

The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter

December 2012



Christmas Greetings to all. Burkes Pass is having a tide of change so a big welcome to new residents and very best wishes to those who have moved away. While our usual carol service will have to wait until next year, there will be a Christmas tree in the church (open daily) and you are welcome to put something on it – perhaps a note in memory of a loved one.

Christmas Races

The lead up to Christmas at Burkes Pass in 1871 on 22nd of December (according to Papers Past), started with a horse race meeting. *'Although the day was fine, yet a regular old-fashioned nor'wester was blowing in all its fury, and this alone kept many people from attending, but still about 100 sightseers managed to put in an appearance which considering the out of way locality, may be looked upon as a very fair attendance.'* That NW wind can be assumed to have been considerable in the treeless landscape of the time, and the hazards of the competition significant, with no St Johns in attendance. *'Kiss-me-quick who easily won the Maiden Plate and Don Pedro second, the rider of Spider getting a bad fall about 10 chains from the winning post'*. They were certainly a determined bunch and to cap it all consider the indigestion when *'The foot races, etc, advertised to take place after the races, were, in consequence of the weather, postponed to Christmas Day.'* Were the sprints to be before or after the customary feast, I wonder?



Guess How Many Nationalities?

John Corcoran was fascinated to glance down the open page of the visitors book in the church to see the range of nationalities represented. Out of curiosity he proceeded to count how many were there. The grand total came to 70 different countries. The pages continue to record the surprise and delight people have, to find the doors open, and interest in the relatively unaltered, and simple interior. Our small stall of items with a Burkes pass flavour helps to keep the trust afloat. It certainly is very encouraging to read the appreciative comments and think back to the rather uncertain times back in 2000 when the Trust was formed to keep the place.

Three Creeks Service Station

A recent highlight in the village has been the creation of this beautifully crafted building with its decorative sign writing in authentic old style at the former hotel corner. Dave Taylor has created this gem and tells me there is much more to look forward to when he installs the old petrol pumps, vintage vehicles and paraphernalia to go with it. Definitely worth a visit.



The Art Shop

Spectacular and intriguing photographic art is now occupying the former shop building and also well worth a look.

The Address Book

Your assistance in keeping up to date the names and addresses for the Trust newsletter and other communications of local interest would be greatly appreciated. As most people are aware, this newsletter is circulated mainly by email, no strings attached or subscription required, and for those who prefer a paper copy it can also be posted or delivered by our very obliging rural delivery. It is distributed to everyone I am aware of in the Burkes Pass area and to anyone who expresses an interest in receiving it throughout NZ and overseas. Having one foot in Burkes Pass and the other in Christchurch means I do not always keep up with change so if you would like to keep in touch and save trees please email Graham Batchelor gbatch@clear.net.nz and we will add you to the list.

Alma Cottage News

- Welcome visits from family members of the Greene and Keeffe families continue to happen as they are passing through, and often leave us with tales of childhood exploits.
- On the maintenance side, the cob surface of the cottage is having a well overdue recoating with a brushed on mixture of clay and that magic ingredient, fresh manure. Yuk! you may say, but nothing else works the same. It fills the fine cracks and dusty surface so it looks like new again and is very cost friendly. Yes, I do wash my hands before eating lunch afterward.
- Heavy rain in August/ September washed out the banks of the normally placid Opihi stream running through our local native revegetation area. A significant area of several hundred new plants close to the bank were exported out to sea and the creek bed has obviously got aspirations to become the Rangitata. However, the replacement plants are already in and a larger area fenced off further from the bank edge so perhaps there is a silver lining after all.

Facebook – The idea of the facebook page is to put up photos etc as things happen rather than having to wait for the newsletter. It also means that you can respond or comment.

Hint: It is useful to hit “like” on a new item as it then propagates to other people and gives it more exposure. <https://www.facebook.com/burkespassht>

Wishing you happy days with family and friends this Christmas,

Cheers

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