

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2017 NEWS AND VIEWS

Welcome to 2017 it is sure to be a happy new year. We hope you all had a great holiday season. Many thanks to all the volunteers from 2016 and hope to see you all again soon.

Brief reports from the end of 2016

On the 8th November we held a joint RSA Women's Group and Historical Society meeting at Stephen's Church hall, where Mayor Andy Watson spoke to us about his trip to France, where he visited for Anzac Commemorations earlier on in the year. It was a very interesting talk enjoyed by all present. This was followed by afternoon tea.

We also held a stall at Marton Market day on 26th November, where we sold plants, produce, baked goods and general bric-a-brac. It was a great morning and we had a steady flow of customers, which continued until the rain turned up just after lunch. We were all very thankful for our new gazebo. We all enjoyed our day, and would like to thank everyone who donated items for this.

Then on 29th November there was an outing to Bulls Museum. Sixteen members attended this and we were warmly welcomed and then shown around the museum. This was followed by an enjoyable afternoon tea, which was served to us in the Museum. Thank you Bulls for a very good and interesting afternoon.

Marton Country Music Weekend

This year we decided to try opening the Historic Village for the three days prior to Marton Country Music Festival. We were open from 10 to 3 on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday with volunteers welcoming visitors. Wednesday and Thursday were fairly quiet days, with a few more visitors arriving on Friday. During this time we also had people calling in to do family research.

CALENDAR OF 2017



Members Meeting Tuesday 21st February 2017

We are planning a trip to Taihape and Mangaweka Museums for the next meeting.

Meet at Marton Historic
Village at 1pm. Tuesday
21st February.

The outing will consist of a trip to Taihape Museum and then afternoon tea at The Brown Sugar Café. (Just across the road from the Museum)

We will then visit Mangaweka Museum on the way home. Cost is \$5 per person to cover Museum entries, and then everyone will buy their own afternoon tea.

Names please, plus
requests from anyone
who needs a lift, to Pat
by Thursday 16th

February. Hope you can come.

Phone 327 6063.

HALLS IN MARTON

DRILL HALL

The first hall that was built was in 1870, in North Broadway, (Cobham's Plumbing site), and was the headquarters of Rangitikei Rifle Corps. This was the social centre of the community and had the best dance floor in the district. Many balls were held by the Rifle Corp and Rangitikei Hunt Club. The hall was destroyed by fire in November 1926.

FORESTERS LODGE HALL

Built in 1871 in Broadway (Countdown site), this was used as Marton's first known TOWN HALL. This was the entertainment centre, drawing large crowds to local and visiting shows. By the 1880s the hall became known as THEATRE ROYAL, and in 1890s was purchased by James McChesney. A second floor was added for the theatre, with a furniture emporium on the ground floor. This hall closed in 1904.

TOWN HALL

Opened in 1904 on the corner of Lower High Street and Wellington Road. This hall was the main venue of the town's social functions for almost 60 years. Movie films were first shown in 1904, and talkie films arrived in 1928, with packed audiences. In 1924 the Town Hall was enlarged by cutting the building in half and filling in with a new construction. Kerridge Odeon purchased the hall in 1957 and from that time the Town Hall was known as Civic Theatre. This building was demolished in 1984.

VICTORY HALL

This was opened on Anzac Day 1954 on the corner of Wellington Road and Lower Beaven Street. It was a joint venture between Marton St John's Ambulance and Marton Boy Scouts. They purchased an Everyman's Hut from Waiouru Military Camp. The hall became the popular social centre for dances, flower shows, concerts, festivals etc. The Scout group built a new den on the corner of Lyon and Cuba Streets, which opened in 1960. After 40 years, 1995, the hall was sold and today is a private residence at Bonny Glen. St John's Ambulance are now established on the same site.

MARTON RSA and CITIZENS' MEMORIAL HALL

This was opened in October 1961 in Wellington Road on the old Marton Gasworks site, and is now known as Marton Memorial Hall.

EMPIRE HALL

This was opened on the corner of Hair Street and Hammond Street in September 1932 as a dance hall. It was a former stable owned by Mr. Applebe. In July 1945 the Pacific Chenille Craft Co. opened making chenille products until 1998.

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This factory is today Bary Knitwear making garments.

CORONATION HALL

This was located in William Street behind Rangitikei County Council offices. It was demolished in 1982.

LEGION OF FRONTIERSMEN HALL

This is in Pukepapa Road, and opened in April 1967. This was a five bedroom house that was converted into a hall, and is now the Marton Bridge Club.

DRUIDS HALL

This was built in 1892 in Wellington Road and later owned by Buffalo Lodge. In 1918 it was the emergency hospital to accommodate influenza epidemic patients. It is now St. Francis Indoor Bowling Club.

MARTON SCOTTISH SOCIETY HALL

This is in Lower Beaven Street and was opened by the society in 1969.

VICTORY HALL - 1974



ROD'S REMINISCENCES

Secondary School (Part 3 – Cadets)

I think it was about once a month that the boys had to play soldiers for half a day. We had to remember to come to school on those days wearing the most uncomfortable khaki uniforms we were all issued with. At least one boy grew a lot taller after the issue, but was never given a bigger uniform. He ended up with a 3 inch gap between his tunic and his shorts. That looked even more uncomfortable. The hat badges provided an early lesson in military reality — if you lost your badge, or someone stole it, you just stole someone else's — easy.

A couple of years later, the army graciously provided some half gallon jars of orange cordial, perhaps to compensate for having to “square bash” in the hot sun. While some of this went to its intended recipients, a goodly portion was diverted to end up in the Prefects' Room, where currying a bit of favour was always a useful exercise.

Cadet morning consisted of marching around and lining up for parade, often carrying ridiculously heavy WWI Lee-Enfield bolt action rifles. Some single shot rifles were also in the armoury. I think these were ex Boer War.

After the square bashing part of the day there would be something more interesting like learning how to tune three or four back-pack radio transceivers to operate as a communications network.

One day, I was selected to participate in a simulated infantry charge (of about 6 guys – big deal!), for the entertainment and enlightenment of the rest of the Company. We were issued with half a dozen blank cartridges to fire off as we ran — yes, it was a bit of a surprise that the old rifles we were given to play with actually worked.

The whole effect of a co-ordinated charge was spoiled somewhat by a strict instruction that we were to pick up all spent cartridges after they were fired. I lost one of mine in the grass and had to hunt around for quite a few seconds to find it. Later on I figured out that the powers that be were probably worried that one of us might keep an unfired blank cartridge for ourselves; so they checked that we handed in the same number of casings that had been issued.

One day we all went to the Putiki firing range near Wanganui for some .303 target practice. Some boys found printed targets very boring game and I heard that a storage shed on the site acquired quite a bit more ventilation in its walls that day. At one stage I was assigned to the Butts/Backstop trench to help mark the fall of shot for the shooters. This was done with a metal disc attached to a long pole so that the fall of shot could be indicated without lowering the target. While diligently trying to perform this duty according to the rules, I became somewhat surprised to perceive bullets arriving near my target but somewhat it random. The little vandals back at the firing point had taken to shooting at my moving marker disc. Much more fun I guess!

My big disappointment that day, was that time ran out before I got a turn at firing a Bren machine gun.

Back at school it was discovered that I was quite a dab hand at target shooting. For this, quite good .22 single shot rifles were available. Near the end of the year I was phoned at home and advised that I had tied with another boy in competing to win a cup for shooting and they wanted me to go in for a shoot off. We were each given 5 bullets. When I fired two or three of mine, I thought the “bang” sounded funny – a bit on the weak side. The target showed two bulls-eyes, one hole right on the centre line but right at the bottom, one was half way down and one hole was missing altogether.

I didn't believe for a moment that I had missed the target completely – no way! I persuaded the range master that I had been given faulty ammunition and he let me have two more bullets. I thought I should have had at least three more. The final result was deemed to be that I came second in the competition.

That was the nearest I had ever come, or would ever come to winning a “sporting” cup. In those days it seems that every New Zealand born boy was expected to be born with an built-in gene — *how to play rugby*. I didn't get that one or any other normal sporting one; so a shooting cup would have been especially nice.

That's all for now folks.

All the Best from Rod and the Committee.