

The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter September 2010



Working Bee – Saturday the 2nd October.

9.30 am start, meet at the church. We have more planting to do and possible painting and other assorted tasks at Highfield Cob Cottage. Bring gardening implements, spade or paintbrush. Phone Jane at Burkes Pass on 03 685 6271, prior to the 1st in Christchurch 03 348 1531 or email jbatch@clear.net.nz

Shaken and Stirred.

The saying ‘being hit by a ton of bricks’ has taken on fresh meaning after the earthquake last Friday night. Our historic buildings in Christchurch have been battered and some destroyed. I will never look at a brick chimney in quite the same light again. A neighbour’s chimney dropped into the office at my work place. The roof of long run iron, rafters and T&G lining opened to the sky and looked as if hit by a bomb. The pile of bricks covered the carpet and crushed the computer chair, thankfully unoccupied at the time. We were lucky. As a result we are seriously considering reducing the height or possibly removing the brick chimney from around the flue at Alma Cottage so we don’t have to one-day face another gaping splintered hole or worse.

Church Windows, a Rare Memorial Opportunity.

The return of original style leadlight windows is the next short term goal for restoration of our delightful little church. There are 8 windows to be made and one restored original window to be put back. We now have a reasonable sum put away to pay for this but will need to raise another \$6,000 approximately. I am confident that this is achievable by a combination of applications to funding agencies and donations from individuals. This may be something that an extended family group might consider as a memorial perhaps? The windows will be of simple diamond patterned obscure glass in the pattern of the one existing original. This is a rare opportunity to remember a loved one in the oldest and often visited church in the Mackenzie.



The original
found under
the church



After
restoration

Highfield Cottage Progress

The front windows sills have all been repaired and windows painted. The wooden extension has been water-blasted and prepared for painting and materials gathered on site for drainage and roof repairs. Graham has gathered together the 'story' of Highfield using all we know about it to date and photographs. This can be viewed by going to our web site and clicking on Highfield Cottage and the chapters and photo albums will open as you proceed.

<http://www.burkesspass.org.nz/burkesspass/Projects/Highfield/Highfield%20Cottage%20Intro.htm>



Oral History Project.

Four interviews have been completed and another two to go. Our interviewees have been very generous in sharing their stories of their lives at Burkes Pass. So far we have to thank, Nancy McKinnon (nee Whyte), Prue Clark (nee Parker), Winton Ballantyne and Ward Clarke. I will give a brief background and summary of these interviews in subsequent newsletters. The interview recordings will be deposited and available to be listened to in the South Canterbury Museum when they are all completed.

Nancy McKinnon, Interview-1.

Nancy was born in Oamaru at the time her parents were running the Lake Pukaki Hotel and farming. When she was about a year old the hotel was sold and they eventually moved to Burkes Pass where Nancy went to school. She later married a local boy, 'Mac' McKinnon and they took over Rona Station from his parents. Nancy describes growing up in the village, her mother's work and living with few amenities. She tells of living in the cob cottage now known as Elm Tree Cottage, her work at the hotel, and wedding day at St Patricks Church. Other memories were of the McKinnons, her parents – in-law, visiting 'Rona', their cob homestead as a child, and later life there as a young wife and mother. One domestic detail included the hazards of the Tilly iron that had a petrol-fuelled heater built into it. She reflects on the social activities of the time with Women's Institute, dances and parties and the close supportive community. She now lives in Timaru.

Wishing you all steady ground and a wonderful spring.

Jane Batchelor

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On-line donations can be made to bank account 03 1718 0030625 00. Put your name in the reference box. Send an email with your address if you require a tax deductible receipt