

DECEMBER 2015



**Tena Koutou
Katoa
Greetings to all
from
President DALE
WEBB**

Very warm festive season greetings and temperatures recently have been as warm, perhaps as warm as we would want with so little recent rain. The grass at Brayshaw Park (perhaps the best drained park in Blenheim) is looking particularly brown for this early in the summer; the predictions about it being very dry seem to be coming true. Hot and dry or otherwise have a great Christmas and may 2016 be all that you wish for. I hope the wish list includes lots of time with family, friends and a little of Marlborough's heritage.

On the back of this newsletter is the advertisement for a Special General Meeting of the Society on Sunday the 17th January 2016. The meeting will address two issues; the first routine, to receive and hopefully accept the audited 2015 Annual Accounts. The second is I believe very significant, it is to consider and if accepted approved a change to Rule 2(d) of our Constitution, the document that regulates our activities. The change to Rule 2(d) is the final item required before the transfer of the Society's commercial activities to the Marlborough Heritage Trust. The terms of the transfer have been agreed in principle between ourselves and the MHT, it just remains to resolve the legalities before it can take place, the rule change is one of those legalities. After that without the very significant time and input necessary to govern a small business the Committee can, as I have mentioned before, transition the MHS back to a membership rather than commercial organisation. That is a significant change.

For those that were at our 60th Anniversary Dinner I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. The Marlborough

Branch of the Vintage Car Club were great hosts providing a fine dinner and thanks to our supporters we were certainly not short of wine. I think I am duplicating the words in the report on the dinner later in the newsletter (no because I didn't have room for the report, it will go in the next edition - Ed.) but sincere thanks to Pam Woodward, Lauri Ashwell and Cynthia Rangi who did most of the organising.

From the feedback the Editor and I get relating to the newsletter you appreciate the items that cover and expand your knowledge of Marlborough's history rather than the more topical issues. This newsletter is being produced early to ensure you all have notice of the SGM so is rather light on historical content for which I apologise; we will try and make up for it in the next edition. To that end if you have something on your early family members, an heirloom or event that you would like to share with our members please pass it on we would love to hear from you, particularly if there are pictures. Equally if there is something you would like to know about please advise the editor; among our members there are plenty who have the knowledge or the will to do the necessary research to cover almost anything relating to Marlborough's past. It doesn't just have to be our social history either; as life member John Walsh says to me from time to time we have a great natural history i.e. the landscape, fauna and flora. John tells me there are more plants that occur naturally just in Marlborough than in the entire British Islands; they share almost all of their plants with continental Europe.

Once again have a great Christmas and New Year and as always many thanks for your ongoing support as we continue to celebrate Marlborough's marvellous heritage.

Dale Webb

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From **THE REGISTRAR**

The Archives have recently received a transcription of an interesting letter that gives insight into how the widow of a man killed in the Wairau Affray was coping.

Jane Gardner, the widow of Robert Gardner, wrote the letter to her brother, Mr. P. Birch, on 19 January 1853. Her mother-in-law had recently died and Jane's particulars were required before the estate could be finalized. Although it is almost 10 years since Robert was killed, it appears that Jane has not been in touch with her brother prior to this.

Mr. P. Birch. Pilot
Lower Street, Deal
Kent, England

Nelson January 19th 1853

Dear Brother,

Having heard of the arrival of Mr. Stephen Brown at the Bay of Islands and that he has been making enquiries about me wishing me to send home all the particulars concerning myself and family and the untimely death of my husband I thought it my duty to write to you immediately. Since the death of my poor husband it has been my best endeavour to bring up my family in a decent respectable manner as far as my poor means will allow. My son John, the eldest, is serving his apprenticeship as shoemaker. He has about twelve months to serve and Eliza is in service. I kept her at school up to the last twelve months but she did not get on with her learning so well as I could wish. After John has served his time I intend to apprentice Eliza to the dress making. Mary Jane is a great trouble to me poor girl she is quite insane and cannot be left alone. She is subject to seizing fits and has not the use of speech. She is sadly afflicted.

Alice is growing a fine girl and very intelligent. I intend to give her all the schooling my means will allow but they will not be brought up in idleness while I have health and strength to look after them. Dear Brother, I hear that my poor husband's mother, Mrs. Gardner is dead and that the cannot be settled until you hear from me signed by a Magistrate or a respectable resident. I am still a widow and receiving seven shillings per week from Government, a small pension for the loss of my husband. I will now give you all the particulars by themselves.

My poor husband was killed at the Wairau Massacre June the seventeenth in the year eighteen hundred and forty three by the natives. My son John's age is 16 last October. Eliza was 15 last June. Mary Jane is 12 and Alice is 9 years old next March. Dear Brother clothing shoes and bedding is very expensive and I have not had it in my power to buy much since my husband's death which

makes me very short at present and if there is a little to receive from Mrs. Gardner I should like you to send me out a few of the above articles if it is not too much trouble. Dear Brother this brings my kind love to you and to all kind friends. Wishing you health and happiness. John and Eliza send their kind love to you. They will write to you by the ship Stately as soon as it takes in its cargo for England. They will let you know all the particulars about New Zealand. It is a beautiful country. Dear Brother you will greatly oblige me if you could answer this letter directly as I should like to hear from you and how the people are getting on in Deal as I hear that so many have died since I left the place. Dear Brother I hope this will find you in good health and prosperity and enjoying perfect happiness is the constant wish of your affectionate sister.

One can only hope that Jane's brother replied quickly and that she received some help with her situation. She and Robert, with their three oldest children, had arrived on the ship 'Fifeshire' in February 1842. Fifteen months later, pregnant with Alice, she is a widow. Robert, a tailor and likely unemployed in England, which could be one reason why they emigrated, is named William Gardner on the Wairau Affray memorial and in the newspaper reports of the time, but in the shipping list and the English census record he is Robert and although Jane never uses his Christian name, her letter names the children and confirms it is the same family.

The last mention I have for Jane is an unclaimed letter at the Nelson Post office in 1857.

UPGRADE TO THE MUSEUM FOYER

The upgrade to the Entrance Foyer of the Museum has been mentioned in the last two newsletters. In this one we can proudly announce that its complete, looks great and is functioning as well as it looks.



Looking back towards the entrance door; the old reception area was where the floor is now the blue

carpet. After 25 years it was not possible to match the tiles on the rest of the floor.



The view from reception looking out at a rather bright entrance door; the sun was obviously shining the day the photo was taken.

PEOPLE

It is with regret that we acknowledge the death of one of our Life members, Mr Alan Bolam. Alan was the BNZ Manager in Blenheim in the 1970s and was a good friend of the MHS in that role. Our condolences to Mrs Bolam and family. Condolences also to the family of member Mrs Jackie McDonald who passed away recently.

SUMMER TRIPS

Trip to Perano Whaling station 28th Feb

2016. Please put this in your diary; cost will be \$45 pp for members and \$50 pp non members. Bookings at the museum with payment on booking. Those attending will need to take lunch and drink along with suitable clothing. Leave at 9.00am from the Beachcomber jetty at the Picton town wharf.

Port Underwood 20th March. Costs for this trip will be \$30.00 for MHS members and \$35.00 for non members. The bus will leave Brayshaw Park at 9 am and also pick people up at the Tuamarina School Car park at

approximately 9.15 am. Bookings to be made at the Museum with payment required before a booking is confirmed. Those going will need to bring drink and food and suitable clothing. Those wanting to be picked up at Tuamarina should indicate this requirement when booking.

Woodbourne Farm 10th April. The history of Woodbourne farm is amazingly rich with aviation, agricultural and other firsts, something for all. There will be no cost to this as those going will make their own way there. Times and directions on how to get there will be published closer to the date.

CHRISTMAS HOURS

The Archives close at 4.00pm on Tuesday the 22nd December and reopen at 10.00am on Tuesday the 12th January 2016. The Museum will be open every day except for Christmas Day.

Carols at Old Tua Marina Church, Brayshaw Park



Come and join Steve Austin and friends at Tua Marina Church
20th December 2015

2.30 – 4 p.m.

For Carols and a cup of tea
Entry by Donation

All funds to go to the restoration of the Church

MEMBER PROFILES

This time we feature member Elisabeth Airey who has a strong interest in and a relationship with Marlborough but lives in Wellington and Life Member and historian extraordinaire John Orchard. Elisabeth has featured earlier re her latest book, still available at the Museum.



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF THE MHS:

About four years

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE SOCIETY: I live in Wellington, but my father came from a Nelson family that had interests in Marlborough. Since my retirement I have turned my work/interests to historical research, and writing books and articles. I have been a long-time member of the Nelson Historical Society. As my interests were starting to include Marlborough, I thought it timely to join the Marlborough Historical Society. Several years ago I did a job for the Marlborough Museum Archives, collating about 650 letters and photos of the *Ball Collection Renwick Letters* which the Museum had digitised. I also wrote an index. These proved very useful for a book I was writing published in December 2014. It is called *For the sake of my daughter: from Aberdeen, Scotland to Nelson, New Zealand*. See www.https://elisabethairey.wordpress.com

DID YOU HAVE A PREVIOUS OCCUPATION AND WHAT

WAS IT: I spent the majority of my working life in the business world, the last 15 years of which I was a Director and CEO of Chamber Music New Zealand. This entailed contributing to the policy of the company and as CEO seeing that it was carried out. The job involved regular travel to Australia, the USA, and Europe. On my

retirement I returned to university and completed a BA double majoring in History and Art History.

WHAT IS THE THING THAT MHS MEMBERS MAY BE INTERESTED TO KNOW: Dr Thomas Renwick was my great-great-uncle; his second wife was my great-great-aunt, Anne (Annie) Smith. He bought two sheep runs in the Wairau: *The Delta* and *Birch Hill*. From the former he cut off a number of sections and established the town that now bears his name. With his first wife's money and his business ability, he established the run *Dumgree* in the Awatere in 1849. It remained in the Renwick family until 1977. Dr Renwick assisted his wife Anne's sister, brother in law and their two-year-old daughter Annie (known as Allie) to emigrate in 1877 from Aberdeen to Marlborough, through provision of several Renwick sections which they ran as a small farm. These were my great-grandparents and grandmother.



John Orchard receiving his QSM from the Governor General.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF THE MHS:

I think I joined in 1980, so 35 years. It only seems like 20 years; time flies when you are doing enjoyable activities.

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE SOCIETY? In 1980, I returned to Blenheim to teach at Marlborough Boys' College. I was keen to learn more of my home patch. The late, great, Nevil Matthews was persuaded by REAP to run a series of evening lectures and full day fieldtrips featuring Marlborough History, so I enrolled. I met some great people who are still good friends, and 'clicked' with Nevil, and the late John Davies. Both Nevil and I worked late hours, so he would call me out in the mid evening to talk over history and we would often finish at about 2.00am. We covered many issues, and I continue to use the knowledge he passed on, tell some of his stories, and wish that he was still with us to see the progress we have made. Nevil encouraged me to join the MHS, and then the Committee. He was looking for interested people in the next generation to share his knowledge.

WHAT WAS YOUR PREVIOUS OCCUPATION? Since Canterbury University and Teachers' College, I have taught at Waitaki Boys' High School (3 years), and Marlborough Boys' College (20 years). I was Head of the Outdoor Education and Geography when I left. I have

been Senior Teacher for Heritage Education at Marlborough Museum for 16 years. I also worked part time at McKenzie School for emotionally disturbed children, and was a Senior Housemaster in the boarding houses of both Colleges. I suspect this was good training for being very patient and determined as a teacher.

GIVE TWO EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU DO AS THE HERITAGE EDUCATION TEACHER: I run teaching programmes for school visits to all the museums in Marlborough. This involves pupils from 5 to 18 years of age, from Marlborough and visiting schools, such as an annual visit from Seatoun School. Popular programmes include: LIFE IN THE OLDEN DAYS, based on the Brayshaw Park museums; LIFE ON AN IMMIGRANT SAILING SHIP, based at the Edwin Fox Museum; THE ANZAC EXPERIENCE, based at Marlborough Museum; and THE HISTORY OF FLIGHT, based at the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre. In my view, Marlborough has the most diverse range of historic sites and geographic processes in New Zealand. Part of my role, is to encourage teachers to bring their classes on trips into the field, with popular programmes including: HERITAGE WALKS in all of our towns; WAIRAU AFFRAY RE ENACTMENTS at Tua Marina; FAULTLINE STUDIES in the Wairau and Awatere Valleys; and visits to Maori pa, whaling stations, Capt. Cook sites and goldmining areas.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR WORK OR INTERESTS? I am a 'hands on' person with hobbies and sports including: tramping, photography, white water kayaking, sea kayaking, sailing, genealogy, archaeology, home renovation, native plants, cob building restoration, railway history and Edwin Fox preservation. I was a founding member of the Blenheim Riverside Railway, and have been President for all 30 years. I call on all the above interests in my job, but enjoy the voluntary work of guiding annual fieldtrips with Barry Holdaway and the late John Davies.

WHAT IS THE THING THAT MHS MEMBERS MAY BE INTERESTED TO KNOW? I was once very shy, would never talk in front of a group. I was taught Geography and School Cadets by an inspirational teacher, Lloyd Kerr. He set life standards, and fired my interest to become a teacher. Fifty years later, I probably talk too much, but I don't have any regrets about my career.

WHAT CONCERNS YOU RE LOCAL HISTORY? My greatest concern in a word is "FUTUREPROOFING".

Is each person with specialist knowledge or skills, passing it on to at least 2 younger people, and also writing down or filming their skills? Examples:

The knowledge Ian Lyall has of The Stables.

Trevor Jane and Ian Conway's have of radio technology.

Kevin Andrews has of newspaper printing machines.

Peter Tester has of old fire engines.

Peter Tester and Jeff Rowberry have of steam tractors.

Gary Coburn has of the mechanics of the Riverside Railway locomotive fleet.

Bob Thoms' and Ian le Grice's had of old tractors.

John May had of vintage cars.

Prue Matthews has of the founding days of our smaller Marlborough museums.

There are many other examples, and fortunately some such as Jenny Pierson, Brenda Carr, Peter Thomson and Barry Holdaway have made the effort in recent times.

TUA MARINA CHURCH

By Project manager Ian Conway.

As you can see from the photos, kindly provided by one of my cohorts, Kevin Andrews, we have now replaced the T & G lining on the west wall of the vestry, covered the ugly exposed beams with plywood, taken the bold step to remove the painted wallpaper/scrim from the



west wall of the church body, to be replaced by painted plywood. The reasoning here is that we do not have enough of the same T&G to cover the areas vacated by the now removed doors. As you may imagine, with a project such as this we have completed a myriad of minor updates, such as replacing locks, providing a donation BUCKET that is now situated at the front door of the church, Please don't trip over it, but DO stop and ponder the message upon its lid!, repairing the step up onto the podium, fixing holes in the floor etc...etc.

Apart from the \$4 in our bucket to date, we are looking for funds to replace the guttering, so far we have a \$1826.00 quote for that job, another for around \$700 for the 54 panes of glass required for the windows.

To that end, may I please ask that you, as members, consider sponsoring one of the church's pews at \$1000 each to help overcome the shortfall that we are faced with. There are kudos attached to this in the form of your, or your family's, name engraved on a shiny brass plate attached to the said pew.

A real plus is that the new, and paid for, windows will be delivered this week!!! May I finish by saying that any help that has been given towards the church by my fellow volunteers or any other members is gratefully received, without you there would be nothing! Merry Xmas and look forward to a completed church in 2016.



**MARLBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC
SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

Audio Visual Theatre MHS Building

Sunday 17th January 2016 Commencing at 2.00pm

All members are invited to attend

Business to be conducted

**Presentation of the Audited Accounts for the MHS
Notice of Motion relating to the Objects in the Rules of the Society**

A notice of motion has been considered and a resolution approved by the Committee with the requirement that it be voted on by the Society's Members at a Special General Meeting. The Notice is:- That Rule 2(d) of the Society becomes:-

2. **THE OBJECTS** for which this Society is established are:-

- (a) ...
- (b) ...
- (c) ...
- (d) To discover, collect, preserve, store and display any chattels, records and archives of historical value to the people of Marlborough by such means as the Society considers appropriate including by forming and maintaining relationships with the Marlborough Heritage Trust and any other organisations that have similar objects to the Society so that the discovery, collection, preservation, storage and display of items may be undertaken by such other organisations for or in conjunction with the Society.

Currently Rule 2(d) states:-

2. **THE OBJECTS** for which this Society is established are:-

- (a) ...
- (b) ...
- (c) ...
- (d) To discover, collect, preserve, store and display any chattels, records, and archives of historical value to the people of the Marlborough Province.