

President's Report

Covid 19 now rules our life. The lockdown has seen the closing of our museum to the public and our staff working from home. We have followed the lead of Council during the lockdown and will continue to follow their advice about when staff can return to the museum and when public can again have access.

With our staff, Kathryn, Karen and part timer Elizabeth, working from home they have had the opportunity to carry out such tasks as enhancing the content of our website, compiling for local teachers a guide to Cambridge history resources available online, and carrying out detailed research on Cambridge history. Several quizzes have been produced on Facebook. If you haven't already seen this, visit the quiz on our website at <https://cambridgemuseum.org.nz/quiz-hidden-gems/>

I'd like to thank the Cambridge Community Patrol for their ongoing patrols during lockdown and their visits to our museum ensuring our buildings remain secure.

At this time we are reminded that Cambridge experienced an epidemic 102 years ago which saw our Town Hall set up as an emergency hospital for the sick. Cambridge experienced the sad loss of two hardworking nurses Margaret Watt and Linda Veale. Our website has a history of the Influenza Epidemic at <https://cambridgemuseum.org.nz/cambridge-in-1910>

Over the years our Society has had a lot of support from local businesses and many business owners are members of our Society. We would ask you to first consider shopping locally to return in some way the support we have had from them.

So let's all work together to keep our community safe.

Grant Middlemiss
President, Cambridge Historical Society

New Members

A warm welcome to our new members Anne Galbraith, and Rob and Coralee Carr

From the Museum Manager

As you are aware, the museum's doors remain closed for the time being. Although we miss seeing the friendly faces of our visitors, we do have an opportunity to catch up on other tasks, such as research, on-line updates and conservation.

One of our tasks is sorting our extensive research files that Eris Parker (long time museum curator and Cambridge researcher) compiled over many years on a host of Cambridge subjects. We are working on collating these files, so that our research visitors can more easily navigate them to extract relevant information. Whilst doing so, we are making discoveries of our own that will be useful for future exhibitions, programmes – and even articles for this newsletter.

We have also been exploring what we can provide from the collections of the Museum whilst in lockdown. Using lateral thinking, printed and online resources, we have been able to answer research queries and share our collective knowledge and understanding of Cambridge history.

Our chains of heritage connections are growing.
Best wishes from the staff of the Museum.

Kathryn Parsons
Museum Manager



Monday 2 March saw us hosting the Waipa Collections Forum where museum staff from around the district met to discuss common issues and experiences, and provide advice.



The Personality Pace

This photo appeared in the Cambridge News recently with the request that if anyone knew what it was about, could they please let us know.



Robbie Hughes rang us next day, and explained that back in the mid-1970s, the Trotting Club ran an annual event called the "Personality Pace". Pictured left to right are:

John Walker	Middle distance runner and Olympic champion
Ronnie Phillips	Radio Announcer
Tony Teesdale	Rally driver
Kevin Green	All Black and Chiefs coach
Bob Lovett	Racing reporter for Best Bets
Roger Lang	Driver and trainer

Robbie Hughes thought that Kevin Green may have won the event, as he often bragged afterwards about beating John Walker in a race.

The event was eventually discontinued due to Health and Safety concerns.



Looking down Empire Street in the 1920s, probable site of Fong Lee's laundry circled.

Chinese Laundries in Cambridge

Joanna Boileau has written a fascinating account on Chinese Laundries in Aotearoa New Zealand, called "Starch Work by Experts". Some of her research was carried out in the Museum, and she gifted us a copy of her book in thanks.

The following excerpt is the tragic story of Fong Lee, who married Ah Nui in China and had two sons. Ah Nui remained in China while Fong Lee came Auckland in 1915 and then to Cambridge, trading as a launderer from 1922 to 1941.

"He lived with a European woman, Petrina Louisa Petersen, from around 1920. They had two children, Keith Leong Petersen in 1934, and Nancy Lee Petersen in 1936. One Christmas Eve 1936, a tragedy occurred at the laundry. Passing by around 8.30pm, a local musician Frank Higgins, saw Petrina standing at the door. He wished her 'Merry Christmas', to which she replied that it was not a very merry one for her as she had so much work to do and nothing to drink. Her husband had gone to help a Chinese fruiterer who had a shop nearby, leaving her at home with the children. Frank offered her a drink and produced a bottle of beer. Returning from his friend's place, Fong Lee found Petrina drinking with Frank and became very angry. He poured the beer down the sink and ordered Frank out. The couple quarrelled, and Fong Lee returned to his friend's place. In her distress, Petrina went upstairs and tried to cut her children's throats, then her own. The police were called and admitted the family to hospital. Fortunately, their wounds were not serious and they were discharged within two weeks. Petrina appeared in the Hamilton Supreme Court in February 1937 on charges of attempted murder and attempted suicide. The jury found her guilty, but pleaded strongly for mercy. The judge placed her on probation for 12 months.

On 9 February 1937, while on probation awaiting the court hearing, Petrina married Fong Lee; Reverend Chou, the Auckland Presbyterian missionary, made a special trip to Cambridge to marry them. The couple had a third child in 1941, Mary Anne, and all the children took the Fong surname. Around 1942, the family moved to Mangere in Auckland, where Fong Lee worked on a market garden. Soon afterwards, Petrina deserted him and the children. He had no further contact with her, although he heard through Chinese friends that she went to live in Wellington."

Through all this, Fong Lee continued to send money to support his family in China. He later worked for Line Bros toy manufacturers. He was living in an army hut in Point England Road in Tamaki in 1952. He died in August 1976.



Cambridge Police Charge Book

One of the more fascinating archives in Cambridge is a Charge Book dating from 1871 to 1900, held at the Cambridge Police Station. By far the most common offence is drunkenness, including drunk in charge of a horse, but here are some random entries which give an idea of the constable's lot in Cambridge's early days.

One of the earliest entries was a charge against **Tim Sullivan** for drunk and disorderly behaviour in 1871. Sullivan spent a couple of days in prison in lieu of a fine. He appeared before the court for drunkenness again in February and March 1873. A month later he was shot dead by Mohi Hotuhotu Purukutu and Hori Te Tumu of Ngāti Hauā after crossing the Aukati line at Kairangi while working on a farm. His killing caused alarm in the town and Cambridge families spent that night in barracks at the Star Redoubt in Fort Street.

Te Warrana, a native constable was assaulted by James Gaffney in November 1877. According to Te Ara's website (the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand), *"Governor George Grey enrolled Māori into the police partly for their specialist knowledge of tribes (and how to fight them), and partly to bring the two races into closer and more friendly contact."*

Joshua Allen was cautioned and discharged for playing an unlawful game of chance in Duke Street with an instrument called an "Equalizator". What it was and how it was used remain a mystery.

Mathew Cooper stole a pie and dish from Mr Roberts' boarding house and was sentenced to six months hard labour.

A murder took place in 1881 at the Oxford (Tirau) racecourse, where **Paina Tahipara Maipaera Te Papa** stabbed Hoami Te Kere. According to the Waikato Times of 10 May 1883, Mikaere Te Papa had petitioned Governor Jervois for Te Papa's release.

In a sad case, **Sarah Johnson** concealed the birth of her baby son by disposing of his body in the garden behind the Masonic Hotel in July 1882.

On 27 January 1884, **Thomas Mulvaney** did unlawfully make use of violent and threatening language towards John Pascoe and Robert Kirkwood of the Duke of Cambridge Hotel, by saying *"I will shoot all you buggers. I will do 14 years for you. I will burn the bloody place down"* and other words to like effect, the same being calculated to provoke a breach of the peace. He was fined £50.

On 21 March 1884, poor **William Atkinson** was charged £50 for unlawfully casting himself into the Orake river at Oxford (Tirau) with intent to murder himself. He was 25 years old.

Three men were fined £14 each for riding a horse on the footpath.

In October 1884, **Arthur Wilson**, carpenter, neglected to provide for his four children aged 9, 8, 7 and 6, who were then living in the Kohimarama and Howe Street Industrial Schools. He was ordered to pay 6/- for each child until they reached the age of 15 years.

John Anibaldi failed to dispose of his dead horse, thereby allowing it to become a nuisance, and was fined and ordered to pay burial costs of 10/6.

A nasty fracas at the National Hotel occurred on 7 June 1885. Seven men had charges including assault and threatening behaviour laid against them. A few days later, one of the men was charged with cutting the hair from the tail of **John Runciman's** horse. Runciman was a well-known Cambridge identity. He had served in the New Zealand wars and was fluent in the Maori language. He farmed for many years at Broadmeadows in Bruntwood, and died in 1927 aged 91 years.

Mary Ann McGee was a desolate figure in Cambridge at this time. She was born in Ireland in 1825, married James McGee in the 1850s and had 11 children. In 1874, James died of paralysis after an accident at the Criterion Hotel where he was working. After James's death, Mary Ann's behaviour became increasingly erratic. In 1883, she prosecuted her sons Henry and James for failing to pay her adequate support. In 1885, (age 60, charwoman) she was cautioned and discharged for using insulting words and behaviour. She was fined and imprisoned for assaulting Charles Craig with a glass in the face while drunk at the Criterion Hotel in 1892. Over the next ten years, she was cautioned and discharged several times for drunkenness. She was committed to the Avondale Asylum in 1905 and diagnosed with "Delusional insanity/senility" after being frequently seen talking to and threatening imaginary people. She died in 1907.



Charles Craig (pictured), who was assaulted by Mary Ann McGee in 1892, was assaulted again in 1893 by John Gillison striking him in the face with a clenched fist. Craig was a "small-time business tailor", according to Beer and Gascoigne's history of Cambridge "Plough of the Pakeha". After spending a year in the Armed Constabulary in 1881, Craig had set up shop premises in Duke Street.



Cameron and Essie Johnson

It was 1931, and Dr Henry Charles Tod had been practising in Cambridge since 1923. He and his wife Kathleen had social status in the town, and so they were “somewhat lukewarm” to the news that Kathleen’s aunt and uncle, Cameron and Essie Johnson were shifting to Cambridge with their daughter Grace.

New Zealand was increasingly in the grip of the Great Depression and Cameron and Essie had fallen on hard times. They were artists. Cameron was a member of the Auckland Society of the Arts for a period in the 1920s, and had studied in Melbourne under Frederick McCubbin. His work today is largely unknown. Only two portraits exist in a public collection, that of the Auckland Museum, and the top price of one of his works at auction was \$400 in 1995 for *The Waitemata*. His pictures lacked the magic that would instil him in the ranks of the leading figures of New Zealand art, although he had exhibited alongside them.

Essie was also a talented artist, producing “good, delicate” watercolours, according to Tod family members.

Today, Cameron Johnson is regarded as the first artist of Auckland’s west coast, spending the early 1900s painting the seascape. He was a handsome, charming man who left his paintings in lodges throughout the west coast in lieu of payment, leaving an artistic trail of where he stayed. He and Essie lived a life of counter-culture – a romantic ideal of artistic life, against all practical odds.

The Johnsons left Auckland with a trail of debts in 1930, and moved to Rotorua where they lived briefly. Cameron was then 63 and Essie 66, a stylishly dressed women with her hair cut fashionably short and blonded. When debts became unavoidable in Rotorua, the family absconded to Cambridge where they had both familial and medical support. Cameron was developing chronic heart disease.

According to Sandra Coney in *Cameron Johnson, First Artist of the West Coast of Auckland* from which this article is based: “Tod family members recall the Johnsons coming to dinner on a number of occasions. Cameron is remembered as of medium build, with white curly hair, a handsome man still. One of his nieces described him as of kindly disposition and likeable, a description that is echoed by others who recalled Cameron.

Grace is described as like her father, with blonde hair. To one of the young Tod family she was like “a beautiful princess”. She would play the violin while her mother played the piano after dinner ... Essie was showing signs of dementia and took a long time to finish a meal, which was frustrating for the young Tods as etiquette determined that while Cameron and the Tod parents conversed, the children

could not speak. This is still remembered eighty years later!”

The Johnsons lived in a house they rented in Hamilton Road close to St Andrew’s Anglican Church, which Cameron painted in watercolours. The Rev Chandler described Cameron as “a most picturesque character” who had a profound knowledge of literature and a host of other subjects. By this time, Cameron was confined to his bed,

over which hung the last picture he painted, a bowl of roses with some petals scattered on a polished table.

He died on 23 July 1935 and was laid to rest in Plot G122 at Hautapu Cemetery. There is no headstone.



Essie and Grace stayed on in Cambridge. Grace taught the violin, piano and art, and cared for her increasingly confused mother.

Essie wandered, sometimes found at night down by the lake in her nightgown. She was committed to Tokonui Mental Hospital in 1941 with dementia. She died on 27 August 1942 and was buried with Cameron in Cambridge (although her burial records cannot be found).

For some time, Grace worked as a photographer and painted. She married Charles Davey and ran a motor camp in Tauranga, well-known for their musical evenings. They eventually shifted to Auckland, where she died in 1982.

If you could see your ancestors
All standing in a row.
Do you think that you’d be proud of them
Or don’t you really know
Some strange discoveries are made
In climbing family trees
And some of them you know, do not
Particularly please.

If you could see your ancestors
All standing in a row
There might be some of them perhaps
You wouldn’t care to know
But there’s another question
Which requires a different view
If you could meet your ancestors
Would they be proud of you?

Accession no. 1544, Notebook – writer unknown



Anzac Day Poppy



For those of you with knitting needles and some bright red wool (or whatever colour you have on hand in these COVID-19 times), why not use some of your lockdown time this April to make Anzac Day poppies for your bubble?

Here is a very easy pattern taken from the National Army Museum website:

RIBBED POPPY PATTERN

Red wool
Scrap of black yarn OR black button (pictured)
3.5 or 3.75mm needles

Body of Poppy

Using red wool, cast on 60 stitches.

Rows 1–8: K2, P2 across whole row.

Row 9: Knit 2 stitches together across the row (30 stitches).

Row 10: Slip 1 stitch, Knit 2 stitches together then pass the slip stitch over... repeat across the whole row (10 stitches).

Break off yarn with long tail and thread back through remaining stitches and pull tight.

Join edges with mattress stitch

Centre of Poppy

Using black yarn, cast on 16 sts. Cast off. Coil into a tight spiral and sew base to the centre.

OR

Use a black or green button with 4 holes and sew to centre of poppy.

Add pin.



How well do you know Cambridge?

Do you recognise Cambridge in the 1860s-1950s?
Guess where these photographs were taken.
Answers next page:



Answers to previous page

1. Cambridge Primary School, Duke Street

Cambridge Primary School on Duke Street is recognisable because of its high-gabled buildings. There has been a school here since 1869.

2. Victoria Street

The shops on Victoria Street may have changed but look above the covered walkways and much of the building shapes and names remain the same. In this early 20th century photo, the Victoria Bakery in Victoria Street proudly advertises its "Machine-made bread". How things have changed.

3. Lake Te Koutu

Lake Te Koutu has always been a popular place to spend time. The buildings you can see in the background of this photo are swimming sheds, opened in 1886.

4. The National Hotel, Lake Street

The National Hotel on Lake Street started life as the Alpha Hotel in 1867. The present building was built in 1912 after a disastrous fire razed this wooden building to the ground.

5. Arnold Cottage, Hamilton Road, Te Awa Village,

Just out of the centre of town on Hamilton Road, this cottage is on its original fifty acre military grant given to John Arnold in 1866 at the end of his three year military service. Maria Arnold, John's wife, grew sweet peas around the cottage from seeds she had brought from Australia in 1864. She also helped to run the Butchery on the Triangle Corner in Cambridge while John fattened cattle and grew oats. They raised six children and St Andrews Church bears a stained glass window to the memory of John and Maria Arnold.



Arnold Cottage today

6. Carter's Stables and horse and buggy, Cambridge-Rotorua Road - now Carter's Flat.

From the 1870s 'King Carter' ran coach services to and from Auckland. At his Cambridge stables he had many buggies, wagons, and around 100 saddle horses for hire. Travelling from Hamilton to Auckland by wagon would take one day.

Image: Beere, Daniel Manders, 1833-1909: Negatives of New Zealand and Australia. Ref: 1/2-096183-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22775759

7. Duke of Cambridge Lodge, Empire Street now Wallace Cotton

Opened on 25 August 1908, this was built for the Duke of Cambridge Lodge. It was unlike other Cambridge town buildings of around the same time – for instance the Courthouse, National Hotel and Town Hall – because it was made of wood. A 'brick only' by-law had been introduced for town buildings until a good water supply to fight fire was connected to all the streets.

8. The Corner of Duke and Empire Street, now Central Court

The Criterion Hotel was built on the corner of Duke and Empire Street in the 1870s. It was destroyed by fire and replaced by the Central Hotel (now Central Court) in 1927. No parking problems in those days. The quality of this old photograph is remarkable: every blade of grass in the foreground can be clearly seen.

9. Cambridge Railway weaving around the edge of Lake Te Koutu, now the Lakewood Development

Cambridge Railway was opened in 1884. Regular services on the Cambridge branch were mixed (passenger and freight), stopping where or when required. The exception was the midday train which carried passengers only. Connections were made at Frankton Junction with services to and from Te Awamutu and Auckland. In 1884, the train trip to Auckland took 6½ hours.

*Tairangahia a tua
whakarere,
Tātakihia ngā
reanga oāmuri ake
nei ... Honouring the
past; inspiring the
future*

