

Community Newsletter no: 143 March 2023

Kia ora and greetings Kaikōura,

We hope 2023 has got off to a great start for you. It took off at speed here and I can't quite believe it's time for our annual community newsletter already. Due to soaring costs we have not been able to get this printed for every household this year, so we would really appreciate your help in getting this out to as many people as possible. If you get this electronically please feel free to share it far and wide. We will be posting it onto our website and sharing the link through our community networks, as well as printing some copies to put in public spaces. Perhaps you could print a few copies for your elderly neighbours or others you know who don't have internet. Another idea would be to print some out for your customers if you run a business. Together let's see how far we can get this. It'll be like an old school chain letter!

This year our activities have been all about collections: conservation projects, future proofing our collection processes and access, organising our storage to accommodate more collections, repatriation of some taonga collections and also a fun project recording the collections and stories of a well-known community collector.



Collection care

We are nearing the end of a big project replacing the various liquids in the marine collection specimen jars to ensure their ongoing preservation. This has been a joint effort with Jan McKenzie from University of Canterbury's School of Biological Sciences. A thank you also to Kaikoura High School for the use of their science lab. This is a favourite collection with visitors so we we're working hard to get it back on display.

Left: Latreilopsis petterdi - Antlered crab

Collecting history of a local collector's collections

Bev Elliott is an avid collector and documenter of our region's landscapes and its natural inhabitants, with particular focus on birds, fossils, rocks and shells. With funding from KDC's Community Grants scheme we engaged local photographer, Dan Kerins, to capture images of Bev and her collections, while we recorded some of her life stories. We plan to create an exhibition of the photographs and stories later in the year to celebrate Bev's life and work, and so the community can learn from her commitment to protecting the environment and her passion for our natural wildlife.



Above: Bev at home in her shell room

Collective Effort Required for New Surfing Exhibition

The distinctive geography of the ocean bed along our coastline means Kaikōura is one of the most consistent and enticing surf regions in New Zealand. These waves started attracting visitors to Kaikōura from the early 1960s, making surfers some of our earliest tourists. These people helped shape, and continue to influence, the social fabric, culture and economic life in Kaikōura. However, their stories are mostly untold, and their impact largely unrecognised. The new exhibition, opening in late spring, will be a fun exploration of the history of surfing in Kaikōura, while also encompassing the wider topics of Te Ao Maori, oceanography, environment, and the interconnection of these elements.



Above: Surfing at Mangamaunu, from the Brian Betts collection

To bring this to life we will need your help and we are very interested to hear from anyone with stories, photos, film footage or any other items that will help tell the stories of surfing in Kaikōura. We are especially interested in the earlier years from 1960s to 1990s. Please contact us if you think you can loan or donate content or items for this exciting new exhibition. This is being developed with the support of funding from Lotteries and the Aotearoa Gaming Trust. We are grateful for their backing and encouragement.

Out with the old...

Sometimes even a Museum has to get rid of old stuff. It has served us well but it's definitely time to retire our collection database. After a mammoth effort we are now ready transfer over 45,000 collection records over to a new platform, e-Hive. This will give us more efficient access, and allow us to do more, with the information we have on the historic items that we hold on behalf of Kaikōura. Down the track we will also be able to share more of our collection online so that it can be enjoyed by more people and beyond the walls of the Museum. This was made possible through funding from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage via Te Papa National Services Te Paerangi. Thank you so much; this is a big step in modernising our practices and ensuring access into the future.

Support local heritage and culture and get the warm feels all year long

You may have noticed that all of the projects highlighted above have involved external funding. Looking after heritage assets, and showcasing history, is expensive work and getting more expensive by the day! We simply could not do these things without this financial backing, and securing funds is an unending quest. It was important for us to keep our entrance fees at current rates so that we remain within reach of our community and visitors to Kaikōura. You can help us with our mission by renewing or joining as a Museum member (fees also remain the same this year), making a donation and promoting us among your friends and family. So pop into the Museum or head to our website to renew or sign up for this year, which runs until March 31 2024. Memberships are great value and we even have a special new category for businesses. <https://kaikoura-museum.co.nz/product/membership/>

Congratulations to the Kaikōura Fire Brigade on their flash new station. In recognition of this we have compiled a bit of early history of this longstanding and vital community service.

Steph and the Museum team

THE KAIKOURA VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE – A short history

Notes taken from “Fifty Not Out” and “75 Not Out” by Grahame Elson

The Beginning

On October 24th, 1935, a meeting was held for the purpose of forming a Volunteer Fire Brigade in Kaikoura. A committee consisting of E. Flower, H. Hayward, H. Harrison, D. Jack, and S. Allan was appointed to investigate ways of financing and equipping a fire brigade. For the next few years the brigade appears to have been self-governing, its finances relying entirely on donations and fund raising schemes, and spending being proposed and sanctioned at regular meetings. In July 1936 subscriptions were sent to the United Fire Brigades Association and this brought the brigade under their umbrella and rules. With the passing of the Fire Service Act 1975, the Kaikoura Volunteer Fire Brigade became part of a truly N.Z. National Fire Service.

A Home of its Own

From the first meeting held at the picture theatre, the brigade met and stored its appliances in a variety of venues. Among these were, Rink Taxis Garage 1936-1939, the Takahanga pavilion until 1942, then Hayward and Wright’s premises until 1945 when, after countless discussions and a lot of hard work, the brigade moved into a “home of its own” at the junction of Torquay and Killarney Street. Originally the town library, the brigade’s men converted the building into a functional but comfortable headquarters with the only draw-back being that, until the end of its fire brigade life in 1967, it never had a toilet.

“A home of our own” was also coined by C.F.O Hayward at the opening of the new fire station on the Esplanade on Saturday, 9th December 1967. The Esplanade station has served as the base for the fire brigade since that time.



A1994-534-600-02a
Kaikoura Fire Station (21st Anniversary), Dec 1960, located on the corner of Killarney and Torquay Streets. George Fairweather and Don Proctor standing by the brigade's equipment



A1994-534-498-06
Fire truck pumping excess water after flooding in the West End, July 1963



A1995-178
Kaikoura Fire Brigade Team. Back left - right: Noel Burrell, Grahame Elson
Front left - right: Russell Arthur, Bud O'Connor

The Fires

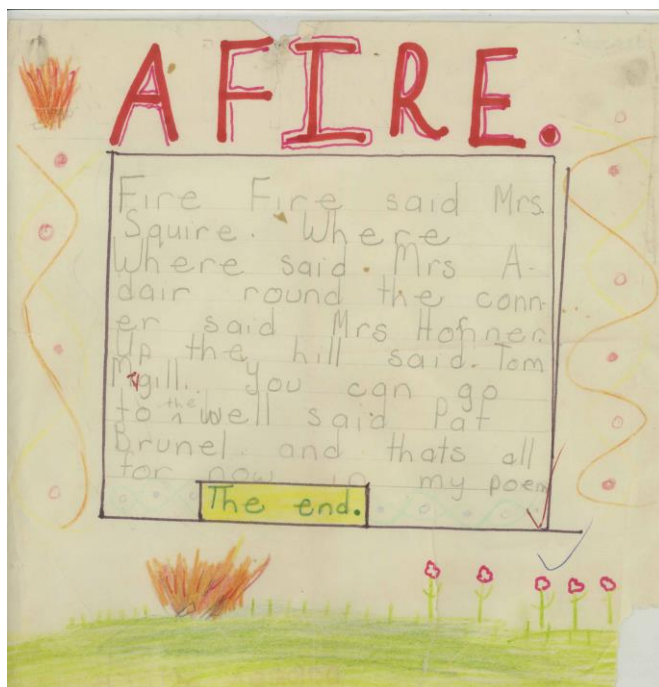
The first recorded call out was to a grass fire at the property of V.C. Hughes on the Esplanade, the date being 17th January, 1936.

1938 saw seven fires being attended, five of these to cars. It seems that overfilling, and the spilled fuel igniting was a common cause of fire in 1930s and 40s.

With the arrival of the main trunk railway to Kaikoura, a new cause of fire arrived, ash from the locomotive's fire box starting fires along the track. At one incident on 2nd September 1950, a derailed train at Sandy Bay (Okiwi Bay) caught fire and was extinguished by the brigade. At the time this was the most distant call attended.

The busiest day due to wind was the big August storm, 1st August 1975 when the brigade was engaged for over 28 hours.

The oldest building to be destroyed by fire was the court house in 2010.



A1985-0727: A Fire - a Poem by Donor
(Names changed from original to locally known women)

Newspaper Snippets

Bucket Brigade – KK Star 10 Dec 1964

A ladies bucket brigade beat the Kaikoura Fire Brigade to its duties recently, when a small fire broke out in a hedge in Davidson Terrace. The Brigade was called but when it arrived it found that Mrs G. Elson, wife of a brigade member, and neighbouring ladies, had coped most effectively with the outbreak. Organised by Mrs Elson the use of a garden hose and buckets had quelled the fire.

Weekly Fire Siren Tests – Christchurch Press 27th Dec 1948

Advice has been received from the superintendent of the Kaikoura Volunteer Fire Brigade that weekly tests of the fire siren would be carried out at approximately 12 noon every Sunday. The new siren is situated on the reserve in Takahanga Domain, at the junction of Takahanga Terrace and Killarney Road near the top of the "zig-zag".

Automatic Fire Alarm System is Efficient – KK Star 2 Feb 1953

If the person who set off the automatic fire system at Mr T.H. Hitchcock's corner at 8.30 o'clock last evening wanted to ascertain if the system was working and efficient, his curiosity should be satisfied. The system works and is highly efficient judging by the large number of people who followed the firefighting equipment in cars, trucks and on bicycles.

But false alarms are things that are not necessary. Members of the Volunteer Fire Brigade give up a tremendous amount of their leisure hours to prepare themselves to protect lives and property... And they do not appreciate being called out unnecessarily. There is also the danger that they may answer a false alarm and be unprepared to answer a genuine call.

Such a happening as last night can only be condemned by all right thinking people, and it is to be hoped that the brigade will call in the police to check up on the offense. If the culprit is found the maximum penalty should be imposed. This would act as a deterrent to any would be bell-pushers.