

The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter

September 2018



Working Bee – Saturday 22nd September – meet at the church 9.30 am.

Planting and Heritage Walk maintenance – your assistance would be greatly appreciated in keeping our township looking wonderful, any time you can spare ... even an hour or so. Morning tea provided. If time and helpers permit, some repairs to the Cemetery Hut would keep it 'alive' for a bit longer.



Maggie's Sewing Machine

Earlier this year I was contacted by descendants of Maggie Greene who lived at Alma Cottage to see if we would be interested in the return of her sewing machine to the cottage. Maggie's grand daughter, Dot Hopkinson, accompanied by her daughter, Donna McColl, and grandson, Lochey, delivered the wonderful old Singer treadle machine home again. It had been inherited by Maggie's daughter Lillian and then passed down to Dot. One look showed how carefully it had been looked after over the years with intact original cabinet and gorgeous gold transfers. It is now awaiting its next sewing project in pride of place.



Church Trees Safely Removed

The decision was made somewhat reluctantly to remove the three elderly pine trees on the NE corner of the church grounds. They were definitely past their use by date, having been topped and severely pruned some decades ago, were misshapen and starting to shed branches. The work was done by arborist, John Baxter, who has done some massive tree dismantling jobs beside the church on several occasions and his skills, at tree climbing and manoeuvring heavy branches to fall in the right place, are truly impressive. He comes from several generations of a family of arborists from Scotland. This was handy as his tolerance of freezing temperatures was also necessary on the morning of the job.

Many thanks to Ivan Eason for coming to our rescue to clear the heavy logs, distributing them for timber and firewood around the township and removal of slash with his heavy machinery.

Thanks also to the Mackenzie District Council Heritage Protection fund for assisting with the cost.

Seven trailer loads of mulch from some of the slash ended up on the township native areas which will help with moisture retention and reducing weeds. Now it is all clear for starting the new fence.....



Wanted - Children's Stories Relating to Burkes Pass for the Hut Book

In the little red Musterers Hut is a large book with a few yarns from early days at the Pass but many empty pages waiting to be filled. It would be fantastic to have some stories about more recent times from our younger generation, no matter how short, or pictures that that could make our book come alive with colour. It could be about anything, real or imagined, adventures, favourite pets, or helping on the farm.

Recently when I was looking through some old newspapers I came across a story written in 1939 by Donald Scott aged 9 years old. It starts ' Now in Burkes Pass the cars whizz past and kick up a lot of dust, and we have to be careful crossing the road (*not a lot has changed except less dust perhaps*). In the old coaching days the coaches used to give the horses a rest at the old blacksmith's shop. There was a house joined to this, but now has been made into a store with a bowser in front (*now the site of the Gallery*).... Coaches used to go through the Mackenzie Plains to the Hermitage. The road was not fenced off, and as the coaches passed from one property to another there were boundary dogs instead of gates, so the coaches could go through but the sheep could not follow. The dogs became fierce because they were lonely and did not always get enough to eat and drink (*sounds very sad*). Now the roads are fenced off and the boundary dogs are not needed (*hooray*). When my great-grandma took her first little baby home, she took it many miles on horse-back to her home on the Mackenzie plains. She carried it in front of her. Now that baby is my Grandma.'

Alma Cottage Screen-printed on Cotton Bags

A beautiful pen and ink drawing of Alma Cottage by Shirley O'Connor is being printed on cotton bags as a fundraiser for restoration of the Burkes Pass church. The bags are ideal for a multitude of purposes and can be folded up to keep in your handbag or glove box and a great replacement for the single use plastic bag. They will be available from the stall at the back of the church in the next few weeks.



The Tui Challenge

Those wonderful song birds, the tui, have been heard and seen in Geraldine and Timaru in recent times... do you think we could encourage some to come as far inland as Fairlie and Burkes Pass?

Apparently, the birds live on nectar, fruit and insects. Some flowers that will thrive locally are flax, hoheria and kowhai, and a number of exotic flowering trees as well. A good list of plants is listed on this site <https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/conservation-activities/attract-birds-to-your-garden/what-to-plant/>

Public Toilet

Who would believe the joy and relief of having a public toilet in town. Joy mainly from local businesses who now can direct the many visitors to it and relief...well that speaks for itself! A cute little building with its pitched roof and own verandah in Pioneer Red now stands next to the Gallery and been well used since the construction fences were removed a couple of weeks ago. Thanks go to the Mackenzie District Council.

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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.