

Tēnā koutou and greetings

From Elizabeth Harvey, Museum Manager



The flags lining Victoria Street are a colourful reminder of the significant days of remembrance that fall in Spring. While our focus is often on the people and places involved at the front lines of conflict, in this edition of the newsletter Karen writes movingly about how many at home nourished and clothed soldiers

and civilians during and after World War II. A great read, and sure to add resonance during the days of remembrance.

A Tribute to Queen Elizabeth II

We recently collaborated with the Waipā District Council to create a photograph display on the town hall as a tribute to the Queen. It featured images taken by local photographers Vic Butler and Jack Dalton when the Queen visited the town in 1954. During this tour, she was compared by Māori to the kōtuku, the white heron. A sighting of the kōtuku is considered a once-in-a-lifetime encounter, and a good omen. Many of you have shared your memories of the Queen with us and a display highlighting items and taonga from her visit, as well as other artefacts that demonstrate her influence in our town will be on display until the end of November.

A huge thank you

Our Winter Series focussing on art collectors was a great success. I'd like to thank Lyndall Hermitage for coming up with the splendid idea, encouraging inspirational collectors to take part and also sharing her own collections with us as part of the series. My thanks go to Kaye and Grant Bezzant and Jutta Mark for sharing their passion for art with us.

NEW Pop-Up Exhibition – One Weekend Only

In the last edition of the newsletter, we encouraged you to talk with us about ways we could share our photography collection with you. Your responses have inspired us to include a selection of Buckingham's photojournalism pieces in our pop-up exhibition at Arnold Cottage - part of the **A Passion for Art** art trail on 19-20 November.

ADDRESS LABEL FOR DELIVERY OF HARD COPIES (ON REQUEST)

Titled *Having Fun: Photos the 1960s and 70s*, Buckingham's captured moments have an immediacy where it seems we are looking at people we know. Because many of these have been taken at games and events, it's not always possible to know names. Instead, we are drawn to imagine their personal stories from their clothing, hairstyles and facial expressions. Make sure to visit and see whether there is anyone you recognise. See you there.

Tēnā koe from Grant



I am looking forward to meeting all our members at our Annual General Meeting on Thursday 17 November 2022 at 7.30pm at the Cambridge Bridge Club in Fort Street. At this meeting you will hear about our renewed direction and focus now that it is sadly no longer feasible to proceed with our proposed

building alterations. Elizabeth will be telling you all about the Government's focus on New Zealand History in our Education system, and the importance of our museum, our historic records and taonga in this development.

I am excited about the progress we have already made with our renewed direction and look forward to raising our community profile in the coming year.

We are saying farewell to committee member Fiona Faris who is moving out of Cambridge. We are sad to lose the energy she brought to our committee. I am pleased to advise that all other committee members will be seeking re-election.

The local body elections have seen Susan O'Regan elected as our Mayor. We look forward to working with her in the term ahead. In saying farewell to past Mayor Jim Mylchreest, I thank him for his support and assistance over the past nine years and wish him well in his retirement.

A warm welcome to new members Robert Newcombe, Warwick Nicoll, Veronica Trent, Claire Hubbert and Mary Meikle.

Grant Middlemiss
President

Upcoming events

17 Nov – Historical Society AGM, Bridge Club, Fort Street, 7.30 pm

19-20 Nov – Pop-up exhibition: *Having Fun: Photographs from the 1960s and 1970s*, Arnold Cottage, Te Awa - part of A Passion for Art trail 10-3pm FREE



You are not forgotten

WWII soldiers in Europe and the Middle East had to suffer periods of tedium when mail was eagerly awaited. Swapping stories, memories, references to common acquaintances, and looking forward to the future kept their thoughts from the dangers ahead – for a short period at least. This is the story of a Cambridge family who preserved their correspondence with friends on active service overseas during a frightening time in New Zealand's history. The correspondence is now in the care of the Cambridge Museum, thanks to donor Jacqui Darvill.



Minnie Rippon (pictured) was a great favourite with Cambridge children in the 1930s. Beside the fact that she owned a chocolate shop, she was a generous and kind woman.

She was born Minnie Packer and came to New Zealand in the early 1900s to help her sister Ada. Ada had recently lost her husband and son to TB and was bringing up her daughter Florence alone.

Soon Ada married her second husband, Alfred Brown. Minnie Packer married Mr Rippon and moved to Auckland where she kept a store in Ponsonby.



Ada's daughter Florence grew up and met William (Bill) Edwards (pictured). Bill worked as a barber in Hamilton and would often cycle to Cambridge to see her. He eventually shifted to Cambridge and opened his own barber shop. He loved sports and was involved in rugby, horse racing and rowing. Florence played

the piano for the church, silent movies, visiting circuses and other local events. Florence and Bill married and had a daughter Shirley.

Mrs Rippon moved back to Cambridge where she, the Browns and the Edwards all lived together at 'Salthurst' on 67 Princes Street. The house was beautiful and had on its walls Goldie paintings and the J Elder Moultray painting "The Fugitives" – now in the collection of the Cambridge Museum.

Mrs Rippon opened a chocolate shop next door to Bill Edwards' barber shop. When Bill was cutting children's hair, he would keep them still by telling them that the swordfish head mounted on the wall continued through to the chocolate shop next door, and if the children went there afterwards, they could see the tail. Of course that wasn't true, but Mrs Rippon would give the children free sweets as a consolation.

Mrs Rippon's kindness

When Mrs Rippon saw many of her young customers, having grown up and enlisted, head off to the Middle East and Europe to fight in World War II, she vowed to save all her rations and send parcels to them as often as she could. She sent them chocolates, newspapers, handkerchiefs and even Aspro, and the Cambridge soldiers loved her for it.

From Gunner N H Brewer to Mrs Rippon in April 1942: *"I must acknowledge receipt of several papers etc lately, also parcels. You must send a great swag of things away to your soldier friends. It must be almost a full-time job to procure them, pack them up and send them away. Your parcels are always well packed and they arrive here in perfect condition ... I keep in touch with Cambridge affairs by the papers you send me."*



Soldiers displaying items received from Mrs Rippon

Bill Edwards – Keeping in touch

Bill Edwards had bad arthritis and remained in Cambridge in the Home Guard during World War II. He corresponded with Howard (Bush) Hooker, whom he had employed in his barber shop, and with keen fisherman Gordon Entwisle who sent him this letter in 1941:

"Just a few hurried lines to ask you to let me have again the address of your brother & sister in England. If you remember, you gave them to me before we left NZ & I will tell you what happened to them. I put them carefully away in my presentation pocket wallet but as Reg Buckingham is returning shortly, I gave it to him with a few other articles to take back with him. This afternoon I was cleaning my kit bag out & searched each piece of paper looking for it. Then it suddenly dawned on me where it was. I don't think I will be in a position to make use of the addresses for a good while yet, but it is just as well to be ready. I could probably get them from Bush, but don't know when I will be seeing him again. Met him a few times since we have been back from the desert, but they left for an unknown destination last week, & it will not be very long before the rest of us have joined them.

Our 2nd echelon lot joined us late last night & now we are a complete unit. It will be far more interesting now carrying out our operations as such. Have not seen many of the



Camb boys since coming down here, but they are spread over a big area, & are hard to find.

This last week we had something very unusual for Egypt. It was wet Sat, Sun, Mon & Tuesday. As we couldn't do anything, we were taken to see military pictures of Abyssia [sic], & for their kind, they were very instructive. We learn a lot more in 1 hr by this method than we would in a week otherwise. By the way please tell Ruby that Egypt is not spelt Egypt as she put on my last letter.

How did you get on at Rotorua? I hear that Taupo is fishing fairly well this year as regards condition. Do you put it down to the Labour Govt? Tell Ruby that one of her boyfriends from the orange drink shop at Rotorua is over here somewhere, but I haven't seen them at all. Will give him her love if I see him.

One of the boys with us now has a game fishing launch at Bay of Plenty & I have been invited to try my hand with a friend for a few days when I return. Do you think you could leave the shop in Ruby's hands for a few days? Big fish tackle is much cheaper here than back home, & he has ordered a fair bit to be sent home. This includes a reel for £125 for his personal use. In return I have invited him to try the trout at Taupo, & he is looking forward to it, so between us, we will clean a few fish up before we finish.

We have had no airmail now for a fortnight & have no idea when the next will arrive. A few papers arrived tonight, so there must be a surface mail in. As space is limited, papers etc are sorted first so as to give them room to throw the letters around. Still we get all our news now by airmail, but the Freelance is looked forward to & I am fortunate in getting it & the Weekly, 3 Heralds & the local rag sent regularly.

Was amused to see in a recent Herald, from a copy of the local paper, where a black marlin had been caught at Rotorua. Do you know anything about it?

Some of our boys came back from Palestine this afternoon & oranges are now 1 piastre for a chaff sackful. They are rotting on the ground as there are no boats for export, & it has been a good year for them.

Well news is scarce here now so I will have to close down, & will write again from our next position if at all possible. Kind regards to all the family."

Shirley Edwards' contribution

Bill's daughter Shirley was also committed to sending parcels and clothes overseas. She and her friends sent their S.4 teacher Gunner Leslie Bear a cake, and he wrote them a charming letter of thanks:

"I should really scold you for spending money on me when you have relations of your own to whom to send parcels. However, I was so delighted to receive your parcel that I shall have to let you off this time and send you my sincere thanks both for your present and for your good wishes."

He went on to give them lively descriptions of the customs and habits of Egypt and its people.



Shirley with her great-great-aunt Mrs Rippon.

After the war, Shirley donated an old coat to be sent to Europe. The coat had her name and address inside one of the pockets, and in 1948 she received a letter of thanks from Helena Matejko from Poland, which Shirley had translated:

"From UNNRA I received from you the coat in a pocket of which I found the address of my donor. For this I am very thankful.

I would like to write something about myself. I am a Pole, thirty-six years of age but really I feel much older, and life for me is at present without any future. My heart is desolate. My husband was taken by Germany to a concentration camp where he was killed. After a few months my only daughter, Danuta, who was fifteen years old died rapidly from meningitis and this was one of the greatest crosses of my life.

At the present time in Poland we have many children without parents and I thought at first to take one of the little ones and adopt it, but from another point of view I am thinking that I would not be able to love the child as my own.

So I am just filling my life by helping other poor people. But I cannot help very much because my health is not very good and we have so many poor people in Poland. I am attending night secondary school for adults after my work and this gives me some pleasure."

Shirley received several more letters from Helena who was learning English, and improvements in her language are evident as time went by.

In a letter of thanks from Private Edward Chard for a cake Shirley had sent him, he mentioned a letter from Mrs Brown. The museum's collection includes a card addressed to Mrs Brown which shows that Shirley's grandmother was also corresponding regularly.

Warm appreciation

The constant generosity of Mrs Rippon, Mrs Brown and the Edwards family showed the young Cambridge soldiers that they weren't forgotten by their friends at home. And by donating her coat and earning the thanks of Helena, Shirley learned of the hardship suffered by a civilian on the other side of the world.



Te Ihingarangi

Part 12 of a history of the Karapiro-Maungatautari area by Te Kaapo Clark and Lyn Tairi. This chapter continues with the Native Land Court in Cambridge and land claims.

1800 KO NGĀTI RAUKAWA, NGĀTI KOROKI, NGĀTI WAIRERE, NGĀTI HAUA



Illustration of a typical flour mill built in the North Island in the 1840s and 50s. They were often expensive and were generally encouraged by missionaries. As enterprises, they were usually funded and run by hapū. Ref teara.govt.nz

When the ownership of the Maungatautari block was first established in 1871, Pakeha land buyers began in earnest to procure the land. In 1873, E Maclean and Co purchased 8,000 acres. Ngāti Koroki retained some land at the foot of the mountain, around their kainga Tioriori, Taane, Te Wera a to Atua and Wharepapa.

The people still grew crops of maize, oats and potatoes, according to A J Allom, who visited the area in December 1873. The crops grown would have been cultivated to feed the visitors now, rather than trade. The flour mills lay idle and an effort to get them going again in the late 1880s failed.

Allom also reports that he saw great preparations for a meeting that was to be held in January 1874. The meeting was a very large hui, which was probably called to discuss land issues and to find solutions to the ever-increasing Pakeha encroachment onto the land. One such meeting in 1873 urged the people to “stop selling land, stop leasing land, stop road-making [and] stop erecting telegraph wires.”

Many such hui took place at Maungatautari during the 1870-1890 period. It had become the main centre for Kingitanga activity. So much so that by 1886 a bank — Te Peeke o Aotearoa — had been established in the area. The exact location of the bank has never been identified, “The bank was set up at Parawera [under the auspices of Taawhia] and operated at Parawera, Maungatautari and Maungakawa.”

Right from the bank’s conception it drew ridicule from the Pakeha press. The first account appeared in the *Waikato Times* 12 December 1885. Its supercilious, patronising attitude set the tone for much of the later writing. These later accounts (probably all derived from the same source) say the bank was burnt down by unhappy investors after six months of operation. What actually did happen to the Maungatautari bank is lost in time, but a cheque of Maungatautari Peeke in the Cambridge Museum, is dated 17 March 1905.

Stuart Park’s “Te Peeke o Aotearoa” in *New Zealand Journal of History* rightly concludes:

“The Bank of Aotearoa was created to meet the monetary needs of the King movement and its treasury, and to express the financial autonomy of the Māori people. During its 20 year history it apparently filled these needs well ... The cheques of Te Peeke ..., enabled the transfer of money between the bank and its customers, sometimes in quite large amounts, without the need to move cash. Te Peeke o Aotearoa was a bank indeed.”

But by the 1890s, the Native Lands Act and the Native Land Court had succeeded; the land that Ngāti Koroki had left was individualised into whanau blocks. A report by the *Waikato Times* travelling correspondent in March 1892, stated that:

“Higher up the slopes are the native settlements where a considerable amount of grain had been grown this season. The Maoris are now abandoning their former communal habits. In the old days crops were grown and consumed in common, but now each family have their own plot of grain, and their own little stack...”

Here we find the beginnings of settlement as portrayed by Aunty Miri Tairi’s mural on the wall of Tirohia.

