

The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter

March 2013



Working Bee

Sat 30 March (Sat of Easter)

Starting at 9am at St Patricks Church

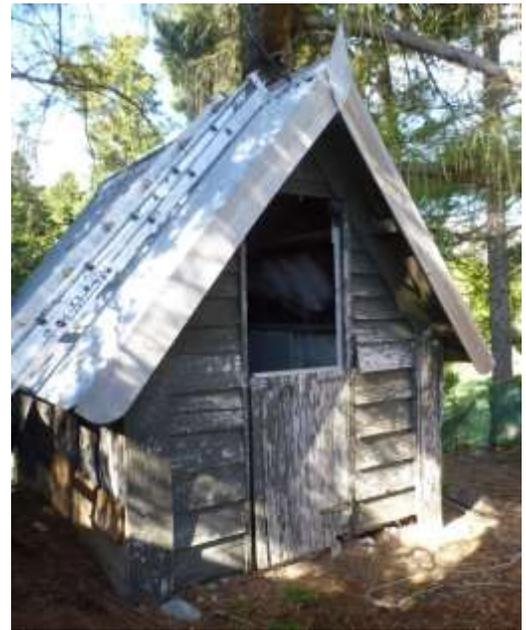
We would really appreciate your support of our small community. It is a great way to meet others for a short time. If you can help please email Graham (gbatch@clear.net.nz) and indicate what “gang” you would like to join and tools you can bring or just turn up!

Jobs planned:

- Cutting up a large fallen tree to the entrance of the ice skating rink. Need chainsaw and possibly a tractor and chain and some muscle power to move wood.
- Spraying re growing broom at the ice skating rink. Need back pack sprayers.
- General weeding of the plantings on the roadside. Need grubbers.
- Possibly fencing the ice skating rink – needs netting erecting. Need netting strainers, and fencing gear.

The Travels of a Historic Little Hut

The restoration of the Burkes Pass ice rink provoked re-discovery of a delightful little building whose history is still unfolding. The Corcoran family made a very generous offer of a little hut on their property, that adjoins the church, to be used for restroom facilities at the rink. This would also meet a long awaited need at church events. It perched high on the hill behind their house and virtually hung over the steep cliff that drops down to Burgess Stream, locked in by a mature larch tree. It defied removal by any safe mechanical means so was dismantled by Graham and Murray and Maree Hemmingsen, turned into a ‘flat pack’, loaded onto a tractor tray and driven the 50 metres down the hill to the paddock close to the church. Many days later after careful reassembly and repair, including the creation of a carefully crafted door, and a paint job to match the church, it reappeared looking as cute as a button.



Discussion with previous residents of the Corcoran’s present house included Joyce Kelly (nee Kingsbury), who remembered it was used as a play hut. Joyce was brought up at the hotel and has also has links with the ice rink. During the 1960s her father, while the publican at the hotel, developed the rink as a business. The family later sold the hotel to the Baxters and moved to the house next to the church. Brenda McCarthy and her husband had built this house while managing Paddy’s Market Station and Brenda was certain the hut was at the back of the section when they moved there.



In the process of dismantling the hut it became apparent that it might have started life with a canvas roof stretched over a wooden frame as significant remnants of the canvas remained under the later addition of tarpaper and corrugated iron. Early research suggests this may be an unusual early building technique.

Louise Corcoran, when examining an 1880's photograph of Burkes Pass township taken from up the hill behind, was sharp eyed enough to recognise the unique profile of the little hut with its steep pitched roof and horizontal rear window situated at rear of the hotel. Her suggestion, tongue-in-cheek, was that it has been steadily making its way to Tekapo!

Ice Rink Renovation Progress

So far we have restored the water control inlet and outlet, levelled a sunken corner, mowed the broom, installed a toilet facility, and planted some young pines and poplar tree poles to re-create shade at the NW end of the rink.

This year some of the major tasks are to remove a huge fallen willow that has fallen blocking the vehicle access, spray the broom regrowth and then complete the fencing so we can graze the rink with a few sheep to keep the grass and broom down.

Hopefully, weather permitting we could even see some ice to skate on.

Bridal Request for The Old Red Tractor

With good memories of Burkes Pass holidays, Sarah Hemmingsen specified the old red Nuffield tractor to get her to the church on time to marry her man, Kris Alexander, in January this year. She sat in splendour on a white linen covered hay bale beside her father, Murray, while the driver, looking very dapper in his antique straw boater, drove her to meet her groom at St Patrick's Church. A piper escorted them for the last leg of the journey and the ceremony went without a hitch for the happy couple, afterward returning to Alma Cottage for refreshments and photographs.

Best wishes
Jane Batchelor

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