

# The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter

## May 2021



### Mackenzie Council Planning

A great opportunity to brainstorm a wish list for our Burkes Pass township to be considered for the long term. Council is also asking for your feedback on parks, reserves, trails, open spaces and facilities to guide them for the next 10-20 years.

<https://letstalk.mackenzie.govt.nz>

The trust has drafted a response to their questions and ideas which you are welcome to request to copy or use. Your support can make a big difference. Email me for the draft [janelbatch@gmail.com](mailto:janelbatch@gmail.com)



### Bill Wills – an Unexpected Talent

Many people remember Bill as a 'remittance man' who lived at the Lockhart's Creek ford on the Mackenzie Pass Road. He came to NZ about 1918 from England via Australia where possibly he met his downfall. Remittance men were the black sheep of wealthy families and effectively paid to never return. Bill used to collect his remittance from the Albury Post Office and later on, his money was sent to the Fairlie CFCA, who delivered his grocery needs on a weekly basis. Bill did drink heavily when it was available, and some suggested it was his 'antifreeze' in winter, however it is difficult to imagine what he endured in that stage of his life. The local community assisted at times providing home cooked meals and assistance with rudimentary shelter. According to Prue Clark (nee Parker), he would reciprocate by milking the Mt Dalgety house cow for her mother when her father was away working. Margaret Parker captured his characterful likeness in a pastel portrait. Eventually he went to live at the Otipua Block of Talbot Hospital, an aged care facility. He made his appreciation of their care known by making each nurse a beautifully crafted handwork mat. Cecilia Davis was given one when she was a young nurse there around 1963. Made of woollen Turkey work, also known as Ghiordes knot, it has a tufted surface with multi-coloured layers and with loop edging. Cecilia has kindly donated it to the Trust for safekeeping and display. Bill died at Timaru Hospital in 1965.



### Burkes Pass Speed Limit Changes - Waka Kotahi Video

The lowered speed limit brought down from 80kph to 60kph has been generally welcomed by residents and visitors to Burkes Pass improving safety, noise and general driver behaviour. A video to record the effects on the local community was filmed earlier this year as a 'Road to Zero' initiative. The link can be seen on the BPHT facebook page <https://fb.watch/4L8RpakYMa/>

### Annis Cottage Progress

Helpers at the April working bee literally mucked in and a milestone reached when the exterior cob repairs were completed recently. It was a special experience to have descendants of the Anniss family who travelled from Timaru to help. Starting on the interior is an exciting prospect.



## Church Fence Construction Completed

At last, all the pickets are now in place, thanks to the workers who turned up to our working bee on Saturday April 3<sup>rd</sup>. A final top coat of paint to be sprayed on is the final step. Joyce Kelly, lived as a child at the hotel, and brought along an enlarged photocopy image of the street frontage of the township in the 1800s showing clearly the original picket fences in place beside the hotel and neighbouring cottage. It would be fantastic to find the source of the original photograph to get a quality image – does anyone have any idea?

The church garden also got some attention from two of us and we would greatly appreciate finding a source of mulch to help with weed control.

## Events

- We enjoyed hosting a visit from the South Canterbury Historical Society on 24<sup>th</sup> January, and they had a tour of the cemetery, church, cob cottages and the bush.
- The weather was kind on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Feb for a group from the South Canterbury branch of Forest and Bird Society who had a picnic on the lawn at Alma Cottage after a wander around the bush track.
- Friends and family of Robin Stevens gathered with Shirley O'Connor at the church on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May to celebrate his life and many talents. Shirley and Robin were responsible for significant repairs to the church when it was used as a gallery and also created an unforgettable ride-on miniature steam train on their adjacent land. A young totora tree was planted to mark the occasion.

## Burkes Pass Cricket Club Celebration Match

150 years ago in September 1870 a number of run holders formed the district's first club at the Burke's Pass Hotel. They became known as the Burke's Pass Sloggers. Prior to 1870 the Mackenzie Country was one of the first places in New Zealand to play cricket with intermittent social matches held at sheep stations from as early as the 1850s. The special match was held at Fairlie's Strathconan Park on 31<sup>st</sup> January and featured Albury and Burke's Pass competing for the former Mackenzie Cricket Sub Association's Fielden Cup. A good social game was had on very pleasant sunny afternoon. The players came from far and wide to represent their respective teams and the humor and camaraderie was likely much the same as many years ago. A feature article in Stuff noted "some lusty hitting was a feature of a cricket match between Burkes Pass and Albury in Strathconan Park, Fairlie, on Sunday". It resulted in a victory for the Sloggers... "There was a crowd of about 50 there, a good turnout," one of the organisers Matt Robinson said".

The Burkes Pass club went out of existence in the 1890s however maybe it is time to make a comeback.



## Sycamore Timber – ideas sought for a Trust fundraiser

A large number of large sycamore trees behind Alma Cottage were felled over summer. These trees were beautiful mature specimens that created a lovely shaded woodland, but a weed menace. It was sad to see them go, but it was also a relief as they are prolific seed producers and the most significant hazard to our native bush. They can germinate and grow rapidly in shade and eventually out grow the bush and take it over. Crawling through the undergrowth regularly to pull out the seedlings loses its attraction after a few years. However we are exploring uses for the beautiful densely grained timber to use as a fundraiser for the Trust. It is suitable for kitchen use such as chopping boards or platters, any other ideas out there?

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