

A new look for 2024



I hope you all had an enjoyable break over the Christmas New Year period.

The team at the Museum were able to make good use of their time when the Museum was closed for earthquake strengthening work last year. They

have made excellent progress in recording and storing the remainder of the Museum collection. In addition, they were involved in the new Timeline exhibition project, working closely with the designer and members of the Committee, right through to the final installation in December last year.

The Historical Society will be operating a stall at Payne Park (by the Cambridge Water Tower near Resthaven) on Saturday 17 February from 9am to 1pm, to promote the Society and to attract new members and volunteers. Do drop in if you are passing by.

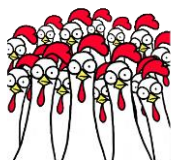
After the disruptions over the past few years, we are looking forward to a great new year and we have an interesting programme planned. We look forward to seeing you at these events in 2024.

A warm welcome to new members Phillip and Jenny Moon and Jason Rutherford.

Jeff Nobes, Acting President

Calling all Bakers and Hosts for 18-21 March 2024!

Are you a keen baker and enjoy meeting new, like-minded people?



We wish to run a café at the *Capturing Cambridge* Buckingham exhibition at the Town Hall, and are looking for donations of baked goods and volunteer hosts – as many as possible. If you can help us, please call Elizabeth on 827 3319 or email: elizabethharvey@cambridgemuseum.org.nz

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Gay & Richard Hicks
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Tēnā koutou and greetings from Elizabeth, Karen and Kate

2024 has begun with record-breaking visitor numbers for January. Overall, responses to the new displays have been positive and many have shared their feedback in our visitor survey in the Research Room. If you haven't already done so, please pop in and share your thoughts. As Friends of the Museum, you are invited to an evening event celebrating our new displays – *The Timeline and Other Tales*. An invitation has been emailed to you and more details are available in *Upcoming Events* later in this newsletter.



February is Waipā District Libraries Heritage Month. Walks and talks have been planned around the town, including historical walking tours by Historical Society members Michael Jeans and Sue Milner. Be sure to check out the Waipā District Libraries website for more details.

Cambridge Museum will be presenting *Small Town, Big Stories* on Saturday 17 February at 10am. It's a free event looking at photographs from the Museum's collection and the stories they reveal.

If you're looking for nearby heritage spots to visit, the Police Station and Temple Cottage on the Ratatu Reserve in Kihikihi is a short 20 minute drive from Cambridge, and open on the first Sunday (11am -2pm) and Third Wednesday of the month (1pm – 3pm). The Waipā Heritage Forum met there this month and was given a guided tour of the restored buildings which are filled with artefacts, games, old books, costumes and more.

Next month, in partnership with the Town Hall Community Trust, the museum will be presenting a week-long show of Reg Buckingham's photography – *Capturing Cambridge*. We are fortunate to have Claire Hubbert volunteering her time with us to help with the exhibition. Claire is the Cambridge Photography Club's Photographer of the Year 2023 and brings an expert eye to our exhibition choices. The exhibition is part of the Autumn Festival and will be in the town hall between 18-21 March, 10am – 4pm (late-night opening on Thursday).



The Cambridge Daffodil Show

This article was written by Clive Denton. He recently published One Hundred Years of Cambridge Daffodil Shows. Sourcing archives for Clive was a fascinating process for Museum staff. A copy of his book is held at the museum.

The Cambridge Daffodil Show was one of many such flower shows that flourished in almost every city, town and village throughout New Zealand in the 20th century. These flower shows were usually organised by the local church or Horticultural Society. At the spring shows held in August/September, daffodils would be the in-season flower, but by no means the only display vying for public attention. There would be a host of other flowers, fruits, vegetables, preserves, baking, needle crafts and stalls. These shows performed an important social function in the community, particularly for isolated rural folk. They were also important fundraisers for the churches.

Sources of Information

The first Cambridge Spring Flower Show was held in 1907. In researching this institution, two important sources of information emerged. The museum held a minute book that carefully recorded meetings and show reports from the formation of the Cambridge Daffodil Society in 1912 until 1968. Another minute book was in the care of the Northern Daffodil Club and the diligent record keeping was continued until the Society went into recess in 1991. In 1996, members of the Northern Daffodil Club reinstated the show, which continued until its last show in the Cambridge Town Hall in 2007. Both minute books are now in the safekeeping of the Cambridge Museum.

Over the years, the Cambridge Daffodil Society made full use of the local newspapers for the reporting of their shows. In contrast to the matter-of-fact minutes, these reports provided additional information. More importantly, they gave an insight into personalities and the nature of the events. The internet site *Papers Past* is a useful source of information for earlier newspapers up to about 1950. Whilst you can highlight your key words, trawling through the information can be a bit tedious. *Digital NZ* is a good source of photographs, although some are difficult to download. You will find the later editions of the *Cambridge Independent* at the museum all beautifully bound in a hard cover. I knew the dates of events I wanted (day/month/year) so finding information was very easy.

The Daffodil Show

In 1907, the young women of the Presbyterian bible class organised a spring flower show to raise funds to extend the church hall to better accommodate the bible and Sunday school classes. There was an imaginative array of flowers and entertainments. The mayor at the time, Mr W F Buckland, an enthusiastic horticulturalist, wrote the daffodil schedule, entered numerous prize-winning flowers and

donated bulbs to further promote the growing of daffodils. The show was a great success and raised £110 for the church. The show was repeated in 1908 and 1909. The rambunctious, take-no-prisoners Mayor worked beside the teenage girls, even though they seemed the only ones interested in the daffodils. Mr Buckland did manage to find something to growl about to the girls on each occasion, however!



1910 Daffodils

In 1910, the show shifted from the Alexandra Hall to the new Town Hall (another Mayor Buckland project). The prestige of this move seemed to result in an increased interest and involvement, and by 1912 the Presbyterian Church had called a congregational meeting to form a properly constituted society to run the spring show. Its name became the Cambridge Daffodil Society. The committee was to be selected from members of the congregation. Mr Buckland was a member of another church, so Mr A Hopkirk became the President of the Society.

Other insights

People's involvement in hobbies and clubs often provides an escape from the pressures and concerns of wider society. They report on their activities in a rather pragmatic way which seems only of interest to those involved. However, reading between the lines, looking for patterns and thinking about isolated comments in the context of the day will often provide insights into the society in which they lived.

With the outbreak of WWI, the Society pledged all of their show profits "to the relief of local distress." Although there was a country-wide enthusiasm for patriotic fundraising, mostly it went to the wider support of Empire or soldiers overseas. The Te Waikato sanatorium on Maungakawa had become a hospital for returned soldiers so the local Daffodil Society funds went there.

In 1918, the daffodil show was lucky to get the Town Hall, as the rose show due in November had been cancelled. This comment gives rise to an investigation of the influenza epidemic when the Town Hall was being used as a hospital. The Society was indeed impacted, losing two young women who volunteered to work there.



Early flower shows were two-day affairs and entertainment went on into the night. *"A full hall enjoyed Mr MacDonald's sword dance and sailors horn pipe, a musical selection on concertina by Mr Martin, Mr Hauster's dramatic sketches gave much merriment and the Hautapu school boys gave a spirited and clever Maori haka."*

In 1928, a world renowned daffodil specialist Mr Wilson from Ireland visited Mr Hopkirk's garden in Grosvenor Street where there was a ¾ acre of daffodil gardens and a further area of naturalised bulbs amongst the trees. Mr Wilson was impressed.

In the early 1930s, the Treasurer reported *"in spite of a difficult year there was a £16 profit for the church."* This halving of the profit continued for the next three years. The show was held in the less than adequate Peace Hall which the church had just built. It saved on rental. *"In the novice section flowers must be from bulbs of less than 2/-."* This was rescinded after the depression.

In 1939 *"mainly due to restrictions on petrol"* the show was cancelled for this and the remaining war years. It made a rather tentative restart in 1946, restricted to novice growers only. The President appealed for younger members from the congregation to help run the show. In spite of the tentative restart, the show thrived during the next 30 years, although the deaths of many of the original members were recorded.

The Cambridge daffodil show was never restricted to just local growers. Indeed the first show in 1907 was to have received flowers from Mrs Johnston of Remuera. Unfortunately they went astray on the train and ended up in Rotorua. The 1926 show records entries from Te Awamutu, Hamilton, Auckland and Thames. In 1913, a prominent grower Mr Weightman from Fielding attended. It is probably fair to say that at this, the wettest time of the year, there would have been few passable roads, particularly through the Rangitikei and King Country regions. Mr Weightman's preferred mode of transport was probably the train. He could have boarded it late in the evening at Fielding, travelled through the night and arrived early in the morning at Hamilton, transferred to the Cambridge branch line, got off at the station and walked to the Hall.

Later decades

In the decade from 1970 to 1980 the Cambridge daffodil show reached its zenith. This high point seems to have come at a time when growing and showing of flowers was

popular throughout New Zealand. Gardening was the country's favourite fascination. It was a time of extravagant and ambitious garden shows. Also during this time, handcrafts were a popular pastime. Cambridge

Daffodil Show records indicate they were aware of the pulling power of this trend. Each year a craft display was included, for example Pottery, Wool Craft and Spinning, Quilting, Antiques and Floral Art.

1987 was a milestone year for the club. It was their 75th anniversary and the show was to be held in the new Trinity Church complex in Bryce Street. Although the complex had been completed some years previous, the Daffodil Society was concerned it would not be suitable. These concerns were soon dispelled; the show was a great success, so much so that next year the Northern Daffodil Club joined forces with the locals and in this new venue held the first National Show ever in Cambridge. There were 911 visitors to the show.

By the 1990s, flower shows had become the interest of dedicated hobbyists, semi-professionals and professional growers. Outside exhibitors were providing the daffodils and the locals were doing the work. This workload on a small number of older parishioners was the final straw for the Cambridge show.

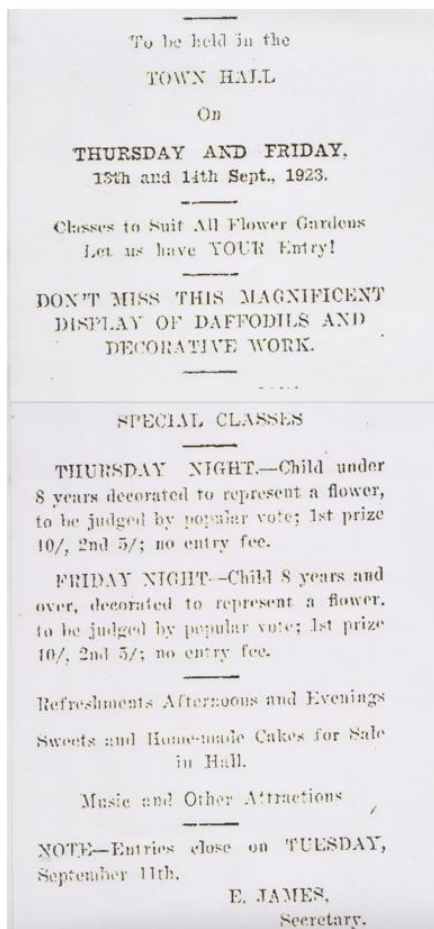
The last show under the Church-run Society was in 1992. The Northern Daffodil Club was unable to respond to a last-minute plea to take over the running of the show. Had the 1912 resolution not restricted the Society to the Church congregation, then maybe other enthusiastic daffodil growers in the Waikato may have coalesced into the

Cambridge Daffodil Society, rather than forming their own club in 1970.

Several years later, in 1996, the Northern Daffodil Club did restart the Cambridge Show. They held the last show in the Town Hall in 2007.

In 2023, a second National Daffodil Show was held in the Cambridge Town Hall. A report

in the most recent New Zealand Daffodil Bulletin states: *"The Northern Daffodil Club offered to host the National Show in the Cambridge Town Hall. What a great venue and location it turned out to be. Cambridge was a beautiful little town for the occasion."*



A Day in the Life of Museum Staff

If you were fortunate enough to see Te Papa's exhibition *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War*, featuring larger than life sculptures of WWI soldiers, you will enjoy this article.



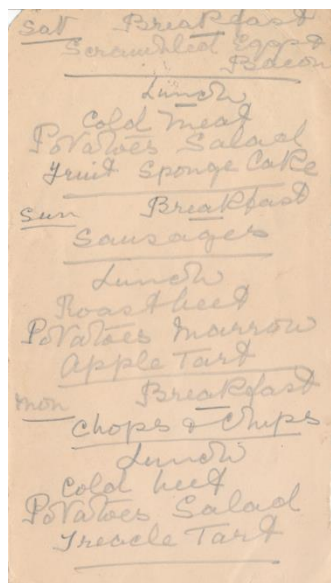
The first sculpture in the exhibition was that of Spencer Westmacott (1885-1960) who was an officer with the 16th Waikato Regiment, which departed

New Zealand for the First World War in October 1914. Te Papa's story of him can be found here:

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2015/04/01/introducing-spencer-westmacott-farmer-soldier-artist/>

A few weeks ago, Kate and I were accessioning a collection that originally belonged to Mavis Harris – a music teacher in Cambridge during the 1940s and 50s. She taught youngsters from the Beer, Boyce, Garland, Haworth, Levesque and Steen families to name a few. She later married Syd Aitchison of Otorohanga.

Among her music notebooks, certificates and photographs, we found a small cookbook with two used envelopes inside. The backs of the envelopes had been used to write in pencil weekly menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The two envelopes were originally addressed to Spencer Westmacott and Mrs Westmacott. The cookbook had "Westmacott June 1924" written in pencil on the cover.



Before she worked for us, Kate was Regional Collections Manager at the Waikato Museum. It was fortunate that she recognised the Westmacott name and understood the importance of the objects – especially to the Otorohanga Museum. The Westmacotts farmed near Otorohanga, and Kate knew that the museum already had a Westmacott collection.

We contacted the donor, who had no idea the items were significant. She was happy for us to pass them on to the Otorohanga Museum. Needless to say, the staff there were delighted to receive them.

Karen Payne

Upcoming Events

Please write these dates in your diaries.

Small Town, Big Stories

Waipa Heritage Month talk featuring photographs from the Museum Collection

Saturday, 17 February 10am at the Cambridge Library

Market Day

Payne Park, on the corner of Hamilton Road and Vogel Street, by the water tower. The Historical Society will have a stall there. Come and see us!

Saturday 17 February 2024 9am – 1pm

The following three events are exclusive to yourselves as Friends of the Museum.

A Timeline and Other Tales

Introducing the Museum's new displays

5.30 pm, Friday 23 February at Cambridge Museum

Please RSVP by 14 February 2024 for catering purposes.

Join us for a special look at the new displays within the Museum. The Historical Society Committee and Museum team will be on hand to talk about the ideas behind the timeline and other tales in the new displays.

A Visit to Hanatoria, Ringer Road

Saturday 9 March 2024 at 2pm

Limited to 15 guests so RSVP is essential. Please bring a small plate for afternoon tea.

The Wheki family has kindly invited us to their home for a tour and afternoon tea. Hanatoria was built in the late 19th century for Chief Karika Paeahu and Princess Parepumai Te Whetuiti. The couple played a prominent role in the affairs of their locality, serving both Māori and European communities. During that time their villa took an overflow from the nearby Government-owned Te Waikato Sanatorium and developed a reputation as a place of healing.

A Visit to Brackenfield House

Saturday 6 April 2024 at 2pm

Limited to 15 guests so RSVP is essential. Please bring a small plate for afternoon tea.

The Hurley family has kindly invited us to their home for a tour and afternoon tea. Brackenfield House was designed by Alexander Wiseman and built in 1913 for Hubert Barry after his retirement as the Superintendent of the Waihi Gold Mine. The buildings and gardens of Brackenfield House remain one of Cambridge's most invaluable and irreplaceable historical and ecological treasures.

