



August 2020

Volume 4, Issue 2

Gore District Historical Society

# The Bulletin

## WELCOME

Dear Members,  
How wonderful to attend last month's Historic Society meeting and be together again after Covid 19 Lockdown. To quote French President Macron, "We're not up against another army or nation, but the enemy (Covid) is here, invisible, elusive."

We New Zealanders can be proud that we displayed such a cohesive national response to Level 4 Lockdown. This disruption to our formerly busy lives enabled a period of reflection and many have stated they enjoyed the experience. Discussion during our Down Memory Lane section of our last meeting revealed that we experienced great kindness while locked down and this kindness continues now that we are at Level 1. There was such generosity by those who delivered food & other necessities for the vulnerable who were unable to leave their homes, and the relatives, friends & neighbours who contacted by phone or by having shouted conversations from a distance. We all need social connectedness and while there were periods of loneliness for some, others welcomed a break from routine. We are thankful for our essential services workers who kept our country going despite personal risk. Research recorded in Science News "reveals there appears to be greater patriotism in New Zealand as most of us are of one mind. Some recall the same feelings existed during the Second World War.

We must not be complacent and maintain vigilance to avoid a resurgence of Covid 19. It is great to work together as we go through this piece of history.

Helen Seaton

President

GORE HISTORICAL MUSEUM AND THE HOKONUI HERITAGE RESEARCH CENTRE

Currently closed for redevelopment. To make contact please:

Phone: 03 208 7032 or

Email: [heritage@goredc.govt.nz](mailto:heritage@goredc.govt.nz)



Teddy bears featured in neighbourhood windows and further afield during the historic Covid-19 Lockdown. Check out the experiences of our members in this slice of living history.

*Image—Pinterest*

## FROM THE MUSEUM

The Museum is currently closed for redevelopment. A collection inventory is underway to establish cataloguing priorities over the coming months.

H & J Smith's—thought to be dated March 1913 around the opening of their purpose built Main Street store.

*Gore Museum Collection*  
A14.33c



*“We are not makers of history. We are made by history.”* Martin Luther King Jnr

### SPECIAL INVITATION.

All are invited to inspect our premises, and view our immense display of beautiful goods.

We will esteem it a pleasure to show you through, and to sell, if so desired, any article in the establishment.

All goods marked at what is our rule, Dominion's lowest prices always.

A most important point, and one never to be lost sight of, is the always lowest price.

We try every day, but our try increases more and more as it spreads into the thoughts and actions of our staff, as each pair of hands and eyes is intelligently added to the effort. To do things better to-day than they were done yesterday.

**Come to this Big Helpful Store.**

**H. & J. SMITH, Ltd.,**

MANUFACTURERS AND DIRECT IMPORTERS  
Gore and Invercargill

*Mataura Ensign 20 March 1913*



## H&J Smith's in Gore

Siblings Helen and John Smith expanded their department store business to Gore in 1905 following a successful 'pop-up' shop. John ran the business in Gore while Helen remained overseeing the Invercargill business. The first shop was in a prime spot, opposite the railway station. In March 1913, a cornerstone of Gore's Main Street, H&J's opened their purpose built store. Almost immediately it was inundated by flood waters that smashed the plate glass windows and ran through the store at a height of 4foot. In 1942 two staff members, standing outside the building, were severely injured when a plane involved in a mock evacuation exercise crashed in the Main Street. On a lighter note, the building was venue in 1954 to Queen Elizabeth II when she was hosted by the Gore Women's Club in their rooms upstairs. H&J's has provided employment for numerous locals with many women having their only work experience there prior to marriage and/or children.

## NZ SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS—GORE

The NZSG Gore monthly meetings include a speaker or a demonstration relating to family history / genealogical research. Visits to other repositories are a frequent highlight. The group welcomes those working on a genealogical / family history project, offering their support and assistance. Meetings: First Tuesday/month 7pm @ Gore Visitor Centre [Speaker/demonstration begins at 8pm].

Please note that the Visitor Centre is now located at the Maruawai Centre (the former Salvation Army Shop).

# H. & J. Smith

Have now ARRIVED IN GORE, where they have opened a Permanent Branch in Main Street,

**Nearly Opposite the Railway Station.**

Owing to our ever-increasing business we have found it necessary to open a Branch, and will be pleased to see our many friends and customers, who can rely on receiving every attention. **INSPECTION INVITED.**

H. & J. SMITH are Manufacturers and Importers of  
**Ladies', Gentlemen's, and Children's Outfitting,**

All of which are being sold at first cost, thereby abolishing the middleman's profit.

## H. & J. SMITH,

MAIN STREET, GORE, AND INVERCARGILL.

*Mataura Ensign 6 May 1905*



A rare 1940s photo of Gore's Main Street in the 1940s

## COVID-19—LOCKDOWN

### LIVING HISTORY

*At the July 2020 Room Meeting of the Gore District Historical Society reminisced about their experiences during the Covid19 Lockdown:*

*Helen Seaton* - Although living in separate houses Helen and friend Julie formed a 'Bubble' and met up at the end of each day, each supplying their own refreshments and glass or mug while sitting a distance apart at Helen's house. Light hearted banter, laughter and talking about the day. Grocery shopping was done by kind friends who braved queues at supermarkets while observing the distance rule.

*Peter Fettes* - Peter spoke of the kindness and thoughtfulness people displayed towards each other during Lockdown and beyond. This was endorsed by other members.

*Adrienne Rogers* - Adrienne's extended family embarked on a project of painting stones.

*Bonnie Leonard* - "Loved it!", and spoke of the freedom of being in her robe all day with no risk of unexpected visitors.

*Jeanette O'Hara* - Lockdown caused little change to her life on the farm. However the lack of traffic saw many cyclists on the road near the farm with a particularly pleasing scene of a cycling family with two older sons ahead and Dad supporting the littlest one as he rode at the back of the pack.

*Avis McDonald* - welcomed the time to continue writing & researching the Finlayson book which she had begun six years before. When she rang people for telephone interviews, they were all at home because of Lockdown. Avis said she would have liked Lockdown to have continued for a longer time.

*Pat Kirby* - her son who lives in Australia had encouraged her to enter Lockdown 2 weeks before the official date as he was concerned for her safety. This son has a significant birthday in October but is unlikely to be able to enter New Zealand to celebrate because of Covid 19. Her other son who lives in England was unable to travel here in March as planned.

Pat's sister passed away in England since Lockdown. Technical communication devices have been used to the full.

*Bill Keown* - traffic on the main highway near Bill's place was mostly in the form of huge trucks, The usual large number of cars dwindled during Lockdown.

*Ross Dickie* - said that the apprehension felt as Covid-19 invaded our country and much of the world, mirrored that felt by people during WW2.

*Mary Johnstone* - agreed with other members that kindness and thoughtfulness had increased since we became a group of 5 million.

*Ellen Chalmers* - felt a bit lonely as her daughter retrieved the shopping list from the Ellen's letter box and later deposited the groceries at the gate. On the good side, Ellen's 5 children rang her on a roster system thus meaning she received at least 5 calls per day.

## LOCKDOWN CONTINUED...

*Heather Walker*— said “It didn’t phase me. I read lots of books, had lots of phone calls and my son got my groceries.” She also enjoyed seeing lots of dogs, big ones, small ones and some dressed up dogs being taken for walks past her home. Since the end of Lockdown with people returning to work, there are only one or two dogs being walker per day. She reckons the dogs loved Lockdown.

*Mairie Wilkinson*—With possums invading her garden, and also invading her neighbour’s property, Mairie (who had been looking at old recipes) said to the neighbour, “I’ve got a recipe for possum pie!” Neither of them has baked that pie.

*Rosalie McLean and her grandson Aiden*—together they showed pictures of teddy bears. Rosalie’s teddy bears had featured in Lockdown, looking out the window at people walking by. Aiden said he and his brothers had gathered up branches at Grandma’s during Lockdown.



Image by Scott Hammond—Stuff

*Margaret Pullar*—said that Lockdown brought memories of WW2 with accompanying rules. Her father was in charge of checking 16 houses to ensure blackout was obeyed. There was rationing of food, and they did not go out because of petrol rationing. She recalls picking for ergot for wounded soldiers and rosehip berries to provide vitamin C for babies. They also made fruit cakes which were sewn into flour bags to send to the troops.

*Winnie Grant*—said “I had a blast!” Winnie had her 92nd birthday during Lockdown. On the big day, before she was out of bed, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren put notices on the fence saying ‘TOOT FOR NANA WINNIE—92 TODAY!’ Cars tooted, people came down her drive, some she knew and some not, and Winnie leaned over the balcony to talk to them while obeying the distance rule. Someone likened her to the Queen, so she put on her pearls and continued to be Queen for the Day. She received a card from some children (writing done by their mother), which said ‘Dear Winnie, you don’t know us, but we saw the sign.’ And wished her Happy Birthday.

### HERITAGE SOUTH TRUST

#### Annual General Meeting & Archaeological Presentation

Southlanders are invited to attend a screening of the trailer for the Invercargill’s CBD documentary *The Last Tour* and a presentation by a consultant archaeologist about the interesting discoveries being made during the demolition for Invercargill’s inner city development. These presentations will be made in conjunction with the Trust’s AGM and will be followed by refreshments.

The trailer for, *The Last Tour*, by Marolyn Diver-Dudfield of Pouaki Films and funded by is a taster for a documentary which will focus on the interesting stories and historical features of the CBD development block, recreating the walking tours that have been a regular feature of Heritage

Date: **Tuesday 1 Sept**

Time: **AGM 7.00pm**

**Presentation 7.30pm**

Where: **Southland Women’s Club, 194 Esk Street, Invercargill**

A koha at the door for refreshments will be welcomed

**RSVP is essential as limited**

**numbers:** Phone

0211463739 or email

southlandheritageforum@gmail.com

## DIARY DATES

### Gore District Historical Society Room Meeting

10 Aug – AGM with guest speaker Margaret Pullar

14 Sept— Linda McMillan

Oct—details tbc

9 Nov— Speaker tbc

Dec— Outing, details tbc

### Other dates:

1 Sept—Heritage South Trust (see p3 for details)

## QUEEN'S VISIT

H&J Smith's decision to downsize has presented a shock to the people of Gore and surrounds. The Queen's visit in January 1954 when she and the Duke of Edinburgh were hosted by the Gore Women's Club in their rooms upstairs at Smith's was a great event.

The Gore District Historical Society, assisted by the Gore Women's Club, will be performing a re-enactment of this visit at the Maruawai Centre in October (date and time to be confirmed). This will be an evening event and will replace our usual October Room Meeting.



## From the Ensign files 5 August 1890

**Obituary—Mr Alex McNab** -tralia in 1839. He saw the progress he only required to be  
There died at Invercargill yes- of Australasia almost from its infan- known to be thoroughly well  
terday morning one of the pio- cy. In 1855 he came over to New liked. Mrs McNab prede-  
ners of the colony and one Zealand saying "I want to be as far ceased her husband, and of a  
who had a very large stake in- away as I can from settlement" family of 13 only five sons  
deed in the Gore district. Mr knowing full well that the pastoral- new survive, the parents  
Alex. McNab was born in 1809 ist must in time make way for the losing six of their offspring in  
on his father's sheep farm in farmer. He selected Croydon and six weeks. The eldest, Mr  
Argyleshire, and there received Knapdale runs. He took considera- Robert McNab, is now prac-  
an elaborate training in the ble interest in politics and partly tising as a solicitor in Inver-  
management of stock. But the through his exertions a distinct cargill.  
lands were limited and Mr Council was granted to Southland.  
McNab was determined upon Beneath a somewhat rough exterior  
striking out for himself in Aus- there was a warm heart—indeed,

[Abridged]

## Gore District Historical Society

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Editor: Stephanie Herring

Curator—Gore Historical Museum

## ABOUT US

Would you like to learn more about our past?  
Visit historical sites in Southland & Otago?

Join us for our monthly Room Meetings where:

- Guest speakers regularly join us to share their historical knowledge
- We share our own local historical knowledge
- We explore the district on guided bus trips
- We visit historical sites and related events
- We close with a traditional cup of tea and a natter

### Room Meetings

#### All Welcome

2pm - second Monday of the Month

St Andrews Church Hall

Contact: Helen Seaton 208 1379  
Research Centre 208 7032