

## NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2018 NEWS AND VIEWS

### Taihape Visitors

On Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September we welcomed a group of visitors from Taihape Museum, who braved awful weather to get here. They all enjoyed looking around the Museum and we received many favourable comments.

### Celebration of Scott's Ferry Restoration

On 29<sup>th</sup> September, a group of representatives from Marton Historical Society attended these Celebrations. After the ceremony, Rod Smith, Maureen Velvin, and Barry and Robin Rankin, all commented on how very well the day had been organised by Bulls Museum, who were behind the entire restoration project. We congratulate them on their perseverance and hard work, and also on organising such a brilliant event. Extra comments were made of the special delivery of the mail on horseback, which really added to the occasion.

### The Morris Car Club

The sun shone on September 29<sup>th</sup>, when we welcomed the Morris Car Club to Marton. We had a display of ten cars next to the cottage, alongside Paul Czepanski's veteran tractor. Amongst the cars were two from our own members. Trevor Evans' (green Morris ute on right) and Peter Saywell's (yellow Morris 1000 saloon in centre of photo). The grey Morris in the photo is in its original state.

Photos below.



## CALENDAR OF 2018



**NOVEMBER MEMBERS'  
MEETING TUESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup>  
NOVEMBER**

**Outing to Murrayfield near  
Shannon. Leaving Marton  
at 12.30 pm.**



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### **Visit of Mercedes Benz Club**

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October we were visited by the Mercedes Benz Club from Palmerston North. All 15 cars arrived in convoy, which was an impressive sight.

We welcomed 29 visitors who enjoyed their tour of the Museum and Settlers Cottage, and we received many compliments on our variety of displays and how it is all cared for.

### **NOVEMBER MEMBERS' MEETING      TUESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

Outing to Murrayfield near Shannon. Leaving Marton at 12.30 pm.

Murrayfield is usually closed on a Tuesday but are happy to open for us.

They can do an afternoon tea for \$7.50 per person.

The Museum is by donation, so the afternoon will cost \$10 per person.

We will travel there in our own cars and there will be arrangements to collect members from home or meet at Archive Room for transport if wanted.

*Names please to Pat Hayman 327 6063 by 12<sup>th</sup> November.*

### **MARTON RSA 1918 – 2018**

The Marton RSA members gathered last week to acknowledge their centenary of 100 years service in the Marton community. The first Marton RSA committee was formed in April 1918. Their president was Mr A.R. Bryce, and with the support of the Ladies Patriotic Committee, were able to open the Returned Soldiers Club in Broadway.

The last century has seen many returned servicemen from the World Wars I and II and more recent wars, who have worked to support and care for the welfare of their comrades and families.

In Marton Historical Society's archives we have comprehensive records of the soldiers from Marton and surrounding small communities in the Rangitikei, who served in both World Wars. All persons are welcome to make enquiries about family personnel.

## **POST OFFICES IN MARTON**

Marton's first Post Office was established in 1866 at the home of William and Sarah Henderson, adjacent to Hendersons flour mill, the site of today's Marton Motel in Wellington Road. The Cobb & Co coach service called twice a week.

In 1869 the next Post Office was on the corner of High Street and Wellington Road at the General Store of Mr Frederick Beaven.

In 1870 a new Post Office was built in High Street with living quarters for the Postmaster, this being destroyed by the big fire in 1896.

In June 1897, a new Post Office was built on the adjacent site. This was a handsome building which operated until 1927.

In 1927 the next Post Office built, which today still stands on the corner of Broadway and Hammond Street, was considered the most up to date in the Dominion of New Zealand at that time. This was an imposing structure for its time.

This was closed when The Government rationalised New Zealand post in the 1980s.

The building has recently been sold, and it will be interesting to see what its future holds.

*The way things were:-*

## **Controlled Frenzy – Marton Railway Station**

At Christmas time, many people wanted to go on holiday. Air travel wasn't an option in the 1930s of course, and roads weren't very good; so train travel was the thing.

On some days over the Christmas period in 1936, as many as 10 express trains passed through Marton Junction station and there were never less than six. On **each** of the three days December 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>, over 3000 passengers passed through Marton.

The refreshment rooms were, at times, handling up to 800 people at once.

At 6:50 pm each day the mixed train from Ohakune arrived and had to be piloted onto the third set of rails on the East platform to make way for the northbound express due at 6:30 pm which took the main rails and the southbound Daylight Limited, which arrived at 7:02. This was piloted through on the east loop and backed up to the east platform.

Meantime the Palmerston-Wanganui train was on the north end of the west platform preparing to depart at 7:23. At 7:01 the Wanganui-Palmerston train arrived on the West loop followed at 7:21 by the special New Plymouth – Marton passenger train and the mixed train to Taihape stood waiting for departure at 7:45.

Therefore on those days, around those times, seven trains were being handled at once.

*Based on a report in the Rangitikei Advocate, 6 January 1936*

[Next time, we'll talk about Easter 1940 when things got even busier.]

## ROD'S REMINISCENCES

### **Inventions that changed our world**

A list of ancient and older inventions that changed the world could be quite long, but would include such things as the wheel and the steam engine, but they happened long ago and all I know about them comes from other publications. Some other things are more recent, but have had significant ongoing influences

#### The Laser

One of the most amazing inventions that happened in my lifetime has to be the Laser.

April 26, 1951: Charles Hard Townes of Columbia University conceived the idea of a “maser” device (microwave amplification by stimulated emission of radiation) while he was sitting on a park bench in Washington. By 1953 he (and his team at Columbia University) had made one, for which they shared a Nobel Prize in 1964. You might not know what a maser is, but read on ...

This idea was perhaps not truly serendipitous by the strict meaning of the word, but considering where the idea has led, that description must be close.

In 1962, my last year at Secondary School, I first read that real life masers had, by then, been constructed and they worked. By 1960 it had been proved that the microwaves of the original device could be replaced by Light; and so the whole concept morphed into what became known as the “Laser” — the “L” standing for “light”. Who hasn't heard of lasers now? Most people know they somehow shine beams of light, even if many don't know how they work, or why they're so special.

Lasers initially worked off photographers' electric flash tubes and, in turn, produced short flashes of very powerful light. However a distinct theme at that time was that no-one had the foggiest idea of what a Laser could be used for!

Wow! Hasn't this device come a long way in 50 years. How would the modern world get by without them? Modern lasers can run continuously – not just flash. They can cut steel, they can ensure drains and tunnels are surveyed and dug with an accuracy of a few millimetres, they can construct holographic images and repair corneas in eyes so that some people can throw away their glasses.

Lasers are also the single component that makes CD, DVD and Blu-ray players possible and they can transmit thousands of billions of bits of information every second down a single fibre-optic cable.

#### The Resonant-Cavity Magnetron – leading to an enduring “Old Wives' Tale”.

We've all seen movies depicting the massive aerial arrays erected on the south coast of England in 1940 to spot incoming German aircraft on radar. There was no way those radars or their aerials could be transported on anything smaller than a large truck. A single invention changed all that.

The first successful cavity magnetron was developed in Russia in 1935, but was radically improved in 1940 at the University of Birmingham in England. The result was a special kind of radio valve that could produce multi-kilowatt pulses at a wavelength of 10 cm, an unprecedented discovery. The high power of pulses from the device allowed a drastic reduction in the size of radar sets and their antennas. These could not only detect much smaller objects than before, but they could be more easily installed in night-fighter aircraft, anti-submarine aircraft and escort ships.

When the British began using such radars in their fighters to intercept German bombers on night raids, they needed to prevent the Germans finding out about it; so the Air Ministry issued press releases stating that British pilots were eating lots of carrots to give them exceptional night vision. This fooled the British public, as well as the German High Command and an old wives' tale was

born that persists to this day. While it is true that carrots can improve the night vision of people suffering from a deficiency of vitamin-A, their night vision can't be improved beyond that of a normal healthy person.

While the original magnetron valve was a quite sophisticated device available only to the esoteric world of military and defence systems, the modern magnetron has morphed into a much cheaper, mass produced consumer item, that allows most people in our society to own one.

Where would we be today without having a cavity-magnetron as the central working component in every micro-wave oven — now found in nearly every modern kitchen?

### **Navigation – the journey to knowing where you are**

Many of us come from one or more of the great seafaring nations. It is only possible to intentionally go out of sight of land if you have some method (even if crude) of figuring out where you are.

Navigation by the sun and (especially) the stars, probably started a very long time ago, but probably the first mechanical navigation device was the magnetic compass. Later on came devices for accurately observing the angle of the sun and stars, culminating in what we call the Sextant. This device, with a skilled operator, allowed a determination of latitude within a few miles, provided it wasn't too cloudy to see the sun or stars.

A problem remained for a long time — how to find out one's Longitude.

Christopher Columbus must have suffered from this problem as he seemed to be very confused about where he was when he found America and thought it was India.

The best way to determine Longitude was to compare the time of day where you happened to be (as judged from the sun or stars), with the time back at Greenwich. But how was a sailor to know what the time was back at Greenwich with any modicum of accuracy? Pendulums were then the best known time-keeping devices since Galileo discovered them, but they're not much use on a boat for obvious reasons.

One ingenious solution to this problem involved observing the position of the moon. The moon goes through all its possible positions among the stars once every month; so if you can look at the moon and figure out exactly where it is in its monthly cycle, you can figure out what the real time is back home. From comparing the two, you can get your Longitude. The moon moves pretty slowly; so this method wasn't particularly accurate.

A prize was offered by the British Government to anyone who could invent a practical and accurate way to determine Longitude. This competition seems to have produced more or less the desired result – the invention of the chronometer in 1764. With a good chronometer, Longitude could be established within about 8 miles. However, I believe that prize was never awarded due to a lot of politicking standing in the way.

In due course, various other navigational aids were developed and used, using radio signals, such as Loran, while Inertial navigation systems used gyroscopes and accelerometers.

Then the Global Positioning System (GPS) arrived and has now become a system available in just about every kind of vehicle imaginable and also in everyone's pocket or maybe on their wrist.

*"You have arrived at your destination".*

That's all folks. As this is the last newsletter of this year, we take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy New year.