

STONEYCROFT & CACCIA-BIRCH HOUSE

What Do These Two properties Have In Common?

Stoneycroft, the grand home built by William Birch of Erewhon is a prominent landmark in Hastings. The property was purchased by the Hastings District Council from the Ballantyne Estate in 2005 and has been fully restored to become the home of the Knowledge Bank operated by the Hawke's Bay Digital Archives Trust. William Birch built *Stoneycroft* in about 1875 as his town house. He had bought land on the Napier – Taihape Road in 1860 and developed the *Erewhon* Station there with his brother Azim.



Stoneycroft, Hastings.

William Birch's nephew, William Birch Caccia came to New Zealand to work with his uncle at *Erewhon*. William Birch and his wife had no children and it was William Birch Caccia who took over the property when his uncle retired, reversing the order of his names to become William Caccia-Birch.

William Caccia-Birch initially established a town house in the Marton area but in 1921, when he and his wife Maud retired to live in Palmerston North, they bought *Woodhey*. Jacob Nannestad, one of the sawmillers who had felled the Hokowhitu forest, had built this grand house for his family in 1895, beside the Hokowhitu Lagoon, and it was later owned by the Strang family who leased it to the Crown from 1908 to 1910 to serve as the official residence of the Governor, Lord Plunket and his family, after Parliament Buildings in Wellington were destroyed by fire.



Caccia-Birch House, Palmerston North.

After William Caccia-Birch died in 1936, *Woodhey* was put on the market but no buyers were forthcoming and eventually the family gifted *Woodhey* to the government "for use in the war effort". The house passed through a number of institutional uses: as a training centre for Home Guard officers in World War II; from 1945 as a convalescent home for nurses who had served in the war; and from 1964 as the base for Palmerston North's tertiary institutions, with both the Teachers' Training College and Massey University using the house until the early 1970s. Thereafter the house fell into disrepair and by 1983, when ownership was transferred to the Palmerston North City Council, it was in a very run down state. In 1991 restoration began and the building, now known as Caccia-Birch House, is managed by a trust board for the Council. There are probably many people in Hawke's Bay who have attended conferences, weddings, or other business and social events there in recent years.

It is a happy coincidence that the Birch family have owned two fine urban properties that people in Hawke's Bay and Manawatu can still use and enjoy into the future under local council ownership. Hastings Mayor, Lawrence Yule recently remarked that following its restoration, "Stoneycroft should last forever."

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



We thought that it was Hastings' turn to be the location of our AGM this year, and it was held on 7 September. What we needed, was an interesting heritage building with facilities such as meeting room, chairs, tables and kitchen, and most of all a history to interest us all. St Matthew's fulfilled all our expectations and a phone call to Betty Carding, Archivist for the church, made everything possible.

Although, Betty was unable to attend she left us in the very capable hands of Tim Anderson, principal of St Matthew's School to give us an entertaining talk on the history. Graham Linwood was the architect who had been involved with the restoration project and we were lucky to have him and Tim join us as we walked around the church.

Over 45 members were present – excellent attendance considering our membership is slightly over 100. All of the committee stood again for re-election, with the addition of Beverley Fullerton-Smith.

The comments made afterwards were from many happy members who had enjoyed the afternoon, exclaimed over the building and delighted over the spectacular windows.

Rose Mohi
COMMITTEE MEMBER



VIEWS OF ST MATTHEWS CHURCH, HASTINGS

Photographs by the late Peter Hallett, from the book 'SPANISH MISSION HASTINGS', available from the Art Deco Centre, Napier.



ANNUAL REPORT

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 2010/14 YEAR

Membership: Following our formation in November 2012 membership had climbed to 45 by last year's AGM and now stands at 105 including 29 family memberships.

Newsletters: Two newsletters were circulated to members during the year. The society's brochure was also updated and can be seen on the website.

The Website: A brief history of the Napier Beacons was posted on our page of the Historic Places Aotearoa website in May. A history of the Maraekakaho Woolshed has since been added.

Membership Activities: These included the AGM hosted by the Knowledge Bank at Stoneycroft, a bus trip to Central Hawke's Bay in November, a film evening at the Century Theatre run in conjunction with MTG and the National Film Archive in June and an afternoon at Keirunga Gardens in July which included a talk from Georgina White highlighting the history of Dr Robert Felkin and the Havelock Work.

Interpretive Signs: An ongoing activity which this year included the placing of a sign on the Napier Technical College site in conjunction with Napier Boys High Archivist, Phillip Rankine. The sign was unveiled by Napier Mayor, Bill Dalton in May. We are also working with the Duart House Society on a Hastings District Council funded sign at Duart House in Havelock North.

Heritage Advocacy: We made a submission to the Napier City annual plan seeking extension of the GIS aerial photograph system to include older aerial photographs which received a positive reception. We were also successful in gaining a small annual project grant from the Council. We also made a submission to a resource consent application to erect a large apartment building next to the former Napier Soldiers Club Building on the Napier Marine Parade. There was also a submission in conjunction with The Art Deco Trust on the redevelopment of the former Napier Hospital site seeking incorporation of an Inner Harbour lookout and the use of hospital ward names for any new streets and buildings on the site.

Historic Places Aotearoa: Growth of our national umbrella body, Historic Places Aotearoa has been slow and we participated in a national workshop to explore ways to get more local societies to affiliate. This programme will be further discussed at the AGM of HPA in Wellington in November.

AN INVITATION TO JOIN US

Historic Places Hawke's Bay is your regional heritage preservation organisation. It is working to protect Hawke's Bay's important heritage, to provide information and to organise bus tours to historic places,

Our objectives are to –

- Promote the identification, protection, preservation, conservation and advocacy of historic and cultural heritage in the society's area generally for the benefit of present and future communities and generations.
- Promote the education of the public in its appreciation of heritage values.
- Work in conjunction with Historic Places Aotearoa Incorporated (HPA), other regional societies, local and central government agencies to create better understanding and importance of heritage in the Society's area.
- Actively promote participation in heritage events, historic tours and educational seminars.
- Do any act or thing incidental to the attainment of the above objects.

The society's area of concern includes the Wairoa District Council, Napier City Council, Hastings District Council and Central Hawke's Bay District Council.

Subscriptions are:

Single	\$30
Family (includes two children)	\$45
Corporate	\$100
Lifetime	\$300

To join, phone 870 0513 to request an application form or go to

<http://historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz/join-hpa-2/>

H B HERITAGE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF HISTORIC PLACES HAWKE'S BAY (Inc)

NOVEMBER 2014

EXPLORE THE NAPIER-TAIHAPE ROAD
SUNDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2014

This trip will take in historic sites on the Taihape Road as far as Kuripapango. Along the way we will visit The Church of St John at Omahu, Waiwhenua homestead, established by Horace Shield, and Tunanui, originally the home of Major General Sir Andrew Russell. The tour will be led by local historian, Pat Parsons who was a contributor to the history of the area, "West to the Annie". Pat will be pointing out a number of sites of historical interest along the way. Morning and afternoon tea and a light picnic lunch will be provided. There will be an opportunity for a short walk from the lunch venue so come prepared for a day in the country.

Coaches depart from -

Taradale: Pettigrew-Green Arena at 8.00am.
Hastings: Stoneycroft, Omahu Road at 8.20am.
(Parking available on the property)
Returning at approximately 5.00pm).

Cost, including lunch: \$70 pp (members of HPHB)
\$80 pp (non-members)
(\$10 discount if you join with your payment.)

Further enquiries to Denis Pilkington, 835 6525, or Susan Lopdell, 844 6698.

Name:

Address:

Phone: Payment \$..... for.....seats

Please reply with your pickup point ASAP to Coach Tour, 2 Arthur Close, Clive 4102, before 31 October 2013. Alternatively payment can be made by direct credit to HBS Bank 031355 0727668 00 but please phone the Secretary so that he can confirm your booking.

We hope you can join us.

Preferred pick-up point:
Taradale ☐ Stoneycroft ☐



Tuna Nui

FAREWELL

It's time to say farewell to an old friend - the Albert Hotel which has been a part of central Hastings since 1882. The Albert Hotel survived the 1931 earthquake and two fires in the Hastings business area, in 1893 and 1895. It was built for publican William Young Bennett who was born in Tasmania and spent time in the Victorian goldfields. He followed gold to Otago and then joined the Colonial Defence Force, under which he was posted to Hawke's Bay



The hotel closed in 2009 when the Durney Land Company went into liquidation and was bought by the present owner in 2012. Demolition is expected to start before Christmas.