

HISTORIC PLACES

HAWKE'S BAY

HERITAGE NEWS

AUGUST 2020

A history of the hastings

POWER STATION PG4

Ongaonga's Spitfire - Pg11





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Join Historic Places Hawke's Bay today!

Join us to support us in our local heritage advocacy, and to help nationally through our parent body Historic Places Aotearoa. We organise member activities, including visits to heritage homes and historic sites, talks on related topics, and other events. We keep our members informed on heritage matters and our activities through our local newsletters and Historic Places Aotearoa publishes an occasional national newsletter, Oculus.

Call Philip on 06 870 0513 for our membership application.



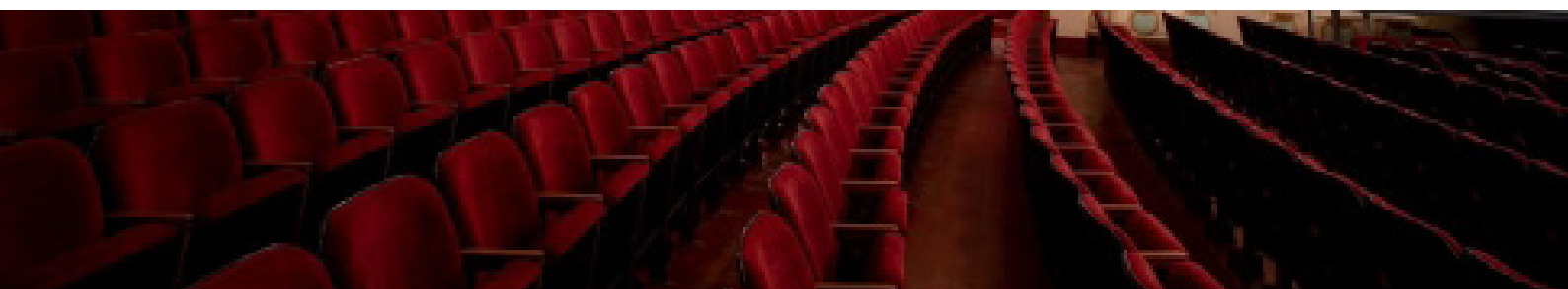
Historic Places Hawke's Bay Annual General Meeting 2020

Your opportunity to enjoy a look inside the recently restored Hawke's Bay Opera House.

This year's AGM will be held in the Cushing Foyer of Toitoti on Sunday 23rd August at 2pm. The Programme includes the formal AGM followed by a talk on the history of the building concluding with afternoon tea.

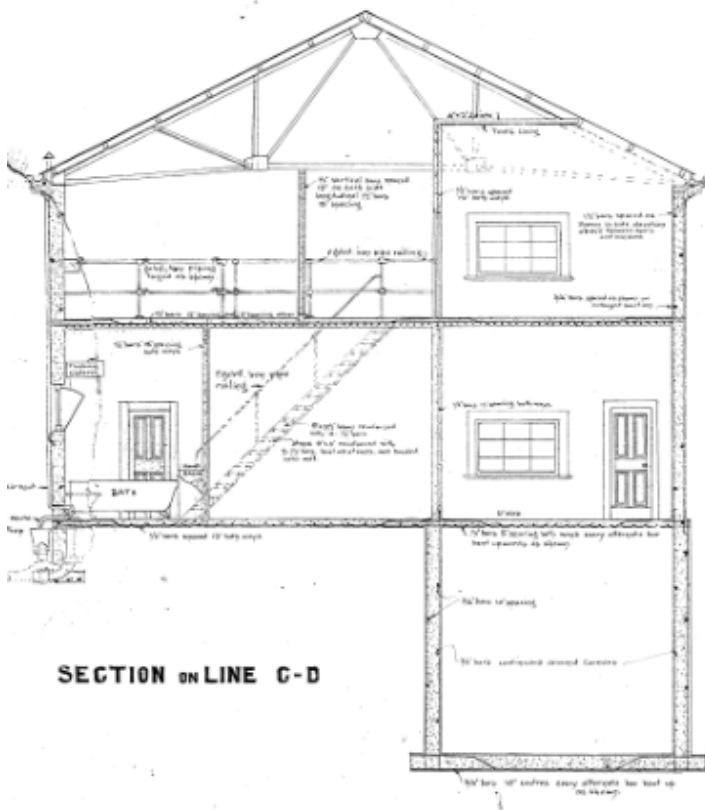
For catering purposes, we would be grateful for an RSVP from those planning to attend. Please contact The Secretary, Philip Irwin, phone 06 870 0513 or e-mail philipirwin@xtra.co.nz

We look forward to seeing you there on the day.



The Story of the Hastings Power Station

By Denis Pilkington



Cross section through the front of the building showing the water tank under the floor viewed from the rear. (Note other longitudinal cross sections indicate the tank is square).

Electricity first came to Hawke's Bay in 1892 with the establishment of the Mokopeka hydro-electric power station on the Maraetotara River built by John Chambers to power his house, woolshed and water pump. This plant is still operational today. With increased interest in electricity from the early 20th century the Hasting Borough Council along with other Hawke's Bay local authorities looked to the government to build a hydro-electric scheme at Waikaremoana. Although the government had previously taken full control of hydro-electric development, restrictive overseas borrowing policies, priority for railway development and World War I all conspired to delay the opening of the first major North Island power stations until the 1920s. In the meantime, local bodies wanting electricity supply had to provide their own. The Hastings Borough had gas reticulation from 1887 and an electricity supply was investigated from 1906.

The power station opened in 1912 after hydro-electric dam sites on the Tuki Tuki and Ngaruroro rivers, and a gas-powered generating plant had been all been considered as alternatives. The station was powered by 2 Mirrlees diesel engine powered generators with a total power output of 200kW. There were 29 consumers. Under the floor of the building there was a water reservoir with two large pumps supplying the borough. Electricity was also supplied to Havelock North, but the supply proved restricted and unreliable leading the Havelock North Town Board to develop their own hydro-electric scheme on the Maraetotara Falls, which opened in 1922.

The power station initially supplied via direct current. Increasing demand required additional generating plant including 2 alternating current generators. By 1925 there were 6 generating units in operation with

a total output of 1,087kW, being 567 kW DC and 520 kW AC. Production cost of electricity was 2.3 pence per kWh (about \$1.00 per kWh in today's terms) with consumers paying threepence to ninepence per kWh (\$1.47 to \$4.40 per kWh today).

The Hawke's Bay Electric Power Board was constituted in 1924 as part of the implementation of central government policy to provide rural areas with an electric power supply. In 1927 the Board started supplying much cheaper electricity to Hastings from the new Government-operated Mangahao hydro-electric power station in the Tararua Ranges near Shannon. This supply was often overloaded requiring the power station to remain on standby for operation during periods of electricity shortage, which was alleviated to some extent when the larger Tuai hydroelectric station opened at Waikaremoana in 1929.



The building in 2016 showing an extension on the right

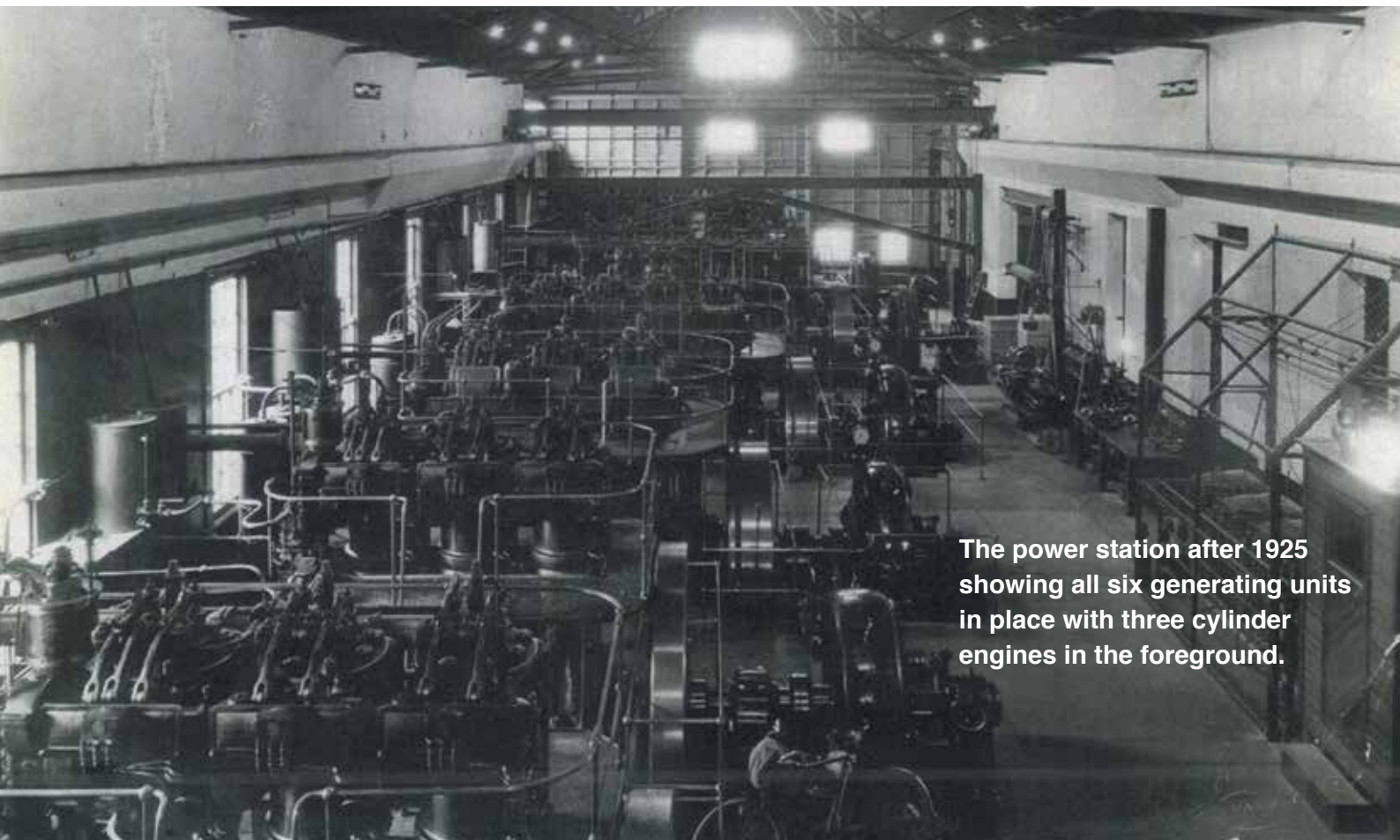
When the Hawke's Bay earthquake struck in February 1931, the Redclyffe substation near Taradale was badly damaged and unable to supply electricity. Although the Hastings power station had some damage, it was still able to operate and was used to maintain water pressure for firefighting. Even after the water main from Havelock North was brought down with the Ngaruroro bridge collapse in an aftershock it was still possible to supply water from the wells near the power station building.

The power station continued to supply electricity for some time after the earthquake until the Redclyffe sub station was fully repaired. Until the 1940s, and probably beyond, the Hastings power station served as a standby supply to augment the supply during national power shortages.

The power station was gradually dismantled with the last 320 kW unit finally taken out of service in 1964. The Hawke's Bay Power Board continued to

operate their mechanical and electrical workshop in the building until 1988 and the electricity control room until about 1990. The building also continued to be used as part of the Hastings water supply system until the 1980s. Commercial redevelopment of the building in 2015 has included installation of a window in the floor at the front of the building so that the original water reservoir can be viewed below the floor. The Wallace Development Company was responsible for the restoration and redevelopment of this building, which had no heritage protection either nationally or locally and could easily have faced demolition without the vision and awareness of the value of the building's features shown by the owner.

***A more detailed version of this history
is available from the Editor,
Denis Pilkington:
denis.pilkington@gmail.com***



**The power station after 1925
showing all six generating units
in place with three cylinder
engines in the foreground.**

A Very Old House



On Sunday 19 July many people took the opportunity to visit Scinde Island House, one of Napier's oldest homes situated in Brewster Street. The open home arranged by owner Matthew Bonnett as part of the Decodence event organised by a group of Art Deco enthusiasts provided the opportunity to visit a number of heritage homes in Napier and Hastings.

Matthew also publicised the open home to Historic Places Hawke's Bay members, and generously made the decision that all proceeds from entry by donation would go to our organisation. The response was overwhelming, and Matthew almost talked himself hoarse telling the constant stream of visitors the story of his home and his imaginative restoration project. Matthew has spent, literally, years painstakingly restoring the house to its original condition creating a fascinating living museum which was enjoyed by the many visitors. Thanks to Matthew's creativity, we have benefitted by some \$300 from this event.



A display of archaeological material.
Photos: Facebook, posted by
Nitrous Harley.

Scinde Island House was built in 1867 as the family home of Napier photographer, hotelier, brewer, and Mayor, George Swan.

This was our first post Covid event for the year and flowing on from the AGM on 23rd of August look out for more activities for members.

One wing of the Maraekakaho Church Hall.

It was reported in Hawke's Bay Today, 8th August 2020, that funding from the Provincial Growth Fund has been announced for the Maraekakaho Church Hall for maintenance and restoration.



Our Hawke's Bay Heritage Network Completes its Sixth Year

We were welcomed by our Chairperson, Barbara Arnott who outlined our most recent project to compile a comprehensive background research document on 47 heritage properties and six precincts for listing in Napier as part of the current District Plan Review process. Barbara also described how an agreement has now been reached with the Hastings District Council to carry out a similar project in their area and it is hoped that this work might ultimately extend to the Central Hawke's Bay and Wairoa Districts.

Katrina Barrett reviewed the current activities of the Hawke's Bay Digital Archive otherwise known as the Hawke's Bay Knowledge Bank. After eight years of operation the Knowledge Bank continues to be very busy with more volunteers being added to the existing team of 90 to work their way through a backlog of 200 collections waiting to be digitised for on line access. The work is being helped with six new computers donated by local businesses, one new server, three scanners and a new camera for photographing maps and other large documents.

Not all volunteers work on site, but even so the operation is starting to outgrow its home at Stoneycroft and it is possible that the organisation could extend its operation to additional sites, possibly in Napier or Central Hawke's Bay.

Prior to the meeting members had been asked to identify one place (building or site) that is not currently recognised or protected that their group values. The Knowledge Bank volunteers chose the Willowpark Lodge built in 1884 in Hastings as a bank and now in need of major restoration.

Paddy Bailey spoke on behalf of the Hawke's Bay Founders' Society and their national body of which she is the President. Local membership is now 160+ which probably makes it our strongest local heritage society and the biggest Founders' branch in New Zealand. The society runs various activities for members and encourages them to follow up areas of historic interest. Their next outing will be to Wairoa. They also run an annual school essay contest and have undertaken various other local projects. Truly a very strong organisation.

Barbara Herbert spoke on behalf of the Heritage Trails Committee. They are currently working on the Clive trail and in the process of editing a large amount of historical information to condense into a trail brochure. The Farndon Trail released two years ago with a limited print run has recently been revised and reprinted to accommodate the new road from Mangateretere to Pakowhai through Whakatu. The next step will be revision of trails in Central Hawke's Bay and maybe then on to Wairoa. The committee is also looking at a "portmanteau" brochure highlighting the full range of trails in Hawke's Bay.

A new group to join us at the network meeting this year is the Maraekakaho Church Hall Trust, who were represented by their Chairman, Jonathan Stockley. In spite of being situated in an important heritage area the hall is not listed by Heritage New Zealand or the Hastings District Council and is not included on the local Heritage Trail. Recent research by the Trust disclosed that the original part of the hall dates back to 1877 and they have managed to find old photographs and other material that has helped to clarify the history of the hall. They are



Ongaonga's Spitfire

currently working towards renovating and restoring the building which will involve major fundraising. A website and Facebook page are helping to raise the profile of the hall and increase the number of bookings.

Hawke's Bay Genealogy represented by Margaret De La Haye remains very active. They maintain a website and other social media outlets, a regular newsletter and search engines in the Napier and Hastings Libraries. They continue to assist local people with research and the latest fad, DNA collection. They maintain a base at Stoneycroft.

Joyce Barry and Ruth Vincent spoke about Landmarks, now in its 20th year. Their aim is to increase the community's self-image and sense of pride and identity which includes local history and heritage. They also provide a community voice for Council projects. Apart from regular history talks and newsletters they also maintain a Facebook page. They alerted us to an upcoming unveiling in Landmarks Square to celebrate the work of founder, Jeremy Dwyer. They acknowledged Hastings District Council support in preserving and enhancing local heritage buildings.

Michael Fowler, the Chairman of the Art Deco Trust, also acknowledged good work by the Hastings District Council in promoting façade enhancement of heritage buildings. On the other hand, he commented on reduced support from the Napier City Council over the last six years. In spite of the continuing success of the Art Deco Festivals and the huge financial turnover they generate Michael commented that the Trust actually makes very little money from them. Under Michael's leadership the Trust has just completed a major financial restructuring exercise aimed at securing the Trust's operation into the future. This could involve extending its operation into Hastings. They are currently moving to appoint a Heritage Manager, a position that has been vacant for some time, to continue the past good work initially instigated by Robert McGregor, to ensure heritage building retention and enhancement in Napier.

Hastings District Council Planner, Rowan Wallace spoke about his role as part of the Environmental Policy Team where heritage is a major focus this year. He noted that the District Plan is now fully electronic now known as the E-Plan and they are now working to provide more information about properties listed in it. They are also working on incorporation of Nation

Planning Standards imposed by the Government through the Resource Management Act. Historic Places Hawke's Bay are about to start a research project in conjunction with the Council to identify heritage properties that could be added to the list of heritage sites in then Plan. He noted that listing requires the support of heritage property owners. To this end liaison will be maintained with owners of properties being researched for prospective listing and in some cases it might be necessary to limit the available details of some properties to protect the privacy of owners.

There was also some discussion about notable trees and it was noted that any notable tree can be listed in Hastings whereas in Napier listing is confined to trees on Council-owned properties.

Michael's Pick - HB Farmers Co-op Garage Building

The Ongaonga Historical Society represented by Dennis Schaw remains very active. Their current priority is fundraising to complete the restoration of the Coles' joinery factory to bring it back to full working order. The very successful Victorian Market held last year is to be repeated on September 20th as a major fundraiser for the restoration of the Coles' building. The Society has various other projects in progress including construction of a hangar for a 2/3 scale model of a Spitfire flown by Hawke's Bay man, Max Collett during World War II. An interesting piece of history for visitors to Ongaonga to follow up.

Other Hawke's Bay Projects mentioned on the night included an application to the Provincial Growth Fund, through Historic Places Aotearoa for production of English style blue plaques to mark



historic sites. If successful this project could be run in conjunction with Heritage Trails.

Joyce Barry also raised the question of what can be done to preserve the increasing number of vacant churches which are often significant historical landmarks in our communities.

Barbara Arnott concluded the meeting with the comment that Historic Places Hawke's Bay are keen to maintain the Heritage Network and Historic Places Hawke's Bay will be looking toward programme suggestions for next year's meeting.



**The Knowledge Bank's Pick –
Willowpark Lodge**

