

The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter

November 2020



Batchelor's Native Bush Open Day; Sunday 29th Nov 10 am- 2.30 pm.

All welcome to come for a wander and tour and share our many wins and buried mistakes. Free entry, tea and scones for a gold coin donation to the Trust and a stall with plants and Heritage Trust items for sale. A fair weather event.

This bush has been a revegetation project for over 30 years, using plants propagated from locally sourced seed and cuttings including silver beech and totora. The site, comprising wetland, riparian planting and shelterbelts, was growing long grass and broom and now is transformed with a developing canopy and accompanying birdlife.



Alma Cottage, 2033 Fairlie-Tekapo Rd, Burkes Pass - look for the flag on the left coming from Fairlie. Parking inside main road gate or on roadside opposite. Ph; 6856271 for further details or email janelbatch@gmail.com

60 kph Speed Zone through Burkes Pass Township

A huge thank you to NZTA for finally hearing our concerns and lowering the speed limit and a massive thank you to all who contributed with submissions to make this happen. It is such a relief and already making a difference. The additional measures of coloured seal are still to be installed and increased threshold planting to visually reinforce the new limit will be enhanced over time.



A Vision for the Future of Burkes Pass Township

The Spatial Planning process was launched by Mackenzie District Council to inform their 'direction of travel' for the next 30 years for all the townships including Te Kopi-O-Opihi which is the Maori name for Burkes Pass. It kicked off at St Patrick's Church with a well-attended meeting including new and older residents, planners, and councillors. Two attendees from Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Ltd. gave an inspirational glimpse of the rich Maori heritage of our area which most of us are relatively unaware of. We were urged to be future focused, do some brainstorming and think what could our township look like in an ideal world. It was great to hear the significant agreement on many themes such as heritage, and many came away with a buzz for exploring ideas.

A concept plan was subsequently produced and has resulted in further ideas that will be presented for comment.

A Tui at Burkes Pass

On the first day of spring, while snow gently fell, a Tui was a very unexpected visitor to our plum tree in the garden at Alma Cottage at Burkes Pass. It spent all day feeding from the nectar in the blossom and at night sheltered in our nearby native bush where its lovely call was heard early in the morning. It stayed for 3 days and then moved on. It is the first one we have seen in the 36 years we have been here. Unlike the rest of NZ, they are a rare sight in Canterbury and certainly never expected in our wildest dreams at the Pass.



Mary Smart's Serving Dish

Born on Christmas Day 1854, Mary Greig arrived as a 19 year old from Applecross, Scotland on the 'Pleiades' in 1874 accompanied by her aunt Mrs D Bain, and came ashore in a surfboat onto the beach at Timaru. She met her future husband Elijah Smart while working at the Tekapo Hotel and they were married at 'Big Ben' the home of Andrew Burnett, (now the site of the Museum in Timaru). They worked variously at Lilybank, Sawdon and Simons Hill and their own home was a cob cottage at Burkes Pass called 'Dornie' after the last place that Mary saw in Scotland before leaving.

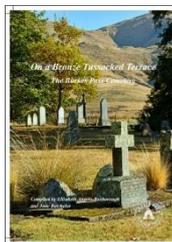
Her grandson Max Willetts remembers her as a small person in dark clothes and always an apron which on a walk through the nearby plantation she used to gather up cones and small sticks into. Very religious, she attended church at Burkes Pass and no meals were cooked on Sunday but prepared beforehand. Family memories record that she spoke Gaelic, did beautiful knitting but as she did not read or write relied on help interpreting patterns. One time the family were gathered in the front room by the fire, Granny was knitting and growled when she dropped a stitch. Sometime later Max was asked what he was crawling around on the floor for, "Looking for the stitch that Granny dropped" was his reply!

Joan Shepherd, Mary's great granddaughter has very kindly donated Mary's very large blue and white serving dish, thought to have been a wedding present, that passed down to her. It is a lovely example of the Asiatic Pheasant design and a wonderful link to Mary and many family meals that could well have started with the Selkirk Grace made famous by Robbie Burns;

*"Some hae meat, and canna eat,
and some wad eat, that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat
and sae the Lord be thankit".*

The Burkes Pass Cemetery booklet

This has been reprinted after the first edition sold out and available at the church or contacting Jane via email janelbatch@gmail.com, or write to 41 Kirkwood Avenue, Christchurch 8041.



Four generations; Mary Smart, Sarah Manning, George Manning and his young daughter Joan. Photo supplied by Joan Shepherd.



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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.