



Lyttelton Museum



Newsletter – Autumn 2017

A milestone for Baden • A milestone for the Museum • WWI diary
Xmas party • Next members meeting

Happy Birthday Baden!

Baden Norris (QSO, NZAM) was the driving force behind Lyttelton Museum from its foundation back in 1969. He remained our Curator until after the 2011 earthquakes, and is still the go-to person for tricky historical questions. Baden turns 90 in April and, as he does, he pauses to reflect on some of the highpoints of his time with the Museum, and his hopes for the future.

There were many memorable visitors over the years, including the Governor General, Dame Catherine Tizard, and British actor Geoffrey Hughes (best-known for playing Hyacinth's brother-in-law Onslow on *Keeping Up Appearances* in the 1990s), who loved the Museum so much, he visited three times.

Perhaps more important, though, were the regular visits from other museums around Canterbury – Sumner, Kaiapoi, and further afield – and the sense of being part of a network of dedicated people focused on preserving the region's history. The thousands of children who visited on school trips over the years brought the Museum to life and Baden loved sharing stories and jokes with them, inspiring new generations to think about those who had gone before.

In building the Museum's collection, Baden always tried to focus on what was special to Lyttelton, not necessarily the most beautiful or financially valuable things. Highlights include objects made by prisoners from the Lyttelton Gaol, like watch chains made of horse hair, and the replica of the flag presented by the Lyttelton District High School to



Baden Norris (QSO, NZAM) in his garden. Photographer: Kerry McCarthy

Captain Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition before it departed for Antarctica in 1911. The replica flag was presented by the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University in the UK. SPRI holds the original flag, which they discovered was too fragile to be returned to Lyttelton, so they had the replica made for us, testament to the esteem with which Lyttelton and Lyttelton Museum are held in international Antarctic circles.

The candelabrum from the church at Rāpaki, which hung in the first-floor hallway of the old Museum, is quietly beautiful, fashioned by hand from the rungs of a metal drum, but forgotten under the church for many years after electricity was introduced. Another treasure is the map of Lyttelton annotated with Māori place names by Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheka kaumatua Donald Couch.

... continued on back page.

Community Board says 'Yes'

The Society is another step closer to having a new museum building. Seven months ago, following a request from the previous Community Board, Christchurch City Council recognised in principle support for gifting the land at 33 London Street to the Lyttelton Historical Museum Society. It asked staff to investigate issues and options associated with such a gift and report back to the Community Board.

The staff report, supporting the gifting of the land, was on the agenda for the March 13 meeting of the (now)



33 London St, which we hope will become the site of the new museum building. Photographer: Peter Rough

Banks Peninsula Community Board. Peter Rough (Chair) and Thérèse Angelo from the Development Committee (supported by committee members Wendy McKay, Ann Jolliffe and Liz Grant) made a deputation to the meeting, providing Board members with a brief background to the project and answering their many questions. There was a high degree of interest and engagement from Board members, and Deputy Mayor Andrew Turner in particular spoke very passionately about the project, saying how appropriate it would be for a community building to be one of the first to be built on London Street, and how it would be a key part of the civic heart of Lyttelton.

Community Board Chair, Christine Wilson, moved that the Board resolve to support the three recommendations in the report which provided for the site to be gifted to the Museum Society. Jed O'Donoghue just beat out Deputy Mayor Andrew Turner to second the motion, which was then carried unanimously.

Now that this box has been ticked, the next step is more work by Council staff, including community consultation to ensure there are no objections to the gift of the land. It is hoped a final decision will be made by the end of May. We are very grateful for the ongoing support of the Community Board.

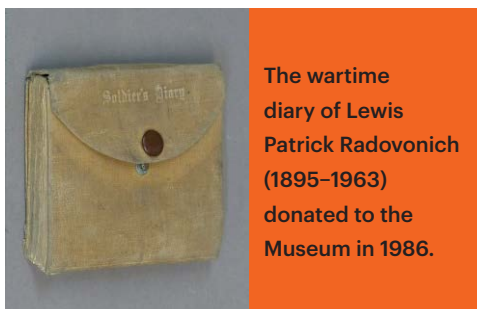
A WWI soldier's diary

Lewis Radonovich has left us a fascinating record of a soldier's life during World War I. In 1917, he kept a daily diary and often noted the small things, building up a really detailed picture. This was a very different life for the 22 year old Lyttelton plumber.

Throughout this year we're going to regularly put entries from Lewis's diary up on the Museum's website – our thanks to the Radovonich family for allowing us to share these accounts. Below are some short edited extracts that we hope will encourage you to keep checking the website to follow Lewis through 1917, one hundred years ago. Or like our Facebook page and you'll get sent these excerpts as soon as they are posted.

Saturday 20 January 1917

Got up at 6 a.m. Land still in sight South Island ... Put in charge of C Coys mess tables. Lost nail & tooth brush in wash house. Small sea running but ship has good load of wool on board & it keeps her steady ... Had tea at 6 pm & officer announced



The wartime diary of Lewis Patrick Radovonich (1895–1963) donated to the Museum in 1986.

that one man had lost his teeth through a porthole & anyone finding them to G Coys Orderly room ...

Thursday 25 January 1917

Got up at 6.30 & had salt water shower & wash then came up on deck for a read. Today is G Coys

washing day & each man is allowed fresh water for washing dirty clothes. I washed two towels 4 handkerchiefs & two prs socks. Saw sailing ship under full sail evidently making for Sydney ... Two companies have been bayonet fighting on deck and Maoris have been practising Hakas and war cries. We sighted three islands tonight & I think they are the Kings Islands. We sighted them about 6.45 ...

Thursday 1 February 1917

Was woke up at 1am by ship anchoring in stream at Albany. Went to sleep again & got up at 4.30. We weighed anchor & wharfed about 6.30. Being on store fatigue we went ashore 1 hr before the Reinf & had to come back 1 hr before them. Got a large motor & we motored into the township which is two miles from the wharf. Fare 1/-. Town is very small about the same as Lyttelton but there is some very pretty buildings there ... There was a tremendous lot of fighting amongst the soldiers & plenty of blood flowing ...

Christmas party

It was all aboard for a good time at the Christmas party on 9 December last year, with about 50 Museum Society members and friends enjoying some seasonal goodwill. Yes it is quite a long time ago now! But being able to hold it on board the Tug *Lyttelton* was very special and we'd like to particularly thank the Tug Lyttelton Preservation Society members for making us so welcome. Several of them joined us and they deserved a bit of festive cheer for all that they had had to do for the party to go ahead – at the start of that week the Lyttelton Port Company said the Tug would have to

move to a different berth. Which they did, though it's not a simple matter. But the Tug's new berth was inside the secure area of the port and that meant everybody coming to our party would have to have security clearance! The thought of that gave us all a headache. Commonsense asserted itself but that meant that early on that Friday afternoon, *Lyttelton* had to be moved back to her usual spot. But they were ready in time, all decked out with Christmas lights, to welcome us aboard. Cheers, fellas!



Tug *Lyttelton* on the night of the Christmas party. Photographer: Hugh Campbell



Wendy McKay, Lyttelton Museum Vice-President, and Geoff Swallow, Assistant Marine Superintendent of the Tug Lyttelton Preservation Society share cake cutting honours. The delicious cake was made by Murray McGuigan, a member of the Museum's management committee. Photographer: Cathleen Hauman

Next Members meeting

Make a note in your diary for **Sunday 2 April, 2pm–4pm at the Community Board rooms in Canterbury St.** The hot topic, of course, will be an update from the Development sub-committee. As reported on P.2 of this newsletter, at the Community Board meeting on 13 March, we put our case to acquire the site in London St. Find out more about what happens next!

**Sunday 2 April 2017, 2pm – 4pm
Community Board Rooms, Canterbury St.**

And after the business of the day, artist Julia Holden will talk about *Lyttelton Redux*, her fascinating art project with works that can be seen in many of the businesses around town. Find out how her sitters reacted to being covered with acrylic paint! And hear how far news of the exhibition has travelled.



'The Suffragette' aka Paula Smith. Artist: Julia Holden

... continued from page 1.

Baden is proud to have been able to highlight the stories of watersiders and Merchant Navy heroes like Captain George Brotherton Morgan, New Zealand's most highly decorated WWII Merchant Service officer, who was born in Lyttelton.

In thinking about the future, Baden is sure of one thing – we're on the right track. He's pleased that the work he and many others have done over the years is being continued with passion and skill, and is looking forward to attending the opening of the new Lyttelton Museum. He's never been much of a one for computers, but is particularly pleased that the collection is available for anyone, anywhere to view online, and especially that we can use the eHive website to collect more stories about the objects. He wants to see us increase our involvement with all areas of the community, especially younger people and schools.

Thinking about where the collection should go from here, Baden quickly identifies sporting achievements as a focus. He can think of at least six All Blacks who came from Lyttelton, for example, but there is nothing about any of them in the Museum's collection.

In many ways, Baden is amazed at how far the Museum has come since its beginnings almost 50 years ago. He's grateful for the opportunities that have come our way, and for the tireless hours put in by scores of volunteers to make it a great success. He has no fears whatsoever for the Museum's future – the necessary elements are all there, and he is sure, once again, it will all fall into place.

And of course we have much to thank Baden for! For almost half a century he has dedicated himself to gathering Lyttelton Harbour/Whakaraupō stories for future generations.

Another successful year

The Lyttelton Museum calendar was very popular again this year, and enriched the Society's purse by \$1400. Thank you to all the businesses in Lyttelton who helped us sell them: Leslie's Bookshop, London St Bookshop, Air Sea and Land, and the Lyttelton Information Centre. Part of the appeal, of course, is the evocative images of old Lyttelton. All these are from the Museum's photographic collection. We do have a few calendars still available at only \$10 – we're not that far into the year! Do get in touch if you would like one.



Image for the month of March: Canterbury Yacht and Motorboat Club shed and Millers' slip, Godley Quay, about 1932.

A bit of housekeeping ...

Get super organised!

- > This year's AGM will be on Sunday 25 June
- > The Spring Members meeting will be Sunday 24 September
- > The Christmas party will be held on Friday 8 December

We will, of course, send out reminder notices and let you know times and venues closer to those dates.

Your contact details

We're updating our mailing lists. Please let us know if any of your contact details have changed:

- > Home address, phone, or email address.

All the ways that you can get in touch with us are at the end of the newsletter.



Lyttelton Museum

Please note that the Museum is not currently open. We welcome your enquiries while we work towards establishing a new Museum.

PO Box 95, Lyttelton 8841
+64 3 328 8972
info@lytteltonmuseum.co.nz