

# Marton & District Historical Society

*'Preserving and Sharing Marton History'*

## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2012

### NEWS AND VIEWS

#### **Another One Rides the Bus**

Recently we had a bus load of visitors through the Village as part of a tour group organised from Wanganui. They enjoyed visiting the Village and in particular, the treasure trove of information held in the Archives room. Many commented on how well presented the village was and thought that the cottage was well cared for.

#### **In Search of a Boulder**

For our end-of-year celebration at Frae Ona Park, it would be delightful to be able to mount the commemorative plaque on a boulder. If you know of one that we can have, please get in touch with one of the members of the committee.

#### **A bright morning at Edale**

Several members recently went to visit the residents of Edale Rest Home, and took along a selection of memorabilia from the Village. It was a great morning spent reminiscing about the earlier days of Marton and some of the events that had happened over the years.

#### **Wooden Toy Car Rally on Track to Race again!**

The Marton Historical Society is getting ready for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual wooden toy car rally.

This year we are going to add an extra run-off section to the track, which will make it bigger and better than last year.

Kits will be on sale at the local schools, and through Project Marton. Remember, any member who wishes to race, can get their free kit by contacting a committee member.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2012



#### **Bi-Monthly Gathering**

Tuesday 14 August 2012

Hear our guest speaker reflect on working for the NZ Historic Places Trust  
Where: MHS Archives Room, Wellington Rd, Marton 2pm

#### **Mind-Working Bee**

Sunday 16 September, 2pm

Marton Historical Society  
No equipment required, just bring yourself along for a fun afternoon!

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wooden Toy Car Rally and Pie Baking Contest**

Saturday 6 October 2012

Where: Marton Historical Society, Wellington Rd, Marton

#### **Marton Market Day**

Saturday 24 November 2012

Where: Broadway, Marton

#### **Frae Ona Park Golden Jubilee**

Saturday 15 December 2012

Frae Ona Park, Calico Line

#### **SPONSORSHIP**

**Sponsor our newsletter! Only \$20 per issue.**

**Marton Historical Society Inc.**

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# SOCIETY UPDATES

## Thanks to our volunteers

A big thanks to all involved in helping with research, village visits and with keeping the village tidy. Thanks to:

Maureen, Margaret, Heather, Franklin, Peter, Elaine, Kylie, Lynne and Pat.

## Collection management

We have had a lot of items donated over the last few months, and it is great to be able to fill in a few gaps in our collection. If you know of anyone who is downsizing, moving house, or having to clear out estate items please ask them to keep the Historic Society in mind.

## Working Bee for your mind

We are going to hold a **WORKING BEE WITH A DIFFERENCE IN SEPTEMBER**. We will be asking people to work their minds, rather than their hands, and to help us identify items in our collection that we don't know:

- what they are; or
- who donated it; or
- what it does; or
- the story behind it.

## Baking, making and celebrating

We are looking to have a stall at market day again this year, and hope you will support us by providing some baking, plants, crafts or bric-a-brac for the stall. We would be grateful if every member could contribute in some way to one of the events to be held between now and Xmas (mind-working bee, wooden toy car rally, market day, Frae Ona celebration).

# COMMITTEE UPDATES

## Society membership

If you haven't already paid your subs for 2012, now is time to be sending it in. Unusually, we have a few outstanding for this time of year.

## Donations and sponsorship

We have put in for funding again, and are waiting to hear from:

- Dudding Trust
- Dept of Internal Affairs for the COGS grant
- Te Papa/National Services Strategic Projects grant

## HELP WANTED

**Do you have any of the following items that you could donate to the Society?**

- ⇒ Eiderdown for double bed
- ⇒ Bassinet sheets and blankets
- ⇒ Matching bedside tables
- ⇒ Lowboy chest of drawers for adults bedroom
- ⇒ Kitchen shelves
- ⇒ What-not display rack
- ⇒ Display rack (suitable for holding pamphlets)

## STORAGE

**Do you know of some free, secure space (e.g. garage, spare room, office, shed)?**

We need to store some of our collections off-site. Please ask around your friends, family and contacts, and let us know!

## ROD'S REFLECTIONS

One evening in the early 1960s, a group of school radio club members visited a farm in the Fern Flats area, where the occupant was into electronics. He had built a television set using a 5 inch cathode ray tube — most likely an old war surplus radar display tube. The tube, of course, was circular but displayed a normal 3:4 ratio rectangular picture on its face OK.

For the technically minded, this would have been an electrostatically deflected picture tube. This type of tube is much easier to operate than the magnetically deflected tubes normally used in commercial televisions — which wouldn't have been available then anyway.

There was no television transmitter or repeater anywhere in this area; so an aerial on the top of an impressively high mast and on the Fern Flats elevated landscape just managed to pick up a scratchy signal directly from Mt Kaukau in Wellington. The picture was very snowy and the sound rather scratchy, and both tended to come and go a bit.



The program that night happened to be an early New Zealand icon — “Eggs with Kerr” (pronounced “with Care”). So the very first broadcast TV program I ever saw in New Zealand was a cooking program. Graham Kerr’s cooking programs went on to significant success in the USA.

Back here, there has been a constant procession of cooking shows on our TV screens, brought to us initially in glorious black & white with the arrival of the Whariti Transmitter. At that time, interference from Australian TV stations was common in Summer and sometimes we could even recognise what program was running on channel 0 in Melbourne.

Colour TV came to Auckland in time for the Commonwealth games in 1973. I think it was about a year later that Whariti got colour. Receivers were horrifically expensive; so I rented one for while. We would turn it on at lunch time for several weeks before the official colour start date, just to marvel at the test pattern of a flower in glorious colour. Some people claimed that they could see the colour from the new transmissions “leaking” through to the screens on their B&W sets, albeit somewhat faint. Some people have remarkable imaginations!

Later on — TV2 arrived. Before TV2, life was simple. On many sets, the channel changing knob wouldn't turn because it had never been moved from its initial TV1 setting. No-one ever had to make dreadful decisions about which channel to watch — there was only one, and we watched everything, from Basil Brush and Lamb Chop to The Untouchables — the original excuse to stay up really late. How different today.

## MARTON AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Membership application

- Individual (\$20)
- Couple or family (\$30)
- Junior - school age (\$10)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Attach payment and send to:  
Attn: Membership Officer  
Marton and District Historical Society  
PO Box 117  
Marton 4741

### Membership benefits include:

- ✓ Bi-monthly newsletter
- ✓ Access to Museum Archives
- ✓ Free entry to Museum Invites to all society events and activities
- ✓ Afternoon heritage talks
- ✓ Complimentary information about the local area
- ✓ Access to heritage training courses

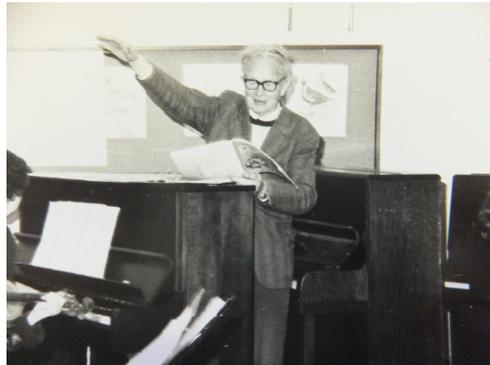
# A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

*From the Marton and District Historical Society Archives*

## On another note...

Alpha Centaurus Ramsay was a notable musician who contributed much to increasing the musical talent available in Marton. His musical talent was first expressed through playing the tenor horn, before moving onto his preferred instrument, the cello, as well as learning the pianoforte. He received formal instruction in the cello from Mr George Elwood in Wellington when he was 16.

He was an amazing musician in that he could turn his hand to playing almost any instrument – and had undertaken performances playing the piano and double bass, as well as the cello. One of the few instruments he had no affinity with was the bagpipes – although he enjoyed hearing these being played.



As a young man, he played in the orchestras that provided accompaniment to the silent films, recalling that sometimes the musicians became so engrossed in the film themselves that they forgot their cues.

He toured for three years with the NZ Airforce Band during World War II, performing for up to 10,000 troops at a time. The band also got to share the spotlight with Bob Hope and Betty Grable.

His enthusiasm for music saw many hurried lunch hours dashing between work and Rangitikei College to teach the school orchestra. Upon retirement, he turned this passion into a second career – teaching the school orchestra, as well as tutoring privately. To maintain the spark of interest in music for young students he would incorporate modern music, such as television theme tunes, into the programme.

Mr Ramsay managed the Marton Branch of Woolworths for 15 years, having spent 31 years with the firm before his retirement. He celebrated his golden wedding anniversary to Betty (nee Moorman) in February 1988. He passed away at home on 22 October 1997 in his 90<sup>th</sup> year.

**Would you like to see your family or business featured here?**

Contact Rebecca on 327 7288 or email [martonhist@ihug.co.nz](mailto:martonhist@ihug.co.nz)

## YES! WE HAVE NO BANANAS...

It was “America’s greatest song craze” in 1923. A unusual ditty penned by Frank Silver and Irving Cohn, was featured in the pantomime Dick Whittington.

The origin of the song is in some debate – perhaps in reference to the banana blight in Brazil, or popularised by a New York Greengrocer influencing the writers at the time.

During World War II the British Government banned banana imports for five years, and shopkeepers displayed signs stating “Yes! We have no Bananas” in their shop windows, in keeping with the war spirit.

The song was also the theme of protests in Belfast in 1932, with the song title also being used for a book about depression in Belfast.

The song contains seven extra choruses, with the final chorus:

*“Yes! We have no bananas; we have no bananas to-day.*

*This song isn’t pretty,*

*But still it’s a ditty*

*That grows on you day by day.*

*And you can all do something for us –*

*Just join in the chorus.*

*(Spoken) All together!*

*YES! We have no bananas; we have no bananas to-day.”*