

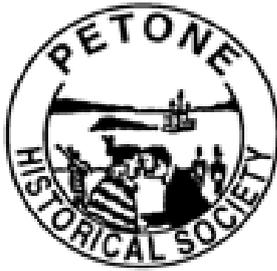


# PETONE HISTORICAL SOCIETY inc.

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## Chronicle April 2015



### 2014 committee

#### President

*Pam Hanna*

#### Secretary.

*Roy Hewson*

#### Treasurer

*Ruth Dickson*

#### Minute Secretary

*Marianne Jenner*

#### Committee

*Basil Chan*

*Barbara Scott*

*Hellen Swales*

*Leonie Dobbs*

*Alfred Memelink*

*Sylvia Allan*

*Joan Got a LifeMembership*



Welcome to our April edition of the Chronicle. Some people are not sure of when our Year officially starts. Our financial year runs from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Our Annual General Meeting is held in March of each year. By March it is hoped that most people would have paid their subscription of \$15 single or \$20 family. Last year we had over \$100 less in subscriptions than 2013. We really need your support and the support of more Petone people to keep financially solvent. While our balance sheets looks healthy most of it consists of unspent grant money for our proposed book of Memories that hopefully will be completed by June.

We have had a very busy year as was shown in our President's Annual Report. There is still quite a bit of money required to keep the Jail operating. This is in two main areas. Costs of new Displays and secondary maintenance of the Jail itself. We share the costs connecting to the museum with the Jackson Street Programme and this year we are faced with finding a way to protect both the museum and the public from wet weather by organising a covered walk way. This past year we have contributed to the electrical work that enabled us to use the new TV to show our history stories. These run continually but we now have three programmes, The Jackson Street Story; The Walk of Champions and our newest acquisition is Glee's to Flicks. Some may recall seeing this at the Settlers museum when David Mealing was the director. Hopefully we will be able to access more films this year. They are very popular with the public especially visitors from out of town or from overseas.

We are grateful that the PHS staff are able to open the museum each weekday when they are in attendance. The average attendance daily is growing and numbers average about 30 people per day. We would have many more during the weekend but the jail remains shut because of lack of volunteers. We are in the process of arranging a new system to hang our wall displays both for better viewing and also to enable the museum to be cleared for Santa's Grotto over Christmas. At present it is quite a job taken them down and then rehangings them. We are fortunate that our new Committee member Alfred Memelink is using his gallery skills to set up a system. Deanna Puata has voluntarily created some amazing material for displays into lovely wall hangings from our basic research.

Our society runs on the help of volunteers to get things done,

## 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING...

With an attendance of just 22 we were anxious to have a short A.G.M and get on with listening to our most interesting guest Claire Craig who is the relatively new Manager of the Heritage New Zealand Region Manager.

The A.G.M. went very smoothly and we have been fortunate in getting two new committee members, both are very talented. Alfred Memelink who is the owner of the excellent Art Space gallery on the Esplanade and a very talented artist himself and Sylvia Allen who has been a leading light in Petone's Planning Action Group since 1977. She is a respected town planner both in New Zealand and overseas. It is great that these two are willing to be on our committee.

The other major happening at the A.G.M was the retirement of Joan Hewson as treasurer. Joan has been our treasurer since 1994 over 21 years. To show the respect of the society the committee made Joan a Life Member of the Society. Joan's replacement as treasurer is Ruth Dickson another long time member. All subs and other financial concerns should now go to her address 11 South Street, Petone or phone 5688440

The President's report showed the work done over the past year. Our little museum is now being upgraded with better framed exhibits but we are now finding a better way of displaying them as we are not allowed nails or screws into the heritage rooms and the walls have to be cleared each Christmas for Santa's Grotto. An important addition is the new Television which is continuous showing of three films – the story of the Jackson Street; The Walk of Champions and From Glees to Flicks the story of Petone entertainment. People may remember seeing it at the Petone Settlers Museum

Our Guest speaker Claire Craig gave us a first class presentation. She has spent some 13 years in



England working for the British National Trust and English heritage. She told s about her

involvement with the developing of Stonehenge into a real heritage focal point with all area upgraded to show Stonehenge in the best light and including a visitors centre. Her other major work was Thames Tideway Tunnel a huge undertaking under the Thames River

some 70 metres below ground. Her work included the protection of the heritage areas along the river. Evidently London has the same problems as Petone with developers trying to build apartments every where possible. The protection of heritage places is very important. She agrees that Petone as a whole should be regarded as a "Heritage Place" that is important for the future.

### **What has Happened in Petone over the past month or so..**

1. The Patrick Street Walk was held on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March and there was a very good attendance of about 30 people who met at Alfred Memelink studio before setting out on their exploration of Patrick Street. The walk was held in fine weather although somewhat cloudy. Sylvia Allan a resident of Patrick Street and a widely respected Town Planner led the walk and explained the way the houses were designed and constructed. This is one of the first group of State house built in New Zealand and probably the only full street to survive relatively intact. After a New Zealand wide competition seven architects were selected to build the houses of very solid materials. They all still survive. Sylvia spoke in some detail about some interesting houses. A very worthwhile walk and talk enjoyed by all those who attended.
2. The video of entertainment in Petone – "From Glees to Flicks" was added to continual TV in the Jail Museum and has proved to be very popular as are the existing two "Jackson Street" and "The Walk

of Champions” . Glee to Flicks were given to us by The Settlers Museum. You may recall that in the early 1990's the Settlers had a film show complete with God Save the Queen at the start. Glee to Flicks was produced by David Mealing the then Curator. There were two other slide/tape shows. – The 1949 Petone Settlers Football team which on the Chatham Cup and the other was “Manpower” the story of women who were manpowered to the Ford and General Motors factories to help produce vehicles and munitions for the war effort. Both these tape slide shows should be somewhere in the Dowse. Hopefully we can find them and get them also copied to film.

3. The Jail Museum is in the process of being refurbished. Alfred Memelink is organised a system to display the exhibitions. We are not allowed to put nails or screws in the heritage walls. With the exhibitions having to be dismantled each November/December for Santa's Grotto we need a system that is easy to change. Unfortunately this takes time.
4. We are preparing a new exhibition featuring a local dentist Norm Willis. Norm was president of Petone Rotary Club in 1962/3. His daughter Brenda Willis who was a member of our Historical Society died last year and to the surprise of Petone Rotary Club she bequeathed on behalf of her father a sum of \$372,844 to the club to be put into a Trust for future Rotary projects. Norm Willis bought his dental practice in 1926 from David Armstrong (the name Armstrong is still on the building on the corner of Richmond and Jackson Street) In 1934 he had a new dental surgery built to his own specifications, on the corner of Queen and Jackson Street. This distinctive art deco building is a great example of the period and is a real asset to Jackson Street. He retired from dental practice in 1955. He lived in Campbell Terrace where Brenda was born for many years.

## **THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP PETONE....**

Petone has always had a number of people who have made a difference and are well remembered. Last Chronicle I wrote about the Memelink family. This time I have a story about another well known and respected Petoneite. Jeremy Garvitch. For those who have not heard of him, he was a very prominent Petone photographer and there were hundreds of people who had a Garvitch photograph. But Jeremy Garvitch was more than that . He had a most interesting life. I well recall one morning when he knocked on the door of my Central School office and told me about his journey to New Zealand and wondered if it would be of interest as an article in a school journal. The well known author David McGill wrote a story about Jeremy Garvitch and the Jewish influence in New Zealand for the Evening Post in June 1980. I reproduce part of his story. I have not included the history of Jewish migration to N.Z or the history of some of their accomplishments.

### **“Jewish role in N.Z.’s Growth by David McGill June 1980**

Grandpa Garvitch is taking his driving test again this year aged 90. He is confident. After all it is nothing for somebody who left his Eastern Siberian home at the age of 16 and travelled overland through China and Japan, taught himself 3000 2words of English and then came out here. Grandpa Garvitch is cheerfully offhand about it. He left one of the least persecuted parts of Russia, he came to one of the least persecuting of countries yet his story has many of the classic elements of the wandering Jew - resourceful, ironic, uncomplaining, determined to better himself, ultimately successful. He arrived here at the end of 1908 along with 10 or so young Jewish immigrants. They had no money and no trade. They became wool pressers, machinists, picture framers, share millers.He ended up photographing babies - thousands of them. The immigrant's offspring are doctors, scientists, magistrates, teachers – here, in Sydney, London,

Israel. He is happy watching his five grandchildren succeeding as artists and architects, and remembering the old days by Lake Baikai which you could fit the South Island into.



He was 15 during the first revolution in 1905. He carried a large knife in the street. The villagers were trying to protect themselves from the central Government troops who swept through the area. Every town had gibbets. At his home six men were grabbed the oldest an intellectual. Goldsibel. Some were Jews. One escaped. He was replaced by the first Jew the soldiers caught. All were hanged. There was no more education available for him so off he went.

**He** came here because he heard education was free. He humped his English books from wool store to cowshed, too tired to teach himself further. But he made it. Walter Nash got him his naturalisation papers. Jeremy used to give him rides to work (at parliament) in the 1953 Hillman he still drives. The Garvitch are third generation New Zealanders now descended from the second wave of Jews of Russian extraction. “ Jeremy Garvitch had his photography shop in Jackson Street for some 30 years. He lived on the corner of Elizabeth Street and

Kensington Avenue. I think he died at the ripe old age of 98 but I am relying on my memory.

#### COMING EVENTS....

1. The Hutt City's Long Term plan is now open for submissions. I believe that the area designated for additional apartments is still shown in the plan as being along Jackson Street from Cuba Street to Victoria Street.. That is our Heritage village and has the potential to destroy this heritage asset.
2. The Local Body Commission is due to release its final option for Super city very shortly.
3. Petone Historical Society's next general meeting with Lower Hutt Historical Society is set to be held on the second Friday in May at 7,30 p.m. At the old Apex House on cnr of Laings Rd. And Queens Drive (opposite Rebel Sports) The speaker will Mike Aanott a Photographer who will show a powerpoint entitled "A Trip through Egypt"
4. Heritage month will be September. More on that in our next issue of PHS Chronicle on 1<sup>st</sup> June
5. Jackson Street Committee has organised an ANZAC flag competition among local primary schools. The children's efforts are on display in Jackson Street and the final group is in the foyer of the Settlers Museum.
6. Our book on Memories of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Petone near completion Should go to print in May. If you are interested in getting a copy please show your interest by e mail to [roy.hewson@xtra.co.nz](mailto:roy.hewson@xtra.co.nz)

#### SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE.....

For those who have not yet sent in your subscriptions for this year please do so as soon as possible. We were over a hundred dollars short on subs last year and will need to cull our list this year. If you can encourage a friend or neighbour to join please do so. The more people who join the greater is our influence when applying for grants.

**PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW TREASURER IS RUTH DICKSON 11 SOUTH STREET PETONE PHONE 5688440. PLEASE SEND YOUR CHEQUES TO HER.**

For those who pay by direct credit 030543 0101318 00 is the number and please add your name to the deposit.