



ONslow HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Established 1968

www.onslowhistorical.nz

Onslowhistorical@gmail.com

86 Khandallah Road. Wellington. 6035

Newsletter Mid 2024

Dear Members

Do come to Tom McGrath's "Wartime Secrets" talk about his father's wartime diaries - a new book:

24 July

7pm for 7.30pm @ OHS, (86 Khandallah Rd, RSVP required for delicious wartime catering).

Many thanks to those who attended the recent AGM. We've got a strong and active Committee. After the AGM our Friend Rod Baxter met with Chorus executives who confirmed Chorus wishes to undertake a commercial sale of K.A.T.E. in due course. OHS also exercised its technical right of 5 year lease renewal, and the status of the building remains our priority.

In June we had 75 children from St Benedict's School visit K.A.T.E. hosted by Claire and Hugh Bibby and me. Two groups of Ngaio Cubs also visited, hosted by (ex cub himself) John Galloway, Hugh and me. The visits were fun and tamariki especially enjoyed learning about and handling Hugh's old telephone collection. The visit was reported in the Independent Herald.

My report on David Parsons' talk on 6 July about the history of the Johnsonville train line will soon appear in the IH.

Judy Siers has completed the secure transfer of OHS' archives to WCC's Archives and there's good progress on listing the contents for ease of public access.

Thanks to WCC's Garbor Toth the Suffrage Year recordings of local oral histories is now publicly available on line.

OHS will arrange for the oral history of Judy Siers' interesting life to be deposited with the national oral history collection.

OHS and the Ngaio and Crofton Downs Progressive Association have set up a Joint Centenary Committee, chaired by Viv Chapple, to arrange for next year's centenary of the Ngaio Town Hall being built (an event is planned for next year's Sunday 3 August 2025).

In closing, my great thanks to George Walter, Immediate Past Acting President. Also thanks go to Judy Siers, Past President, for sterling service over many years, and of course to John Galloway, OHS Secretary for his invaluable support.

Felicity Wong



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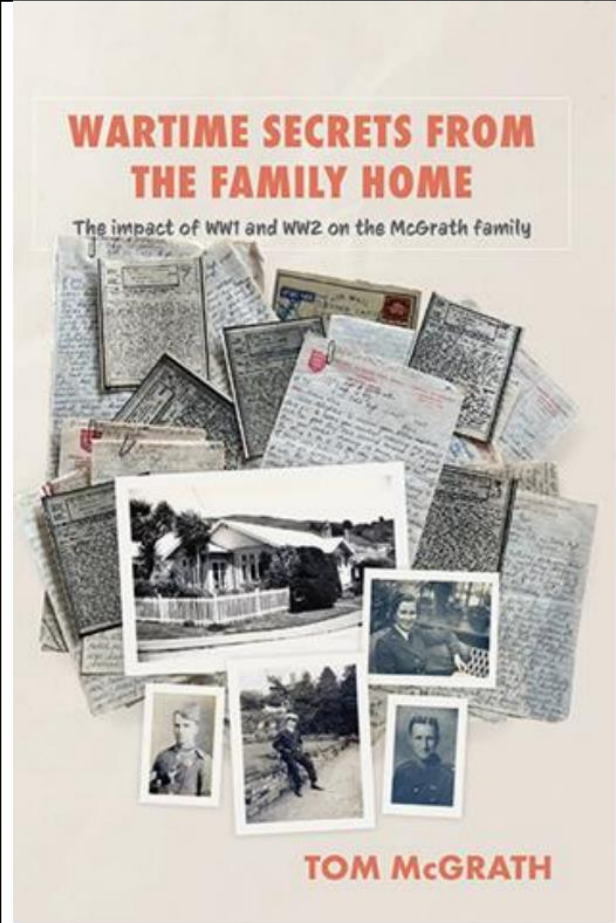
OHS members, family and friends are invited to

Wartime Secrets:

The Impact of WW1 and WW2 on the McGrath Family

Wednesday 24 July 7:15 pm for 7:30pm at KATE Onslow Historical Centre.

Light refreshments served.

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|  | <p>"I blame that bastard Hitler for my teeth," WW2 veteran Hugh McGrath would often say as his dental bills mounted up.</p> <p>He could have said so much more but didn't. So, the full extent of his wartime story didn't unravel until the chance discovery of hundreds of letters, photos and postcards stuffed into boxes and attaché cases and scattered throughout a suburban house.</p> <p>Hugh's son Tom McGrath uses their unique, eye-witness commentary to recount his family's varied experiences WW1 and WW2 experiences in his new book "Wartime Secrets from the Family Home". Copies of the book will be on display at the meeting and available for sale there at \$40.00 each.</p> |
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Presented by Tom McGrath, a former teacher, factory inspector, union organiser, parliamentary research officer and polytechnic lecturer, is now an author, who is a member of the Society and lives in Karori.

RSVP by emailing Onslowhistorical@gmail.com

Events Mid-year 2024



Steaming in to Jville.

110 people turned up for the talk on the Johnsonville rail line history at the Johnsonville library on Saturday the 6th July.

Given by Mr David Parsons President of the Tawa Historical Society.

Proves there is still interest in history.

History at KATE for school students



St Benedict's pupils studying how children dressed and played 125 years ago. Photo: Supplied.

Old telephones, a railway lantern and old photographs of children in Khandallah were learning experiences for St Benedict's School students on their recent history field trip.

Last week three classes of students ranging in age from 5 to 7 visited the former Khandallah Automatic Telephone Exchange (KATE), now the home of the Onslow Historic Society.

They were met by Hugh Bibby, his cousin Claire Bibby, and newly elected Onslow Historic Society president Felicity Wong.

Hugh showed the children his collection of old telephones, and explained how they were once wired from people's homes to the telephone exchange and demonstrated the meaning of telephone language by dialing, ringing, and hanging up.

He also demonstrated how coloured glass in a hand-held lantern was used to guide train drivers to stop and go.

Claire shared photographs of Khandallah children 125 years ago playing outdoors.

Felicity prepared a map for the students to take home of places to visit, such as the former Ngatoto Kumara gardens, the Bridle Track, horse trough and interesting local buildings.

St Benedict's teacher Fiona Barnett said the students learnt about the development of the need for the KATE building itself and had



Hugh Bibby and three St Benedict's School students – Shaun, Henry and Henry – check out a cobra phone. Photo: Supplied.

an opportunity to use some of the examples of early telephones.

"The wonderful collection of photos allowed the students to get a sense of the history of settlement of the area and were challenged to be 'detectives' and to be curious about their local history," she said.

4 March 1984 Saving KATE



The eight oral histories recorded in 1993 (OHS's Suffrage Year project) are available on Wellington Recollect

[The Onslow Historical Society Oral History Project \(1993\) | Wellington City Libraries \(recollect.co.nz\)](http://www.wellingtonrecollect.co.nz)