

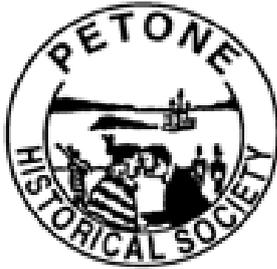


PETONE HISTORICAL SOCIETY inc.

Roy Hewson Secretary 143 Esplanade Petone ph 5686449

roy.hewson@xtra.co.nz

Chronicle June 2013



2013 committee

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Photo taken at our workshop
sorting through old newspapers

Ruth Dickson, Pam Hanna and
Roy Hewson. Beryl Harris was at
the table but behind the camera

Greetings to all,

We had a glorious summer but now we are getting towards the heart of winter and people are less inclined to venture out in the evening. It is however a great time to start your own family story. Once done it will be a delight to your future descendants. If the task seems too big just begin with writing your memories of growing up. We now have a very good collection of people's memories of Petone during the 20th century. It is remarkable how so many remember similar things like Guy Fawkes fires on the beach, and going to school. We would be delighted to have some more. Our intention to publish them has stalled because of lack of money and also lack of suitable pictures to illustrate the stories. Have a look in your albums and see if there are photos we can copy for the book.

There are a lot of changes in the wind for the society. We still have not had an offer of a president. Please think about it. Many of us are getting a bit old but there must be some recent retirees who have the skills necessary and a love of Petone past.

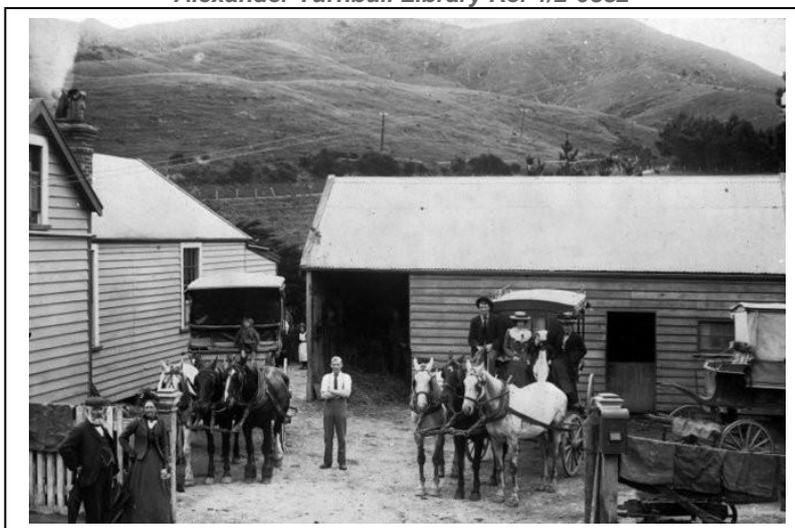
Members movements: Past President Vera Ellen, our solitary life member, is now a resident at Aroha rest home in Taita. She would enjoy visitors. Ron Brazier is also a resident at Aroha .

What is happening with our Society...

1. Last week four of our members plus a visitor from Wairarapa took on the task of hunting through a pile of newspapers from the past. Most of these papers came to us via a carpet layer who found them beneath carpets when he replaced them. Perhaps some others may have access to papers in out of way places.. The earliest paper found was 1883 copy of Auckland Star. There were copies of the old Southern Cross; Dominion; Evening Post and Sports Post among others. Many of them were in very good order. Some were not. We were searching for items about Petone and putting them into labelled boxes for future filing. It was amazing what was found

2. Another task has been preparing exhibits boards for the “Jail Museum” We have a number of interesting photos and articles but these still have to be mounted and laminated. The existing exhibits are to be gradually replaced and stored for future use. If anyone has a feel for design and museum layout we could do with your help.
3. Our visitor from the Wairarapa was Anne Taylor the new editor of the Wellington Region Heritage Promotion Council’s new newsletter which is focussed on heritage information from the whole wellington region. The first newsletter will be in our e mail box by 1st June. I will forward it on to members and anyone else who wishes to register their e mail with me. It will be full of colour and too expensive to post. We have a couple of articles featuring in the newsletter depending on space. We will be most interested in your feedback. This year heritage month will again be September but unlike previous years there is no theme. It is left to the Historical Societies to try and persuade other local groups to undertake their own heritage activity. It is a chance for groups to get free advertising throughout the region. Register with our secretary (roy.hewson@xtra.co.nz) or visit the WRHPC webpage www.wrhpc.org.nz.
4. On Thursday 20th June at 7.30p.m. We are inviting Allison Allitin to speak to us on her research topic “The Streets of Wellington” It would be very nice to show our appreciation by having a good attendance. We will be finished before 9 p.m. Venue Petone Community House (downstairs)
5. On June 5 we will be hosting a travel group from Kapiti and will be showing off what we have in Petone. We have another small group of exchange students arriving on Friday 21 June at 11 a.m.
6. The image below has been chosen as the image for this years Heritage Month

*The 4pm bus from Karori to Wellington driven by Jack Kinsella, setting out from Mr Joe Spiers headquarters at the foot of the Makara Hill, circa 1890s. Photographer unidentified.
Alexander Turnbull Library Ref 1/2-0382*



Heritage Month – September 2013 Invitation To Participate

If you or a group wishes to participate and have a project about their own history ring Roy Hewson 5686449 or e mail roy.hewson@xtra.co.nz for details of participation. We would like to see as many groups take part in heritage month and show their own history either by displays, workshop or activity. We will advertise for you throughout the region. You may like to have look at WRHPC website
A copy of the poster will be attached to this Chronicle. If you can display it or send it on we will be most grateful

Petone Historical Society has already some events marked in. We will be taking heritage walks. We will be laying three more plaques in Jackson Street on the second Saturday; The Community House will be having a Petone book authors day on Saturday 28th Sept with Geraldine Brody reading. Who else can we find to take part in heritage month?

POST-BAG March to June 1840.

I have copied several of the letters sent back to England by the early settlers. These were set out in one of the 1978 Resource Projects for local schools written by Jenny Forsythe who was then Librarian at Petone Library and assisted by Helen Mulgan who also worked at Petone Library.. These extracts were from colonist's letters published New Zealand Journal Vol 1 1840 by Louis Ward "Early Wellington 1928.

Thomas Partridge, who came on the Adelaide writes:-

A vast number of houses have been built and are in the course of erection; native house chiefly, of poles, and well thatched. There are a good many stores in operation and we have no fewer than three auctioneers of whom Mr. Moering is one. From want of houses ashore the emigrants are kept some time on board ship, but the company guarantees them employment at £1 per week.

Labour is high: mechanics 45s to 50s per week. Labourers 30s per week. Beef none, pork 6d per lb., flour 8d per lb., potatoes 12s per cwt.

I am now living in a tent which I have bought. For the house is not yet landed and I am very well contented that I have not yet been obliged to sleep with an umbrella over my head as most others have done. The climate is so fine that everybody laughs at such things. My tent is full of goods, pots and kettles, and all sorts of bedevilment.

Molesworth, Sinclair and Petre, and the aristocracy are setting a good example by working away. Fustian coats and thick shoes are very fashionable, and you would laugh to see officers, doctors and dandies – digging, thatching and chopping away with great frenzy

From Charles McGurk, a gentleman who came on the "Aurora" wrote:-

We engaged with the natives to build us houses which are just finished. This is rather tedious on account of the distance of bringing wood and sedges. The house is built by sticking poles and thatching the sides and roof with the sedges or grass. The thatch is fastened to the sticks by flax and supplejack, a species of willow.

My life is very different to what I led in London – rise at five, breakfast and out to the woods at six o'clock, returning home at six in the evening. It is very hard work (cutting lines through the bush) and I am generally wet all day, as we have to cross over swamps; yet I have not felt the least ill effects from it, and I like this sort of life amazingly.

The natives are quiet and peaceable. A rival tribe called the "naiti-rahoons" have each killed one of their rival chiefs, and are coming down to have a regular fight. Our tent is pitched on the place where these "naiti-rahoons" are expected; We keep some pistols loaded and have a good ditch.

Miss Riddiford also off the "Adelaide" wrote to Mrs Ramsey Old Brompton, England

Major Baker and several others have had very nice ones (houses) built consisting of four rooms each, for which they pay our blankets. Pigs, potatoes, fish, vegetables and pigeons abound here

and the necessities of life can be had for a mere trifle. If you lend your gun to a chief, he will return in the evening laden with game.

Pray join us, for we are convinced it will shortly be a second England. Do not think of bringing a house; the window frames, doors, bolts, bars etc may be of use....

From John Pierce (passenger on the “Duke of Roxburgh”) who was drowned in a boating accident off Petone Beach four months later.

In our garden parsley grows in abundance nearly down to the low water mark. The natives never think about seasons. They never dig, but take a piece of wood and root up the ground and turn over the soil. And if there are eight potatoes they take up seven and cover one over and leave it to grow.

On Saturday I gave three yards of calico for a pig, 40lb weight. The part I sold brought me 12s. On Saturday night it rained tremendously, and we were as badly off as if we were in open air, I sat three hours with Mrs Pierce, after which we rolled ourselves up in our blankets and slept soundly. The next morning we were as gay as possible and felt no cold.

On Saturday the first horses were landed which had a prodigious effect on the natives...

These extracts show the way our first immigrants lived in Petone. These people must have lived close to the beach. There were another larger group at ‘Britannia’ up the Hutt River close behind where Wilford school is today. Betts Hopper got some men to cut a track between the two sites. Below is what the Maori thought.

Wharepouri came to Colonel Wakefield’s one morning.....” We are going,” said he, ”to our old habitation at Taranaki. I know that we sold you the land and that no more white people have come to take it than you told me. But I thought that you were telling lies and that you had not so many followers. I thought that you would have nine or ten, or perhaps as many as there are at Te-awa-iti (a whaling station in the South Island) I thought that I could get one placed at each Pa as a white man to barter with the people and keep us well supplied with arms and clothing, and that I should be able to keep these men under my hand and regulate their trade myself. But I see that each ship hold 200 and I believe now, that you have more coming. They are well armed and they are strong at heart, for they have begun to build their houses without talking. They will be too strong for us. My heart is dark.”

Text: E.J.Wakefield, Adventure in New Zealand 1955 edition.

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