



ONSLOW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Established 1968

Newsletter

December 2023



Festive Greetings OHS members!

We finished the year with a flourish – a great party on Sunday 26 November. It was all about Christmas. We had a full house, nearly 50 of us and we enjoyed a wonderful afternoon tea, thank you Viv and Christine, and finished with Jillian Carpenter and me reading a few stories, quotations and poems, all with a festival lilt and a Christmas theme. We had fun. Thank you Jillian.

Here are samplings and photographs from George Walter and Viv Chapple.

The Four Stages of Life

You believe in Santa Claus

You don't believe in Santa Claus

You are Santa Claus

You look like Santa Claus



A poem

*I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know
But if I should run out of the white
I will gladly drink the red though*



OHS Events 2024

Waitangi Day Holiday 2024
Tuesday 6 February

A walk with Chris Horne.

This will lead into areas of Ngaio. Chris has called it "A Korimako Catchment Tour". More details will be circulated later.

Our contact is Committee member John Galloway:
04 4787603

jghgalloway@slingshot.co.nz

The Events Programme for 2024 will be selected and managed by Committee members Geraldine Needham-Girven and Chris Rabey.

They would welcome help and are available to discuss this, their emails are:

Geraldine:

gneedhamgirven@gmail.com

Chris: ships.pubs@gmail.com



Wellington Heritage Festival 2023

Geraldine Needham-Girven reports:

The Festival was bigger than ever this year, which was ably led by Roger Blakeley and other Rotarians in conjunction with the Wellington Heritage Festival Trust. For the first time there was a formal opening with some very interesting speakers discussing *Heritage in a changing economic and social world in the capital*.

There were over 100 events from Upper Hutt to the Kapiti Coast; OHS contributed four events.

Chris Horne and John Galloway led 16 people on a walk from Maraenui / Seatoun to Hataitai, including the Wahine memorial, Norman Kirk's house and seat, Miramar cutting, and the Te Awa a Taia – the channel through wetlands, amongst many other highlights.

Gábor Tóth gave an illustrated talk about the history of the restaurant in Wellington. It brought back many memories of restaurants and chefs, (who could forget Des Brittain). All enjoyed the supper put on by Viv Chapple, who had used one of Des's recipes.

We also added two of our normal Sunday openings to the Festival and got a few more visitors than we would otherwise have had.

A tribute to Keith Flinders

Sadly we farewell OHS member, Keith Flinders who died late last month, November 2023. He had been battling poor health for a long time. But right to the end he managed to contribute to the affairs of local history and voiced his opinions (various and sometimes in strong protest) regarding WCC current changes to the local scene. His personal interest and descendent relationship with Matthew Flinders the famous Australian explorer (the first man to circumnavigate Australia, and who sailed with Captain Bligh on the Providence) was a fascinating aspect of our conversations. Keith was administrator of the Flinders –Nottinghamshire Family Tree site.

New additions to our OHS Collections

In our general collection:

A collection was sent by Noeline Larkin who claims the title of “family genie for the Nixon/ Radcliffe/Larkin connection”. It contained photographs, genealogical information and stories about the Radcliffes of Collingwood Street, Ngaio. They are descended from James and Frances (nee Nixon) Radcliffe who married in Sydney in 1866 and eventually settled in Crofton as Ngaio was called then, where they bought two acres of land from John and Esther Chew.

In our Booklet Collection:

Pre-European and Early 1840's Māori History

Extracts from OHS Publications

Wellington's Northern Suburbs 1840–1918

Compiled by Julie Bremner, published 1983

Selected editions of The Onslow Historian

Published 1971–2021

Compiled by Isabelle Mak

This 400-page compilation of stories and accounts published over 50 years makes fascinating reading and is a significant reference resource.

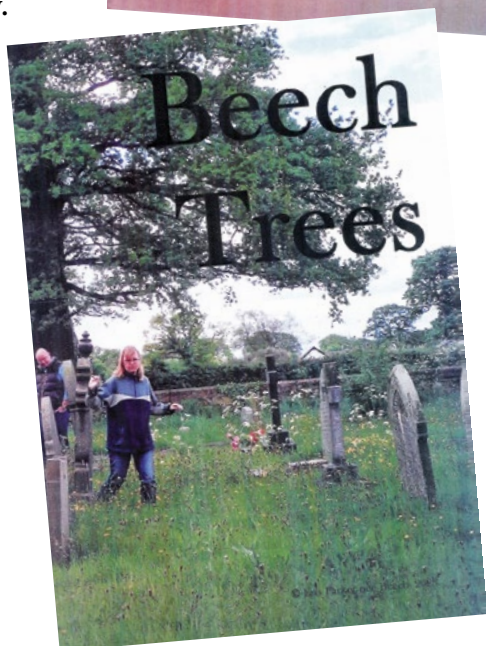
Its origin is interesting. Isabelle Mak, a student at Queen Margaret College was looking for a community project, a requirement of her 2023 school work programme, and OHS brewed a good idea: we proposed to her that she could read all our **Historians**, then copy the relevant pages of the chosen subject, list them, and present them in bound form. It appealed to her and she accepted

what became a challenge in concentration and dedication. It took hours of work.

The result is highly successful. Comments from users are positive, some have said “brilliant” and mostly “how useful!” And all suggested that there could be more projects like this to follow? Maybe.

In our library:

Erin Parker has sent us two splendid books about the Beech family. This acknowledges historical research material we were able to supply thanks to our researcher Julie Bremner. These books will have much appeal to Ohariu Valley residents (there was a good deal of local marriage so hereditary cousins are here to discover) and to those who wonder how they might publish a family history.



Our New Treasurer and Membership Secretary

We welcome Liz Newport giving Lachman Prasad a break after a number of years on the job.

Liz is facing a backlog of overdue memberships. Those who have not yet paid their 2023–2024 subscription could give Liz and all of us a great Christmas gift by making an immediate payment. It's \$35.00 into our bank account ANZ 01 0527 0006628 00.

Are you not sure what you owe us? Email liz.newport@outlook.com and check with her.

Changes in the Committee and new conversation brings up new heritage issues. I asked Liz about the Newport family explaining my mother used to dance with a Marjorie Newport, could they be related? Turned out they were! Marjorie took her talents into teaching and interesting, from an OHS perspective, is that we have advertisements for her classes in our publications.

Miss Marjorie Newport

TEACHER OF DANCING

Toe, Operatic, Character, Classic, Eccentric, American Tap, and National Dances.

Studio - **NGAIO TOWN HALL**

Hours: 9-12 Saturday Morning.

BALL ROOM DANCING CLASS.

TOWN HALL

NGAIO.

MISS MARJORIE NEWPORT

HAS COMMENCED A

WEEKLY DANCING CLASS

IN THE ABOVE HALL

EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 8 P.M.

LEARN TO DANCE CORRECTLY

AT A REASONABLE PRICE.

Advertisements from the *Ngaio and Khandallah Review* 1933, republished in OHS publications: *Wellington Northern Suburbs* 1919–1945, endpapers and *The Onslow Historian*, volume 21, 1991.

Early Johnsonville History

Over the past few months I have been sorting and filing old papers and records from the Johnsonville Community Archive Collection. This collection steadily grew from the 1950s and was managed by Johnsonville librarians.

It is a fascinating historical record of the local community's efforts to shape Johnsonville as the suburb grew, when selected land was sub-divided and purchased by developers for new housing, smaller, adjoining suburbs were established. The population exploded and the commercial centre changed beyond ... well, belief really! This era saw the establishment of many, and then many more, community organizations bringing residents together. The first was the Hawtrey Settlement Association in 1946; their work and other Associations that followed have recorded their relationship with residents and local authorities, their battles, losses and their achievements, through Association minutes, AGM reports, correspondence, research notes, publicity and newspaper clippings.

Here are a few items that I would like to share with you.

An extract from the NORTHJOHNEWS in the 1970s

Blackberry Pies Taste Good

Once again the blackberries have been allowed to ripen before being sprayed. Once again we are expected to believe that children will not pick them after spraying.

It is time the council realised that whatever category you put them in, blackberries taste nice.

The Council should also say whether or not the spray used is toxic. If so, there must be no spraying when the fruit is ripening.

NORTHJOHNEWS

NORTHJOHNEWS

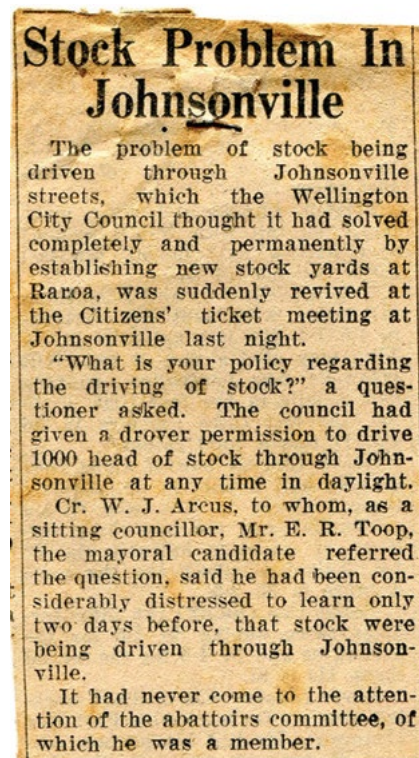
The North Johnsonville Progressive Association hand produced their newspapers and they were delivered to letter boxes. In the 1970s they had their own bard at a time when traffic issues and development of the main road were debated at many 'heated' public meetings. The poem was published in March 1978.

An Ode to a Road

*I stand in fear and trembling
Shaking in very limb
I try to gather courage
My chance is pretty slim*

*At last I'm feeling stronger
I think I'll take my chance
I wait a little longer
And then I do my dance*

*Well here I go, I'm on my way
I'm feeling so much better
I've made it over the J'ville Road
Just to post a letter*



Newspaper clipping c.1955

PY. DWC.

MUNICIPAL OFFICES:
CNR. MERCER & WAKEFIELD STREETS,
WELLINGTON. C.1

31 July 1959.

Dear Sir,

Referring to your letter of the 29th July 1959 I regret the delay in replying to your earlier letter of 1st June which was caused by the temporary loss of a file.

The matter of the droving of livestock at Johnsonville was considered by the Abattoir Committee at its meeting this month when I was requested to inform you that it is regretted there can be no departure from the previous decision not to agree to your suggestion that all stock to and from the stock unloading yards at Raroa should be trucked.

There is one current permit which authorises D.J. McGrae to drive flocks not exceeding 1000 sheep to the Abattoir Siding at Raroa from both Glenside and Ohariu and vice versa at suitable times between sunrise and sunset from Mondays to Fridays inclusive.

So far as the droving of cattle is concerned, no permits have been issued for this and it is the intention of the Committee that any permits which may be received for the droving of cattle should be ~~declined and that the applicants be informed that they should make~~ arrangements for trucking.

Yours faithfully,

(SGD) M.S. DUCKWORTH

Town Clerk.

Mr N. Callow,
Central Committee of Residents' Assns.
of the Johnsonville District,
89 Fraser Avenue,
JOHNSONVILLE.

The Johnsonville Town Board and their building

The Town Board building was constructed in 1912 and members of the Board, who meet at various locations, finally had a home at 3 Frankmoore Avenue. The Board was established in 1874 after the Wellington Provincial Governments Local Boards, 1873 legislation was passed, enabling local communities to elect a Town Board and manage the own affairs. They had jurisdiction over 1,274 acres of land and this continued until amalgamation with Wellington City Council in 1953. The building became a works depot headquarters for staff; in 1975 it was altered and became the local community centre, functioning until the 1990s when it was gifted to the local papakaiaanga and transported to their site. The newspaper clipping below is probably from the *Independent Herald* c. 1980, photo and story from R.J. (Bob) Meyer.

From town board to toddlers



Seventy years ago 16 men in sombre suits and bowler hats and ladies in long skirts, with high-necked frilled blouses, came to the town board rooms in Johnsonville.

Today young women in jeans and sweatshirts, picking up casually dressed children are as likely to be seen at the building, now the Johnsonville Community Centre (above).

The Johnsonville Community Centre building in Frankmoore Avenue is a sturdy memorial to progress.

Johnsonville was Wellington's most progressive borough, local historian Bob Meyer said when it was built.

These days the outside of the old building looks smart with its up-to-the-minute colour scheme.

However, at one time it was rundown and under threat of demolition.

One local organisation that is pleased about the old building's new lease of life and excellent community use, is the Johnsonville Progressive Association.

The building is one that they have listed as a part of Johnsonville's history that must be preserved.

Bob Meyer said the building dates back to 1911-1912 and was the heart of the former Johnsonville borough.

The Johnsonville Town Board, an independent local authority, had its offices there and board meetings were held in the room at the left of the photo.

The door in the centre of the verandah led to the town clerk's office and the workmen's offices were at the back.

Johnsonville had its own gas works situated behind the buildings, its own water supply and sewerage.

In 1953, the thriving borough of Johnsonville joined Wellington City.

Its history should put paid to the stories that circulated suggesting that Johnsonville was in a rundown state when it joined the rest of Wellington, Bob Meyer said.

My Last Newsletter

I advised the Committee some months ago that I would like to pass on the role of writing and producing our Newsletter to someone else.

That person had not yet emerged and perhaps it will come from one of you, one of our members, who reads this and wants to come forward?

It has been a great pleasure to write the Newsletters, and in researching meet new people and make new contacts in the process. I issued them rather randomly, but aligning with the events programme. It started about the time of Covid and the lockdown, when events were only staged when opportunities allowed and the rules were relaxed; but even then they were restricted by masks and numbers were reduced as many members were not circulating in public at all. We have an elderly membership and such caution was not a surprise.

So the Newsletter had a waiting audience and I enjoyed reaching everyone online. As a

consequence we kept our basic loyal membership intact. Now we are feeling a new surge of participation as we all remember how to socialize and enjoy each other's company. Our Christmas party was a great reminder of this.

Please give me a call if you would like to pick up this job and contribute to our Committee's work: siersjudy@gmail.com 027 345 0374

My sign off

I have selected two favourites images, in finale. The letter was delivered to KATE soon after we opened in the mid-1990s. We had painted the building pink and it aroused much commentary. Even some of the Committee were feeling uneasy about this daring colour. I had come back from a trip to England and Europe and seen so many lovely plastered buildings washed in pink and I wanted to make KATE noticed by the community who would have to say "what has happened to that building?" It was cool. It would promote us. We inherited a desolate looking civic building that was dreary, dirty white all over, it deserved to be highlighted, in my view. But dissent brought commentary and one of the results was this reaction and support from a younger member of the public.



Merry Christmas everyone and a happy new year!

**Judy Siers
President
OHS 2023**

