hall (right). The public has until March next year to find an alternative to demolition. Repairs would cost up to \$820,000, while a total rebuild could cost the council just over \$1 million. The Hall was built in 1942 as a recreation hall for U.S. Marines stationed at the local Camp. Titahi Bay was one of eight camps along the west coast of the Wellington region. Of these, the council-owned hall is now the only purpose built structure still in existence and in its original location. The hall is listed in the Council's Heritage Register, with an information sign on the site.



Slow process bearing fruit at Archives

The Hutt City Council Archives is currently conserving and digitising records from the former Petone Borough Council which were damaged in a fire in January 1985. First to be worked on are the 19 volumes of council minutes (1884 -1982), previously inaccessible due to their fragility. The books were first dis-bound by conservators, each page stabilised with acid free tissue and a customised box made. The books were then digitised, using a book cradle, so they can be stored safely and do not have to be handled again. Six have now been completed. As each volume is completed it will be available for viewing at the Archives and eventually online. Staff are already receiving positive feedback from members of the public who are accessing the new-look documents.

Our Taonga: Christ Church, Taita

"The beautiful little church that has watched the Hutt Valley grow up...."



Nestled on the east side of the Hutt River is the 159-year-old Christ Church, built using heart totara by 32 settler families in the district. The church and graveyard - whose headstones form a rollcall of the region's pioneering families - is lovingly maintained by the small but dedicated Christ Church Preservation Society.

Christ Church is the oldest church in the Wellington region and one of the oldest in its original condition in New Zealand. It's also thought to be the oldest complete building in Wellington, its first service held on 1 January 1854. Chairman John Daysh (above) has always felt a special connection: "My Great Great Grandfather John Ings Daysh gave totara logs from his farm in 1853, which were pulled from near Daysh Street up High Street by bullock wagon to be pit sawn without charge into timber for the church by Abraham

Harris, another early settler and church member. My father Duff Daysh was one of those who had the church saved on its original site in the early 1950s and he went on to become a founding Trustee of the NZ Historic Places Trust."

John is referring to the church being the subject of the first campaign in New Zealand to save an historic building. There was a public outcry when, in 1947, a railway extension from Wellington crossed the church's entrance and isolated the church from its congregation. The community successfully campaigned for the church to remain on its original site rather than be moved to Stokes Valley. This led to the formation of the Preservation Society, and the NZ Historic

Places Act in 1954. The NZ Historic Places Trust was established soon after.

Since its formation, the Society has built a new lychgate entrance and stone wall at the Eastern Hutt Rd side, and carried out extensive repairs when the interior was damaged by an arsonist in 1989. The Society relies for funding on hiring out the 85-seat church for wedding and other fundraising events such as the recent Annual Christ Church Heritage Garden Party. Committee member Ian McCulloch led guided tours of the cemetery on the day: "If I can show people they have a family connection to someone buried at the cemetery, then they develop a personal connection to the church." Secretary Janice Henson says a recent project has

been applying for a grant to pay for a \$9,000 conservation report, ahead of ongoing painting and preservation work. A fixture in the calendar is the 9th June 'Annual Celebration Service' honouring a different family with connections to the church each year (see Calendar pg 3). Society members also hold a Christmas Carol Service each December and have published a history of the church and associated families called *Guardian of the Valley* written by Miles Erwin, a descendant of Abraham Harris. www.christ-church.org.nz.



Tool Box

Great Open Days by CCP's Ian McCulloch (below):

- Choose a fun theme - many said they came to the Garden Party because it was a chance to dress up!
- Brainstorm your local connections - we had the Upper Hutt Brass Band playing; artists from Hutt Art Society painting and running stalls; the Wellington Vintage Car and Vintage Machinery Clubs, and Rotary, all supporting and adding interest.
- Use local media: they are always looking for good stories. Make it easy by providing 'what, when, how and why' facts, plus a photo, a month in advance, and they will likely run a follow up afterwards.



Also of interest in the Hutt Valley:

Owned by the Golder family until 1985, **Golders Cottage** (right) was built in 1876 and retains much of its original furnishings, a display of early 20th century costumes and garden. Also in the collection are historic photos of Upper Hutt c.1900, the Golder family and John's five diaries, which give an insight into local government. www.golder.wellington.net.nz. **Robert Orr Historic House** is a two-storey Italianate style villa built from native timber in 1885-1887. June Orr, a descendant of surveyor William Mein Smith, still lives here and

welcomes group visits (her catering is legendary!). There were once extensive market gardens on the (now subdivided) 17-acre property, employing up to 40 people. 132 Kings Crescent, Lower Hutt. T: 04 566 3713.

Petone Jail Museum is sited in the old Jail behind the 100 year old Police station (far right), and is open on week days. It was created and is maintained by the Petone Historical Society, which also established the **Walk of**



– the Wellington Provincial Centennial Memorial (1940).

Champions: a series of plaques honouring the over 200 NZ sporting representatives and national champions from Petone. The Society also runs walking tours. Contact Roy: roy.hewson@xtra.co.nz.

The **Early Settlers Museum** is located on the Petone foreshore in one of our most significant memorial buildings

The ongoing exhibition **Tatou** commemorates the historic meeting of the settlers with the great Te Atiawa chiefs. www.petonesettlers.org.nz.

And don't miss **His Own Steam**, an exhibition of the 50 year career of NZ potter Barry Brickell, this month at the Dowse Art Museum, on display through until August. www.newdowse.org.nz.

Launch of Heritage Month

This year's Heritage Month will be launched on 1 September at the Petone Settlers Museum. WRHPC Chairman Philip Vallance says Heritage Month is a chance for members to showcase their facilities and stage activities to involve the public: "September would be a great time if you have been planning to have an open day or fun event around heritage," says Philip. Petone Historical Society is planning to add three new plaques to its Walk of Champions sporting series during the month, and Wellington Museum of City & Sea is planning a Heritage Fair which will also involve other historical societies in the region. The launch will be hosted by Mayor Ray Wallace. For more information about Heritage Month, contact Philip Vallance on E: alison.vallance@wise.net.nz.



From the archives: Johnsonville rail

July 2 marks 75 years since the first electric unit services began on the Johnsonville line - the first in the North Island. Below is the first English Electric unit at Johnsonville station on 2 July 1938. The Johnsonville line was formerly part of the Main Trunk Railway, but because of its gradient and bends it was bypassed by the current tunnels between Kaiwharawhara and Takapu Road in 1937. The line from Johnsonville to Tawa was then closed and the Wellington to Johnsonville section became a branch line, spelling the end to most bus services to Wellington's northern suburbs: one of the few times in the last 50 years when rail has replaced road!
Murray Pillar,
President, Onslow Historical Society



New history website needs you!

Upper Hutt City Library is calling on the community to help make their new RECOLLECT online interactive database as complete as possible. The database gives access to the library's digitized heritage images and publications. It is strongly Upper Hutt focused, but also contains material from the wider Wellington region, Wairarapa and items of general historical interest such as Trentham Military Camp. "By registering with your email address, you can add your own information or memories about an item, geo-tag its location, label people and objects within a picture, and create your own bookmarked collection of images," says archivist Reid Perkins. RECOLLECT was developed by NZ Micrographics and attracted 2,500 visitors last month. <http://uhcl.recollect.co.nz>.

Old St Pauls open for dining

Old St Paul's will soon be opening its doors for seated dinner functions. Manager Silke Bieda says the idea was born when the church hosted a small 'thank you' dinner for a group of funders last year: "NZHPT staff and guests enjoyed the special set up immensely... as a truly unique dinner experience," she says. However it took time and effort to come up with a plan that would not impact on the heritage fabric of the building, says Silke. "Under survey of our conservation architect Russell Murray we have now found a way of spinning and shifting some of the pews to accommodate seated dinner functions." The church now offers wedding receptions for up to 120 guests and corporate function galas for up to 180 people. <http://www.historicplaces.org.nz/placestovisit/lowernorthisland/oldstpauls.aspx>.

Grant awarded for new history of NZ Opera

Historian Doug Munro of Wellington has been awarded the Friends of the Turnbull Library 2013 Research Grant of \$10,000 to write a history of the New Zealand Opera Company 1954-1971, charting its journey from single-act productions to one of this country's most important cultural institutions. The Library's extensive collections include Doug's father baritone Donald Munro's papers. The Library is funded from income from the bequests of David Bilbrough and Wesley (Bill) Secker, and the Friends are planning encourage further bequests to expand this award. Previous grants have funded biographies of Douglas Lilburn; JC Beaglehole; and dancer Paul Gnatt. www.turnbullfriends.org.nz.

CALENDAR

JUNE	
1	<i>The Conquest of Everest</i> , a film documenting the last stages of the ascent. Described as 'a photographic triumph beyond compare'. The Film Archive, 84 Taranaki St, 7pm. Tickets: \$8 general / \$6 concession.
4	Susan Price will talk about her book on her father Hugh Price (co-founder of Wellington publishing firm Price Milburn in 1957) at AGM of Karori Historical Society, St Ninnians Church, Newcombe Cres, Karori, 7.45pm.
9	Annual celebration service, this time remembering the Welch family. Christ Church, Eastern Hutt Rd, Taita, 2pm. All welcome.
10	The exhibition <i>Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui</i> celebrates the creativity and uniqueness of the Wellington region. Wellington Museum of City & Sea, Queens Wharf.
12	<i>Selling the Dream and other things...</i> with Peter Alsop, leader of a project resulting in a book of the same name on the early art of advertising NZ tourism. Tiakiwai Conference Centre, Lower Ground Floor, National Library, Aitken Street entrance, 5.30pm. www.sellingthedream.co.nz
22	NZ Federation of Historical Societies Seminar on Copyright. Selwyn Church Hall, cnr Hain Ave & Massey Rd, Mangere East, Auckland, 1.30-4.30pm, \$10. Register by 19 June. E: historian@avondale.org.nz .
23	<i>All you ever wanted to know about ferns (Part 2)</i> . An easy two hour walk in the fernery with Leon Perrie. Meet at Otari Information Centre, Wilton Rd, 2pm, \$3.
27-8 Sept	<i>Movers and Shakers</i> , an exhibition of early NZ portraits by William Beetham of leaders in 1860s and 70s society. NZ Portrait Gallery, Shed 11, Wellington.
JULY	
1	<i>The Wesleyan Missions with the Maoris in Kapiti until 1880</i> , a talk by Rev John Rogers hosted by Kapiti Historical Society. Rodderick & Gillian Deane Art Space, Paraparaumu Library, 2pm. Followed by afternoon tea. Gold coin.
28	<i>What use are native plants?</i> A 90 min. easy walk looking at different plants to find out what they can be used for. Meet Otari Information Centre, Wilton Rd 2pm, \$3.

Please send your August & September dates to the Editor E: editor@wrhpc.org.nz.

Our Album...heritage images past & present

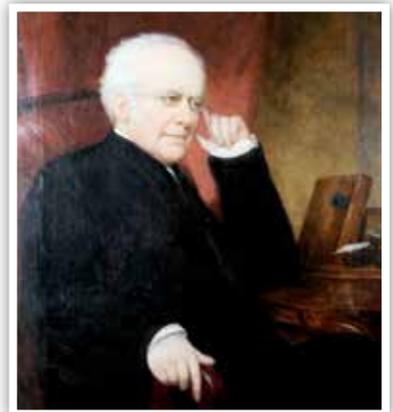
Below: The newly refurbished Carterton, Wairarapa railway station is one of the few stations in NZ still selling tickets from its original building, on the original site. Dating to 1880, the building is owned by Greater Wellington Regional Council who last month completed strengthening,

chimney repairs and painting. Fran Wilde officiated at the opening, which was also celebrated with a public excursion from Paekakariki to Masterton then North on a 1950s DA Locomotive. The station is open Sundays 11am-4pm. <http://www.cartertonrailwaymuseum.org.nz/>.

Left: The Colonial Cottage Museum is currently undergoing seismic strengthening, and this shows its recently completed chimney. The Cottage is due to reopen in July. <http://www.museumswellington.org.nz/colonial-cottage-museum/>.



Right: Missionary Henry Williams (1792-1867) is among the 'movers and shakers' depicted in an exhibition opening soon at the NZ Portrait Gallery (see Calendar pg 3). He was based in Pahia and was widely respected by Northern Maori.



Left: Members of the Petone Historical Society sift through newspapers dating back to the 1960s at their rooms in the historic Police Station, which they share with the Jackson Street Programme. The papers were donated by a carpetlayer who discovered them during the course of his work. Pictured from left are Ruth Dickson, Pam Hanna and Secretary Roy Hewson.

Below: A still from a new moving image exhibition called *The Natural Environment – Ko the Taiao*, running from 6 June to 20 July at the NZ Film Archive, part of a series called *Magic Playgrounds: Historical Images of New Zealand Childhoods*.



Above: A spread from the new book *Selling the Dream*, a history of NZ tourism advertising by Peter Alsop who will be talking about the project at the National Library this month (see Calendar).

Right: The iconic statue of the Virgin Mary at Paraparaumu, one of the images in an exhibition called *Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui* at the Wellington Museum of City & Sea, (see Calendar).

