

The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter April 2011



Working Bee – Saturday the 23rd April

9.30 am at the Musterers Hut for gardening and Devonshire tea.

If you wish, bring a plant or a cutting of a favourite flower for the church garden, planting tools, weeding gloves/ spade or grubber. As usual a fine, sunny day has been booked!!! Children welcome.

Mackenzie District Council Revisit Their Roots

On 25th January I received a joyful email from Liz announcing, **“We've just had a day using our house for what it was intended 135 years ago - A Council Meeting!”**

The present day councilors and staff entered into the spirit of the occasion by dressing in period style and their photograph was posed on the same verandah as the council many decades ago.

Maurie and Liz Angelo have been living at, and safeguarding ‘The Stone House’ since 1972. The building was formerly the office for the Mt Cook Roads Board and later the Mackenzie County Council. In 1862 Mount Cook district was formed as an electorate of the Canterbury Provincial Council, and on the 16th of May had its first election meeting in the Sawdon Station woolshed. The Council created the Mount Cook Road Board in 1863. The building was eventually built in concrete and the first Road Board meeting was held in the new building on 6th June 1876 with Mr Kimbell as chairman.



The Mackenzie County Council was formed in place of the Road Board on 1st October 1883. Reminiscing at the time of the opening of the new council offices in Fairlie in 1913, Mr McGregor gave a vivid description of the primitive conditions in which the Board originally operated. He said that when he first entered public life in Jan 1876, accommodation consisted in the use of a room in the local pub for the day. A small tin box about 2 foot square comprised all their furniture and effects. They had to pay for lunch and horse feed out of their own pockets.

The final decision to move the council offices from Burkes Pass to Fairlie Creek was preceded by much opposition and acrimonious debate and eventually occurred in October 1891. The reason being for the business of the council to be transferred to a more central position, and also considered it would be of great benefit to the ratepayers and members of Fairlie and Albury ridings.

(Ref : ‘Century of Challenge’ by W Greenwood)

Earthquake Update

The initial September the 4th quake was felt significantly at Burkes Pass despite being a long way away from the epicentre. While the church appears to have ridden it well, careful inspection shows that the elderly nails have partially worked their way out as the timber moved and flexed.

The replacement of the windows with the original style is awaiting availability of conservator Graham Stewart, who has been in great demand removing stained glass windows from the many buildings left badly damaged. Luckily for us major damage has been avoided and St Patricks is structurally sound. No further problems arose with the February quake and templates of the windows before and after the quake confirm that.

Church Leadlight Window Fund

We have had a wonderful response to the fund raising for replacement of the plain glass windows with those in the original style, and we are able to proceed. Thank you to all those who have given so generously. Further contributions of any size are still very welcome if any families wish to record their loved ones with a memorial window. Contact Jane on 03 348 1531 or email jbatch@clear.net.nz.

The South Island Organ Company

The Trust is very sad to remember those from this local South Canterbury business who lost their lives in the February quake along with Paul Dunlop who was assisting them remove an organ from a quake damaged church. The company was responsible for the excellent restoration of our two church organs.

Ciao to Liz and Maurie Angelo

It is with great regret that we bid farewell to Liz and Maurie, as they depart for Dunedin this month. Maurie came to Burkes Pass as an art student with a young family and has endowed the place with his vision, humor and style ever since. Liz, with her industry, resourcefulness and passion for the area has ensured that Burkes Pass Heritage Trust has thrived. We used to share them with Pievebovigliana in Italy, and now with Dunedin. I hope we can call upon the 'Lady Elisabeth Roxborough' and 'Count Maurice' to do the ceremonial honours and ribbon cutting here from time to time in the future.



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