

The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter

December 2017



Our Christmas Service (with carols) will be held St Patricks Church is at 2pm, Sunday 10th December, with the Rev.

Andrew McDonald, and Lisa Forrester playing the grand old organ, all welcome.

Followed by Afternoon Tea at the Gallery from 3-4pm – if you'd like to join us please bring a plate of delectables to share, byo drinks. Tea & Coffee provided at the gallery.

Church Fence Update

If you are passing and wondering about the fence looking traumatised it is because it is being gradually dismantled ready for the new picket fence in the old style. Unfortunately, the beautiful old rose bush has had to be cut down but hopefully will be replanted in another place out of the way.

Bid to Correct Names of Local Creeks

The names of small streams and creeks along the Burkes Pass Valley has been pre-occupying the mind of Max Willetts for several years now. Some of these streams bear historic or locally given names but few of these are recognised on maps of the area and in at least one or two cases the names on the maps are historically incorrect. To his credit Max has started the formidable task of putting some of this to rights and has approached the Geographic Board of NZ with his information. He is also passing this on to relevant people locally to get their comments on it and faces a considerable task to give the Board all the information they require.

Max was brought up at Dornie, the old cob homestead built by his grandparents Elijah and Mary Smart who purchased the property in 1886. He attended Burkes Pass School with his brothers, travelling the length of the valley each day by pony, so is very familiar with the waterways he passed by on the route. His grandmother lived in the family household and her stories of the area are also part of his store of memories.

Traction Engine Day Books

These fascinating record books record the daily cartage of goods in the Fairlie Mackenzie area from October 1913 to June 1919. It is a revealing story of what was required to keep a remote farm and household ticking over in those days. Who knows now what a 'superfoot' of timber is? Max has meticulously transcribed these record books that belonged to his grandfather and then his father, giving a copy of the transcription to the Heritage Trust and presenting the originals to the Archives in Fairlie for safe keeping... yes he has been very busy, once again thank you Max.



His grandfather John M Willetts started the business after he left the Albury Coal Mine which he leased and worked. The "Willetts" engine was a 1903 Burrell which he had used for delivering coal all over South Canterbury. The cartage business delivered goods from the railhead and suppliers to properties near and far in the Mackenzie. In 1912, his son John H Willetts took over. The first page records a delivery to Balmoral and includes such items as 50 bags of rock salt, fencing gear, 1 kg white lead, 1 box butter, sacks of pollard, oats, clover and 100 superfeet of 3x1 timber. Other records show items not on the average shopping list now such as a horse feeder, broad leaf posts, chests of tea, barrels of cement, cases of kerosene, a cask of molasses and a case of whiskey. On return trips are recorded bales of skins, empty sacks and bottles. One task was shifting a house and washhouse.

Traffic Issues Now and Then

We need your help to record any incidents you may see involving the highway through our town with a brief description of concerns and photographs if possible, of vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists. These can be passed on to Julie at the Gallery, or emailed to me janelbatch@gmail.com

Highway 8 through the village has been described recently as a disaster waiting to happen with near misses reported daily by the local businesses. Vehicles travelling too fast down from Tekapo into the blind corner where pedestrians often cross and cars, many being tourists, brake hard to turn off when they see things of interest. Truck and trailer units park beside the curve obliterating any view of moving traffic, campervans do bizarre manoeuvres and pedestrians trust their luck. We would like to collect as much information as possible to present to NZTA and try to get them to lower the speed limit through town.

This situation is not new, however we believe it is getting much worse.

Gone are the days when the children of the township put their ear to the ground to listen for a bullock wagon approaching at 2 mph.



Breaking News

A big thanks to the Community Trust of Mid and South Canterbury who have just advised that they will giving us a donation toward the repair and painting of the church.

Community Post

Thanks again to Community post for supply of post paid envelopes to assist with our projects.

Gardening Assistance

Since the felling of some of the large trees beside the church, the new garden area is growing very well as the mulch delivered by 100 years of dropping pine needles has created a great growing medium. This also means that the weeds quite like it as well and I would love to hear from anyone who was willing to volunteer an hour or so each week or fortnight to help me keep it all under control. When the new fence is installed it will all look absolutely beautiful.

Where's Sally

The children's game to hunt for images of Sally the Collie dog along the heritage walk is great fun, from the feedback we are getting. With school holidays approaching, give it a whirl with your children or grandchildren, pick up a guide with clues and rewards from the little red Musterer's hut or the Church. A good way to release energy and get some fresh air.



Jane Batchelor

Postal Address: 41 Kirkwood Avenue, Christchurch 8041

Phone: Burkes Pass 03 685 6271 Christchurch 03 348 1531

Email: janelbatch@gmail.com

Web : <http://www.burkesspass.org.nz>.

On Line Shop: <http://www.burkesspass.org.nz/burkesspass/Shop/indexshop.htm>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/burkesspassht>

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