

NEWSLETTER

No. 64, May, 2022

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AGM Tuesday 28 June 2022

The 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre Inc. will be held in the Centre at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, 28 June. As in previous years, it is anticipated that the formal business will be completed in about 30 minutes.

Following the formal business, at about 8:00 pm, Ros Empson will talk to the meeting about: *The Story of the Mangapiko District Through the Eyes of Ngaire Phillips*.



Mangapiko School

Ngaire, who lived at Mangapiko for most of her life, has been busy recording her reminiscences of the district's history. She was asked to talk to us about her recollections but because she no longer goes out in the evenings, supplied her written records and photographs to Ros Empson who will use a Powerpoint presentation to talk about Ngaire's story of the district.

Developments in the Archives

The collection, systematic storage and cataloguing of artefacts is central to the effective functioning of all museums and heritage centres. Over the last 20 years, our heritage centre has been pretty good at accumulating archival material, particularly paper resources, photographs and a relatively small number of archival objects. In the main, they are either on display or are stored in our archive room. However, when Ros Empson took over management of our archives, it was clear that more work was needed on our system to locate items, including the cataloguing of archival material which has not kept up with the rate of collection.

Over the last two years, Karen and Garry Howard, who were aware of the shortcoming, have undertaken a number of projects to make our archive items more accessible. They regularly spend Saturday mornings working in the archive room, and complete online research and the creation of records at home.

Karen began by creating a catalogue of where information in our collection may be found about each of the militiamen in the 2nd Waikato Regiment. This now exists in printed form in lever-arch files.

Her second project involved working through the extensive records of the Pirongia Residents & Ratepayers Association, given to the centre by the late Sabina Owen, which had not been assessed or catalogued. These were sorted, culled and filed by category and date, so that specific information may be more readily accessed.



An unsorted box of 3000 photo copies of Certificates of Land Titles, marriage records and other official records were given to the late Mary Hurst by Wally Edwards, a local historian at Ohaupo who had rescued them from being destroyed. As a result, they were deposited in our archive room. Karen took on the formidable job of sorting them into categories, and then into the districts where they are relevant. In this way, she was able to isolate those relevant to our district, which have been filed in numerical order and indexed, to be accessioned to our collection. She also created sets of records which will be offered to heritage organisations in other districts where they are relevant. For

example, 3rd Waikato Regiment land records will be offered to the Cambridge Museum. Other items will go to Rotorua and Taupo.

At the same time, Garry worked initially on the vertical files behind the reception desk, ensuring that the contents of each family file are appropriate, and then cataloguing items that had not been accessioned. This highlighted the importance of accessioning items before they are included in the vertical files.

Since then, Garry has systematically digitised several hundred photographs and news articles which were accessioned at the same time. In the long-term, he hopes that they will be made accessible online.



Thanks for Support

- **COMMUNITY ORGANISATION GRANTS SCHEME** for a grant of \$2300.
- **WAIPA DISTRICT COUNCIL** for the annual grant of \$9000, together with a discretionary grant of \$1150 for the development of displays.
- **TE PAPA**, for a Helping Hands grant of \$1100 towards archives expenses.
- **KAREN & GARRY HOWARD** for their tireless work on our archives.
- **PAULA MCWHA** whose work about the Centre on Facebook continue to attract likes.

In Remembrance

We were saddened by the news that member **Olive Clements** passed away on 15 January. Olive was a member when the Centre was established in 2003 and became a volunteer, who regularly opened the Centre for visitors until she stood down in 2018. She was a loyal and valued member.

We were remiss in not recording in *Newsletter 63* the passing of member, **Anne O'Halloran**, in July 2021. Anne was another volunteer who also opened the centre for a few years, before she stood down in 2019.

Member **Shirley Scown**, who passed away in September 2021, was a long-standing member who is remembered for the generosity of she and her husband, Ross, who funded the purchase of a second computer for the Centre in 2019.

Together with their families, we acknowledge the contributions of these former members, and mourn their passing

Consequences of Covid

Covid 19 continues to affect the efficient operation of the Centre. Not only were our visitor numbers drastically reduced during the lockdowns, but more recently, the Centre failed to open on a few days because several volunteers were required to isolate when they or others in their households had tested positive. Nevertheless, it is pleasing that visitor numbers have begun to pick up again since the lockdown ended.

For your diary

28 Jun at 7:30 pm. Heritage Centre AGM.

Disclaimer: Views expressed in items published in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Heritage Centre

From the Committee

- The War Memorial Hall, which was officially opened on 22 August 1922, will be 100 years old this year. The committee plans to hold a celebratory function, on a date to be decided, to which all members will be invited.
- A luncheon at the Centre on 18 December, last year, was tended by 18 volunteers.
- We are pleased to welcome **Norma Tuatara** to our roster of volunteers now opening the Centre on six days a week. Arrangements are currently in train to add a further three volunteers.
- **Sally Uerata**, who has served on the committee since 2003 as the Purekireki Marae nominee, is now resident at Tarahill in Te Awamutu. The committee delivered flowers to her in December, in appreciation for her long service.
- A replacement microwave oven has been purchased for the kitchen.
- A new answerphone has also replaced the previous one which was no longer reliable.

Genealogists using the Archive Room

The arrangement under which genealogists from Te Awamutu are using our archive room to work on documents lodged there by Te Awamutu Museum, has worked out well. They have completed working on the present documents and will re-commence when new records are made available

A Reminder

Membership fees are now due for the 2022-23 financial year. For individual memberships the fee is \$20, for families \$25 and for organisations \$35. Payments may be made in cash at the Centre, or for anyone paying online, the Heritage Centre Internet Banking Account Number is 38-0997-0639270-00. Please reference your payment with your name or the name of your business.

Recently donated

Malcolm Barrett was one of the prime movers and shakers in the Pirongia Rural Box Holders Association which, between 1987 and 1991, challenged a decision by NZ Post to dramatically increase rural delivery fees. Persistent lobbying by the association, and the operation of RDX, an alternative rural delivery scheme, eventually led to a change in the national policy. Recently, Malcolm visited the centre from Hamilton to deliver a box of documents from that time which are currently being accessioned and catalogued in our archives.

Lloyd and Trish Anderson, who farmed at Mangapiko, donated a useful collection of family photos, together with a collection of 36 books by Mary Scott.

Welcome new members

- Lloyd & Trish Anderson
- Anne Barbour
- James Ranstead
- Norma Tuatara

The Rugby Caps of Charles Woolston

Late last year, we received an enquiry about three rugby caps, embroidered with the motif WRU which had been the property of Charles Woolston who was said to have grown up and lived near Pirongia. The caps were awarded for the 1921, 1923 and 1924 seasons. Our enquiries revealed that they were from the Waipa Rugby Union, from an era when there were several smaller rugby unions in the Waikato which were later incorporated into the Waikato Rugby Union.

We have in our collection, a photograph of the 1921 Pirongia Junior Rugby Team which won the Waipa Junior competition in that year, and in the front row, the smallest player was Charles Woolston who must have been 17 years old at the time. Each player in that team would have received a 1921 cap for the team's achievement.

At the time, the Woolston family farmed at Mangapiko on Hawthorne Road, having moved there from Raurimu in 1915. Charles and his sisters, Beryl, Cora and Doris, attended Mangapiko School before he worked on the family farm.

In July 1922, Charles was involved in a serious accident when pig-hunting in the Pirongia Hills. While running down the hill to where his dogs had secured a pig, he slipped and fell, the impact causing his loaded rifle to discharge, with the result that a bullet entered his chin, broke his jaw bone, dislodged four teeth, and lodged at the back of his throat. Nevertheless, he still managed to get on his horse and rode home, a distance of seven miles, only to find that his people were absent. He rode back to Pirongia, from where his father took him to Te Awamutu and then to Waikato Hospital, where the bullet was located and removed.



Woolston's 1921 cap



*Pirongia won the WRU Junior Competition in 1921.
Charles Woolston seated front row, right.*

Despite the physical consequences, Charles was again playing rugby in the 1923 season, for the Methodist Club in Te Awamutu, earning another cap with them. And in 1924, while still with the Methodist Club, he was in the Waipa Junior representatives, for which his third cap was awarded.

Later, he returned to play locally for Pirongia, Karamu and then the Pirongia Seniors from 1929. By that time, he was also wrestling and coached local wrestlers. In 1929, he reached the semi-finals in the national wrestling championships.

Newspaper reports tell that he played rugby as a loose forward, frequently as a "rover", the forward who, was not a member of the 2-3-2 scrum of the time, but stood off to feed the scrum, and make the life of the opposing halfback and scrum-half difficult. There are reports of him scoring a number of tries.

From the late 1920s until 1940, Woolston farmed at Te Rore, on 132 acres located on both sides of the road to Te Pahu, immediately beyond the Hodgson Road junction. He married Margaret Harris in 1935, and two of their children were born locally before they moved to Rangiataea, near Otorohanga. He died in 1963, aged 58 years.

A 1940s photograph collected by Margaret Sherwin



Names on the back:

Standing: Mrs W.H. Bell, Mrs Du Fresne, Margaret Sherwin, Mrs Moeller, Mrs Beet Snr, Mrs Boggis.

Centre: Mrs Livingtone, Mrs Lorimer, Mrs Barry, Mrs C. Berry.

Front: Mrs Geo Owen, Mrs Sifleet, Mrs Bromell & Georgie, Elsie Owen, Mrs Allport.