

President’s Report

The importance of ensuring that Cambridge’s history and heritage is maintained and made available for our children and grandchildren, so they better understand and appreciate the town they live in, is a key objective of the CHS.

The more people who know about the Society and are members of it, the more able we are to ensure this happens. So, think about asking your friends and neighbours if they might like to join our Society. And, of course, it is a very exciting time for us all as we start planning for our new museum, which will enhance the work of the Society.

Membership forms are available at the museum or on-line at www.cambridgemuseum.org.nz. Click on “Historical Society”, then “CHS membership” to obtain a membership form that can be printed off or filled in on-line.

The collection

Your committee has been making plans to obtain temporary storage for our museum collection, the majority of which currently sits in the path of the proposed museum extensions. Moving the collection provides an opportunity to re-assess whether all the items held in the collection are relevant to our town and district’s history.

Storage is expensive. Council has indicated a willingness to help us fund the temporary storage but, due to the expense, will only assist with storage of items that fit within our collection policy.

The policy does give guidelines on how to assess items that are offered to us. It’s not always easy, and we do have a number of items, which, while nice to have, do not fit within our policy.

All this is not new; it has been a work in progress for some time. There is now an opportunity for us to re-assess what items we should have in our collection that best tell our Cambridge stories.

Grant Middlemiss
President

ADDRESS LABEL FOR DELIVERY OF HARD COPIES (ON REQUEST)

Museum Manager’s Report

School holidays in July saw an increase in visitors to the Museum.

During late July and early August, five classes of year 3 and 4 students (7- 8 year olds) visited the Museum as part of their Changing Cambridge Landscape investigation. We showed them aerial photographs, maps, newspapers, and historical photographs of the local landscape and the primary school. A slideshow of photographs was presented for each class. We have also had a visit from the Year 11 drama class from Cambridge High School. The students will be working in groups on a performance piece based on an object, person or topic chosen from their visit to the Museum.

Our dress up basket of hats and clothing has been enjoyed by both children and adults keen to step back in time for photo shoots.

Research enquiries included the history of Nga Hau E Wha the Cambridge Community marae, the Church of the Latter Day Saints chapel in Grey Street, and women’s suffrage in Cambridge.

We have changed the layout in the main room in order to make space for class visits, as well as CHS talks. It was most interesting to hear **Amiel Bates** speak on the rifle collection with his enthusiasm and knowledge of these historic weapons.



Recent acquisitions for the collection include some Cambridge souvenir china, a photograph album of the Peppercorn and Gerring families, Cambridge Chess Club trophies from the 1950s and toki (adzes) found in the area.

The volunteers working on the indexing of the *Waikato Independent* are now working on the issues for July 1938.

Kathryn Parsons
Museum Manager

Membership

Welcome to Leisa Hurley, who joined us in June.

A reminder to those who have not paid their subs for 2018 that they are now due for payment.



Annie Shepperd (Shepherd)

Last month, we published an article from the diary of Annie Shepperd, describing her trek to Maungatautari, as quoted in "Plough of the Pakeha" by Beer and Gascoigne.

Local researcher, **Lyn Williams** told us that she had ascertained that she was buried in Whatawhata Cemetery as Annie Iwersen in 1909. After her first husband James' death at Waiuku, she married again, to the master of a schooner, Peter Iwersen. They ended up farming at Whatawhata. The Hamilton City Libraries has a substantial published family history in their files.

Lyn says that Annie is on her list of subjects for a future "The Dead Tell Tales" newspaper article, as it is so rare to have a woman's voice from the 1800s.



Hamilton Road in the 1890s

Pitfalls for the Local Historian



Pip Vennell, author of "Such Things Were" wrote this article for the NZ Federation of Historical Societies' journal in July 1980.

1. Read NZ history as widely as you can, particularly books relating to districts surrounding your own.
2. In planning your work, do not draw an imaginary line around your chosen area and limit your story to what happened inside it.
3. Local history should be told against a reasonably wide background.
4. Where possible, work from original sources: letters, diaries, official publications and documents, in National Archives for example.
5. Check verbal reminiscences and secondary sources (other people's books) wherever possible.
6. Don't take anything for granted. Even some original sources (the dispatches of Governor Grey, for example) can be suspect.
7. Do not write a history of documents (Lambert's 'Old Wairoa' is a good example of this.) Documents are only a record of events. It is the events themselves you should try to reconstruct.
8. Quote from documents, by all means, when a telling quotation adds strength to your narrative.
9. Explore thoroughly the area you are writing about.
10. Be selective. Do not try to cram in every detail your research has brought to light.
11. Local cemeteries can provide useful clues. From dates on tombstones, published obituaries can be traced.
12. Local newspapers can be helpful, but always remember that newspapers are put together in a hurry. Check such facts wherever possible.

And finally, always state your sources, and when your book reaches page-proof stage, compile an adequate index.

Walks and Talks

REBUILDING THE MASONIC HOTEL

Presented by **Gerry Westenberg**, IT and marketing geek, co-founder of CRM company [StayinFront Inc.](http://StayinFrontInc.com)

Gerry will share with us the challenges he faces in renovating this beautiful historic building, his vision for its future as a boutique hotel and the remarkable discoveries he has made along the way about the Masonic and the important part it has played in the narrative of the town.

Presented by the CHS and the Waipa District Libraries
6.30pm – 7.30pm
Thursday 30 August 2018
at the Cambridge Library

FREE ENTRY



Past Residents: John Fisher

John Fisher was born in July 1837 in Fenwick, Ayrshire in Scotland, and his family moved to New Zealand in 1856. John, who enlisted with the 3rd Waikato Militia in Cambridge in 1866, was a substitute soldier. He had been a member of Colonel Nixon's Royal Cavalry Corps and received the NZ War Medal for active service.

He was granted 50 acres of farm land, and he later bought the land of neighbouring militiamen Wilkinson, Patterson, McCormack, Litledale and Bryant.

In 1867, he married Margaret Scott of Mangere. He had a small cottage ready for his bride when they arrived by river paddle steamer from Tuakau. Later, a larger house was built where nine children, including two sets of twins, were born.

John was a busy man. In 1872 he was on the Presbyterian Church committee, and in 1879 was the Sessions Clerk – a position he held for about 40 years. In March 1872 he enrolled as Sub Lieutenant in the Cambridge Cavalry Volunteers until it disbanded in October 1882.

In 1875 he was elected to the Pukerimu School committee and was chairman for 16 years. In 1886 he was the Pukekura representative on the Cambridge Domain Board, and in 1888, he became a Justice of the Peace. He was vice president of Waikato A&P Show in 1895, attended Waikato Farmers Club meetings and was a committee member of the Cambridge West Athletic Club.

In 1899, he was chairman of the Waipa County Council, 1902-1915 Director of Cambridge Dairy Co-op, and in 1903 on the first committee for the Cambridge Show.

In 1914, at the age of 77, he was appointed a Member of the Legislative Council and served seven years.

He died 13 January 1927, in his 90th year, and his obituary in the Waikato Independent reads, "From the wilderness, he carved out a comfortable home, and converted the property into one of the most lovely farms in the whole Dominion."

From: "The Fishers of Pukerimu" by Kay Carter, and the Cambridge Museum website www.cambridgemuseum.org.nz

The museum holds a highly entertaining letter written in 1940 by JAMES BURNS-MURDOCH who farmed in Pukerimu for about three years in the 1890s. It contains a story about John Fisher. Here is an edited excerpt:

John Fisher will always be remembered vividly by me. It was in lambing time, when I had all my ewes down on the river flats, at the eastern end of the farm. My cadet chap and I had to gallop down and after a couple of dogs that were playing hell, worrying and frightening the whole crowd of ewes, chasing them all round the flat with, of course, disastrous results.

We trailed the dog up to its home, a chap who lived just at the bottom of the hill leading into Cambridge and at the corner of the road there. Said dog had always been a nuisance to me and others, including said John Fisher. When we got to the dog's abode, we found that the owner's wife had just tied it up, but I went up to it and opening its mouth, I found that there were still little bits of wool jammed in its teeth, and blood on its face and body.

I was in a devil of a rage at the time and, stepping back a bit, I shot the dog there and then. The owner sued me for £6 damages and I cross-sued him for £35, I think it was.

One of my witnesses was John Fisher. And I will always remember him as a rather severe-faced Scotchman, not inclined to be verbose, or hilarious, but with a keen sense of humour for all that, and a chap I should have said was dead straight. The question arose in the court as to what really was the value of the defunct [dog]. The opposition lawyer, a Mr Hally, was questioning John Fisher on this point and this was the text of such cross examination.



Hally: Now, Mr Fisher, what would you consider as the value of this dog? Could it be worth ten bob to its owner?

Fisher: Oh yes! I certainly could believe that.

Hally: Would you say the dog might be worth, say, as much as thirty shillings?

Fisher: (looking severe) I believe it might be under certain circumstances.

Hally: (with great jubilation at raising the dog's value so easily) Would you be willing to give as much as £3 for the dog?

Fisher: (after a long silence) Yes, I would.

Hally: (nearly choking with excitement at practically settling the whole case out of the mouth of my most important witness) I will just, if you will pardon me, ask you why you would give as much as £3 for this dog?

Fisher: (with the merest flicker of a Scotchman's grin) To shoot it!



Facebook “Cambridge Museum & Historical Society”



Many of you will already be aware that the Museum and CHS has a Facebook page. Every week, we look for something quirky and interesting that will appeal to Cambridge residents, past and present. We hope that, as more and more people follow our page, they will take the time to “like” our posts, comment on them and share them with friends and groups.

For those who haven’t seen them, I’ve listed a countdown of our top five posts so far:

5. The White Heather takeaways in Victoria Street

Many people remembered calling in to the White Heather after visiting the pool in Wilson Street, and buying a bag of chips for 20 cents.



4. Empire Street in the 1920s

Who doesn’t love this classic photo? The Triangle (Deli on the Corner) looks just the same, but where’s all the traffic?



3. Stock route over the High Level Bridge

Our latest post. Sheep crossing the bridge to Leamington. Reaching over 9,000 people, and generating 119 likes (so far).



2. The United Video sign

The younger generation was startled to find that video stores can provide good museum artefacts. Reaching over 10,900 people, this post had lots of shares.



**AND THE TOP SPOT
FOR OUR NO. 1
FACEBOOK
POST GOES
TO:**



Red Letter Day for Cambridge

Poem handwritten in pencil on the back of a D.S.C. Co-operative Stores memorandum, pre-1909, by a member of the Langmuir family.

The year is drawing to a close
And with it great rejoicing rose
The High Level Bridge is near complete
Was there ere a more wondrous feat

Over our river wide and deep
Stretches the bridge that’s now complete
People are hurrying to and fro
Cambridge is now a busy show

From the bridge we once could see
The beauty of the willow tree
Houses now all take the place
Of the trees the banks did grace

1. Calvert’s in the 1980s

The four photos we posted (taken by Michael Jeans in 1985) reached over 11,600 people and generated many comments, mostly reminiscences about the Lamson cash railway – which, as I’m sure you all know, can still be seen in action in the Cambridge Museum.

