

President's Report

Our Society has continued to grow in 2018 and membership has now reached 240.

Earlier this year, we presented a business case to the Council for an increase to our annual operating budget. The Council increased our annual funding by \$1,500 to cover inflation, and approved a one-off grant of \$40,000 to assist with rationalising and temporary housing of our collection. **A big thank you to Councillors and staff for their continued support.**

We have seen strong visitor numbers over the past year, with 44% of those visitors being Cambridge residents.

We have continued to expand our research facilities. Our staff dealt with over 270 research enquiries this year. The Waikato Independent (Cambridge's local newspaper since 1905) is now available on Papers Past up to the year 1949 - part funded by this Society.

Your Committee

After a decade, **Betty Busst** has stood down as a Committee member. She is a long-time Cambridge resident, and offered the Committee local wisdom and a hard-working ethic – particularly with her participation in working bees and the delivery of newsletters to local residents. We thank Betty for her contribution and ongoing support.

We welcome **Roger Gordon** and **Jo Barnes**, our new Committee members, and look forward to working with them both.

Next year, we will be improving the business structure of our Society. While our main focus will be on the museum extension, we will continue using our current space for quality exhibitions showcasing the history of our town. We will also be focusing on increasing the number of our "Walks and Talks" throughout the year.

Eris Parker – Life Membership

An important event at our recent AGM was the award of a Life Membership for **Eris Parker**. Eris joined the Society thirty years ago when she attended an AGM of the Society and found herself on the Committee. She subsequently served for many years as a Committee member, Secretary and President. She was our curator/manager for many years, initially employed by the Society and later by the Waipā District Council.



President Grant Middlemiss awarding a Life Membership to Eris Parker at the AGM.

Eris has produced over forty books, booklets and photo books on prominent Cambridge families and subjects such as the Cambridge RSA, Police and local soldiers and servicemen and women.

For those of you who haven't accessed our website, I advise you to do so. It is packed full of stories, photographs and information on early Cambridge, and is arguably

one of the finest sources of local information in the country. Our thanks go to Eris for her hard work and dedication in developing this wonderful resource.

Charities Act Registration

The Cambridge Historical Society is now a registered charity. This means that donations to the Society are now tax deductible. Our charity's registration number is CC55864.

Lonely Planet Guide

The latest Lonely Planet guide is out and the entry for the Museum has opening times, the address, website information and a description which reads: *In a former courthouse, the quirky Cambridge Museum has plenty of pioneer relics, a military history room and a range of local history displays.* A Lonely Planet sticker has been supplied and has been placed on the front door.

I wish you the very best for the festive season.

Grant Middlemiss
President



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Museum News

For those of you with friends and family visiting, you'll be pleased to know that the only day the museum is closed is Christmas Day. We will be open 10am until 2pm on public holidays and Christmas Eve. All other days we'll be open our usual hours of 10am to 4pm. We hope to see many of you during the holidays.



We have received some valuable additions to our collection recently. Stuff has donated bound volumes of the Cambridge Edition from 1981 to 2017, along with a substantial collection of photographs from the 1990s onward. This adds to the Cambridge Edition material already held at the museum.

Other acquisitions include a WWI canvas kit bag, photographs of Cambridge and its people, maps, some Borough Council material, and the archives and minute books of the Cambridge Agricultural and Pastoral Association and Children's Calf Club.

A private collector lent us a fascinating collection of WWI uniform jackets, helmets and equipment, which were on display in the military room during November.

The volunteers working on the indexing of the Waikato Independent have nearly completed the newspapers for September 1938. Other volunteers are making progress on indexing and maintenance tasks, which are all helping to improve the access to the resources held. If you have some regular spare time during the week and would be interested in volunteering on a regular basis, application forms are available at the museum.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Kathryn Parsons
Museum Manager



New Members

A warm welcome to **Bronwen Byers**, who joined us in October, and **Debbie Burns, Chris Currie, Lyndall Hermitage, Graeme & Rosalind Mathews** and **Steve & Kim Grounds** who joined in November.

Please contact us at any time if you change your address or wish to add an email contact.

Before the days of Old Age Pensions

The Waikato Independent.

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 1905.

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

WE previously pointed out that the Old Age Pension system had its drawbacks, as it induced sons and daughters to shirk their responsibility to their parents by shunting their keep on to the State. Time was when sons and daughters deemed it an honor to support in old age their parents who had borne the heat and burden of the day, and parents relied on filial feeling to ensure their refuge and sustenance when their strength was spent. And to prevent unnatural children from shirking their duty some Governments—our own included—passed laws to compel them to contribute to the support of aged indigent relatives. There was, moreover, a feeling of sturdy independence which caused people to abhor the idea of living on the charity of the State, and thus thrift and prudence were encouraged. The charitable system and the old age pensions have destroyed this independence, dried up the springs of private charity and caused many to abandon thrifty habits and cease to make provision for the future. The same thing is occurring in Australia. Before the Commonwealth Commission, Mr Fosbery, ex-Inspector-General of Police, instanced cases in which parents of children who were well able to support them “demanded the pension as a right, and thought it more independent to draw their support from the State than from their children.” Most certainly this spirit does not conduce to the making of a nation in which the best characteristics of human nature shall predominate.

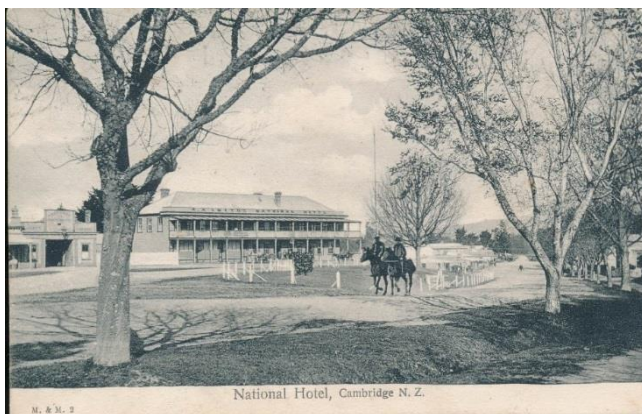


The National Hotel in Cambridge

The National Hotel on 47 Alpha Street (now the Alpha Street Kitchen and Bar) was originally a wooden building. Built for Robert Kirkwood in 1866, this photograph captures the grand style of the building.

According to an inspection carried out on 11 May 1905, the hotel had 27 bedrooms and one bathroom. No fires were provided in any of the seven sitting rooms.

The hotel was well furnished and cleanly kept. The rooms were sufficiently lighted and ventilated. The spouting on the Crowther and Bell's stables next door was out of repair and caused a lot of water to flow over the hotel yard in wet weather. The hotel was drained by a septic tank with no foul air pipe, and the inspector recommended that one should be provided so as to carry the foul air above the top storey of the hotel.



The hotel spectacularly burned down shortly after 2.30pm in November 1912. By that time, George Horner was in the process of taking over the licence from James Watters.

According to a local report, "when the alarm was raised that the hotel was on fire, a few local "sports" happened to be within the building. Appropriate to the occasion, the little party had a final bumper, singing at the same time the popular refrain of "Just a wee doch-an-doris before we gang awa'." They then quitted the burning house.

"Some lookers-on helped by commandeering for their own use bottles of spirits, etc. One individual "planted" his haul of several bottles in a secluded place," but another man watching this operation, took possession of them for himself and his friends, much to the irritation of the original opportunist.

The main telegraph wires between Auckland and Wellington formed part of the wires immediately in front of the hotel. "They were damaged by the heat, but the postal officials at once got to work and telegraphic communication was interrupted to a very small extent. But for the prompt attention, serious delays in the telegraphic service would have ensued."

The staff at the National Hotel were severe losers by the fire in personal effects. According to a report by the Waikato Independent "Mrs Mercer, who was employed as a cook at the hotel being a particularly heavy loser. In

addition to some money, she lost all her clothing and some other goods."

A temporary bar was erected on the site of the fire by Fred Potts, and was open for business ten days after the disaster. When the new hotel was built, the temporary bar was placed on skids and moved behind the kitchen. For many years it was used as staff quarters, and then a junk room. Much of the timber was in good order, and faint lettering could still be distinguished across the front: "National Hotel, Temporary Bar – G Horner." It was demolished in 1959.

An archaeological investigation carried out in 2007 by Andrew Hoffman at the back of the hotel uncovered three wells, some postholes (the majority of which probably related to a series of aviaries present in the 1930s-40s – several bird skulls were found in the rubbish pit) and a post-1900 diesel tank. The tank was discovered half full and may have been used as a diesel fuel station for Cambridge in the past.

The National Hotel was not the only one to succumb to fire. Exactly a year earlier, in 1911, the Masonic Hotel was burnt to the ground, and the Central Hotel (now Central Court) was destroyed by fire in 1926.

**Here's a chance to support the
CAMBRIDGE HERITAGE CHARITABLE TRUST
and the new extension to the Cambridge Museum**

**Come along to the
CAMBRIDGE RACEWAY
CENTENARY RACE MEETING
11 January 2019 | Gates open 5pm**

**1920S THEME – GET DRESSED UP AND
CELEBRATE THE JAZZ ERA!**

Featuring:
The G2 Waikato Flying Mile
G3 Cambridge Trotters Flying Stakes
Adult & Children's Fashion on the Field
Children's Entertainment
Cambridge Croquet Club
Alf Walsh Speakeasy

**Adults \$10, under 18s free
Ticket price includes souvenir Race Book, \$5
betting voucher & a \$1 donation to the Cambridge
Heritage Charitable Trust.**



Jumble Around – Celebrating 50 years



Jumble Around started operating in August 1968 to raise money for Resthaven. It was the brainchild of Sheila Pidduck Chairperson of the Fencourt Women’s Institute.

Sheila Pidduck (nee Otway) first mooted the establishment of a home for the elderly in Cambridge. Her idea was taken up enthusiastically in the community and she was a driving force in the fundraising. When the Resthaven Trust Board was formed in 1966, Mrs Pidduck became a member and remained active on the Board until 1975.

The first two cottages built in Resthaven’s grounds (*Rimu* and *Kowhai*) were dubbed the Pidduck Cottages in honour of Sheila’s hard work and dedication. Next time you visit Resthaven, look out for the memorial plaque on *Rimu*.

Jumble Around started operating at the Leamington Town Hall in August 1968. It was only supposed to last for six months. However, it was so popular that the time limit was forgotten, and by 1974 it had contributed \$20,000 for Resthaven (over \$106,000 in today’s money).



In 1975, *Jumble Around* moved to premises next to the Leamington Fish Shop. From 1975, Resthaven ceased to be the sole recipient of the profits. Beneficiaries included the Māori Community Centre, IHC, St John Ambulance, Cambridge Municipal Band, Deaf Society and Disabled Riders.

Originally *Jumble Around* was open on Fridays from 10am to 2pm. These hours gradually increased over the years and by 1990 it was open Mondays to Fridays 10am to 4pm. After 17 years next to the fish shop, it shifted to larger premises next to the Shakespeare Street dairy.

Eileen Turnbull, President of the Central Waikato Federation of CWI wrote in 1972 “All members should feel justly proud of the work they have done and are doing, and the vision of Mrs Pidduck in promoting this scheme is appreciated by all.”

Sheila Pidduck died peacefully at Resthaven in 1989, aged 75.

The Cambridge Historical Society is very grateful to have received a grant of \$1,500 from Jumble Around this year!

We applied for the funds to purchase hangers, covers and rails so that museum staff can hang heavier weight garments under Tyvek covers. Tyvek resembles paper, but is a synthetic fabric - very handy for protecting fabrics.

The great thing about hanging clothing is that it avoids folds that cause creasing which can lead to the eventual breakdown of fibres in aged fabrics.

Thank you, *Jumble Around*, for your ongoing support.

A day in the life of staff at the Cambridge Museum

