



2026

CDHS — SUMMER NEWSLETTER



CARTERTON DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

142 HIGH STREET NORTH

CARTERTON 5713

EMAIL: carterton.hist.soc@gmail.com

WEBSITE: <https://www.cartertondistricthistoricalsociety.org/>





Chairman Steve Cretney

Chairman Steve's Sentiments

Happy New Year to all our CDHS members, friends and visitors, in Carterton, Wairarapa, New Zealand and all around the World.

The summer months have again been a productive and rewarding period for the Carterton District Historical Society, with steady progress across our core activities and encouraging engagement from both members and the wider community.

Despite the quieter nature of summer, our archive and research work has continued. Committee members, assisted by a few welcome volunteers have continued to make headway cataloguing our photographs and documents, ensuring valuable local history is preserved and more accessible for future generations. This behind-the-scenes work often goes unnoticed, but it remains one of the most important contributions the Society makes to Carterton.

Visitor interest over the last few months has been pleasing, particularly from people researching family connections to the district or visitors curious about the town's heritage. We continue to see strong interest in early settler history, old photographs posted to Facebook, farming records, and the social history of Carterton's schools, clubs, and community groups. These enquiries reinforce just how vital it is to protect and interpret our local stories.

I also want to acknowledge the dedication of our committee members and volunteers, who give generously of their time throughout the year. Whether helping to staff the rooms, assisting researchers, maintaining collections, or supporting administration, their commitment is the Society's greatest asset. We are always keen to welcome new members and volunteers, as the society is facing an uncertain future, due to several long-serving committee members wanting to step aside from official positions. It is critical for anyone interested in our local history, to step up as a volunteer and into these vital roles, or the society may need to close its doors, which would be a devastating outcome for not just the society, but for Carterton.

Looking ahead, the coming months will see us focus on continuing the cataloguing of the collection, as we move closer to our AGM. The upcoming Annual General Meeting will be one of the most important in the society's history. If we do not have any new interest from people willing to step into critical roles, the society will be forced to shut its doors.

As always, our aim is to ensure Carterton's history is not only safeguarded, but actively shared and celebrated.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Society over summer. Your interest and involvement ensure our local history remains alive, relevant, and valued.

CDHS - FUNDING UPDATE

As mentioned in our spring newsletter, committee members have been looking at alternative ways of raising funds to help cover some of our ongoing annual operational costs. We decided to arrange a couple of raffles, with the first raffle being a Xmas Ham Raffle, with 3 prizes of a "Half Leg of Ham", which managed to raise \$415.

Winners were Jane Lyford, Chris Tracey and Leonie Mountford.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone that purchased a ticket in the "Half Leg of Ham" raffle and hope you might support us once again, when we start selling our "Trailer Load of Firewood" raffle, in coming weeks.



WINNER
JANE LYFORD

WINNER
CHRIS TRACEY



WINNER
LEONIE MOUNTFORD



A big thank you to Premier Beehive for sponsoring two of the hams and our President Steve for donating the third ham, which he won at a bowls tournament.

CARTERTON CRIER ARTICLES

The November Crier was as shorter version of the Rimutaka tunnel anniversary, and the December Crier featured an article on the Bank of New South Wales in Carterton featuring the architectural drawings we have recently received. An interesting snippet we discovered was about a time capsule buried near the steps containing coins. When the bank manager left, the container was unearthed, the coins removed and the container reburied. The coins were later spent at the Marquis of Normanby Hotel.

NOVEMBER EDITION - The 3rd November 2025, was the 70th Anniversary of the Rimutaka Tunnel opening, making the train route between Wellington and the Hutt Valley to Wairarapa a much quicker passage. The tunnel replaced the Rimutaka incline rail route using Fell engines to climb the steep ascent on the Featherston side of the hill.

[READ ARTICLE](#)

DECEMBER EDITION - We received a large hand drawn, coloured architect's plan of the Bank of New South Wales building, which was proposed for Carterton. A solid one storied brick building was built and on 28 December 1912 the Bank moved into the new purpose-built premises on the corner of High Street North and Park Road, which was home to the Westpac Bank for a number of years.

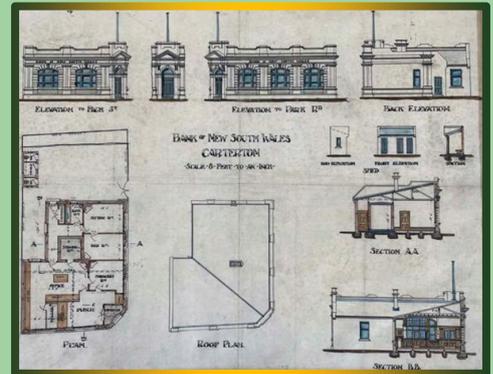
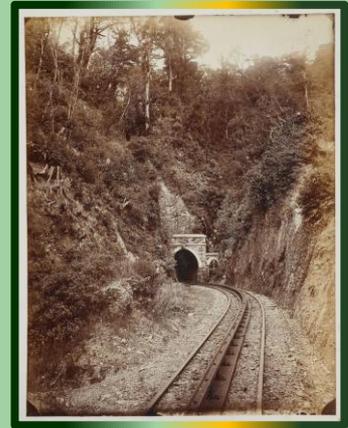
It is lovely to see this grand old building still standing on the corner today.

[READ ARTICLE](#)

If you have a suggestion then please feel free to contact our Secretary Vivienne on our email for Carterton District Historical Society carterton.hist.soc@gmail.com or phone Vivienne on 0274 655 663.

[READ MORE TO LEARN MORE](#)

Rimutaka Tunnel



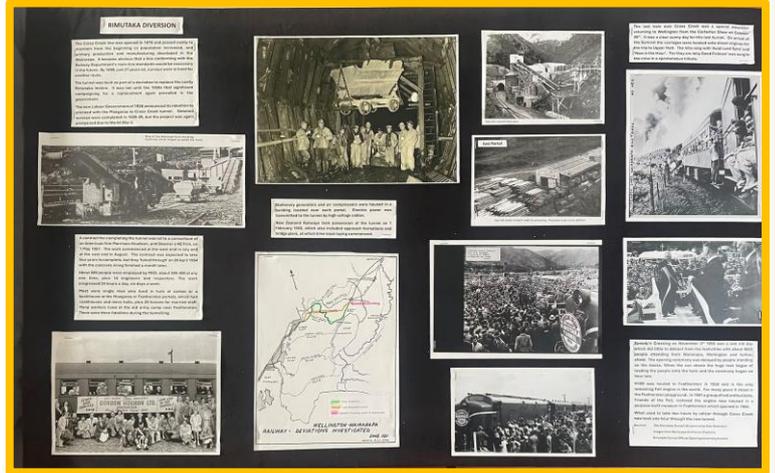
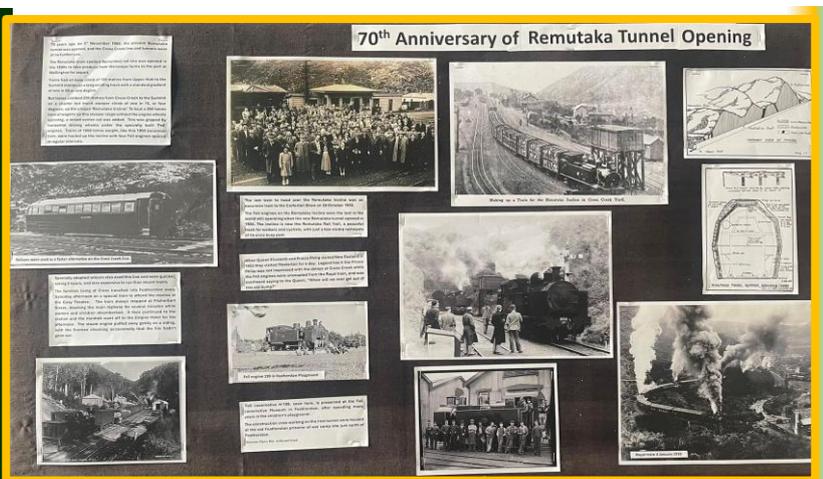
**Bank of New South Wales
Architects Plan**



BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES

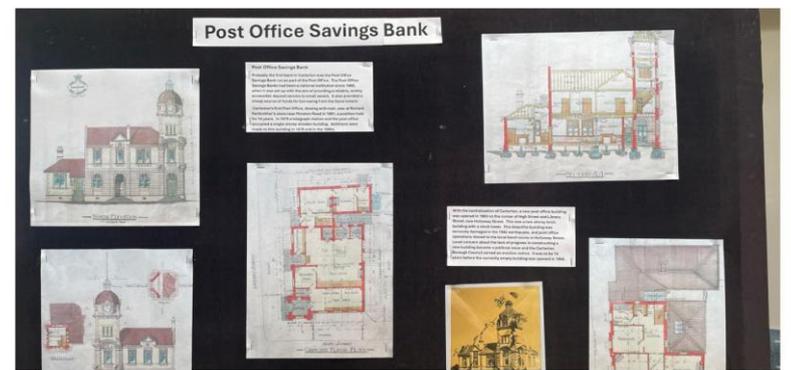
Not long after the Cross Creek line was opened in the 1880s it was realised that it would not meet the demands of the future, and explorations began on an alternative route. But it was not until the 1920s that serious campaigning began. The new route was still not commenced until 1951 and opened on 4 November 1955.

With the 70th Anniversary of the Rimutaka Tunnel in November last year, we thought it a great idea to deviate from Carterton history for a change. We found much interesting information on the construction of the tunnel from old newspapers in our possession.



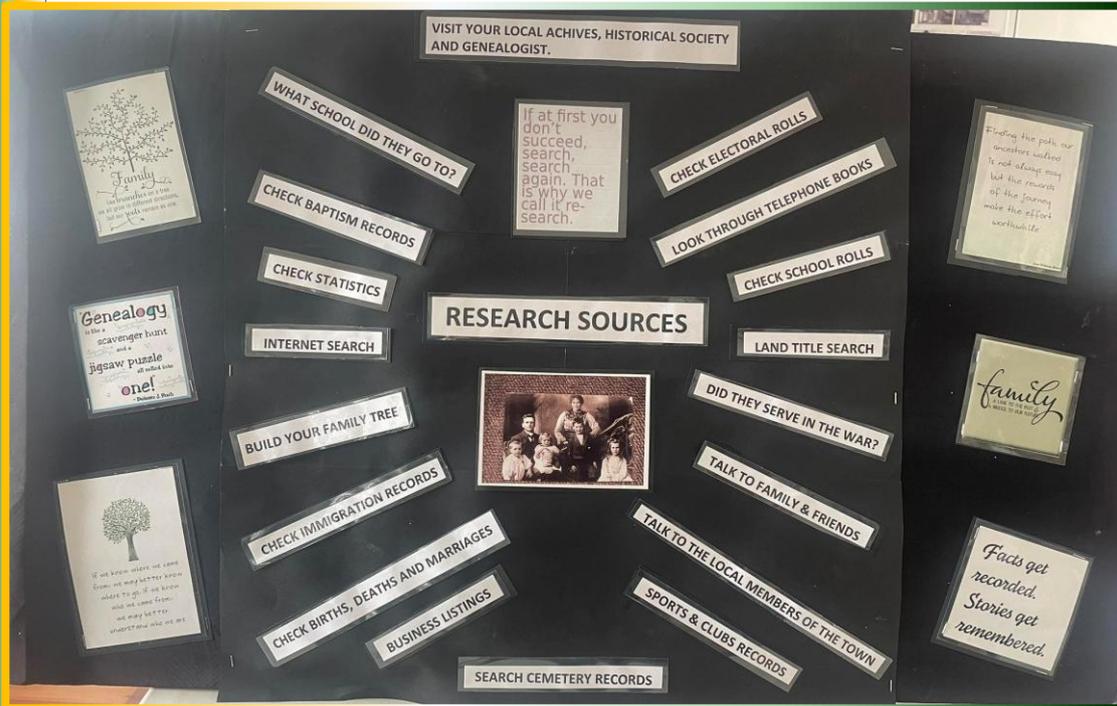
CDHS WINDOW DISPLAYS

Our first display for December was on the Bank of New Zealand, one of the oldest to operate in our town. The first purpose-built BNZ was on the corner by the roundabout and burnt to the ground when the saddlery on our CDHS site caught fire in March 1903. New premises were built on the present site on High Street, but was severely damaged in the 1942 earthquake and the top story and attractive mouldings were removed. This was demolished in the 1980s and the current building erected on the site.



The second display for December was showcasing the Bank of New South Wales, featuring the original architectural drawings the society received, and also the Post Office Savings Bank.

CDHS — WINDOW DISPLAYS



We chose to put up a board with suggestions on research resources for those interested in tracing their family trees. Christmas time, when family are together, is a great opportunity to ask your family members what they can remember about their childhood, parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts. Take notes and get started.



We also set up the late Maureen Leech's nativity set in the window, which is always a wonderful reminder around Christmas time, of the great work Maureen did for the society.



The late Maureen Leech
1938-2023

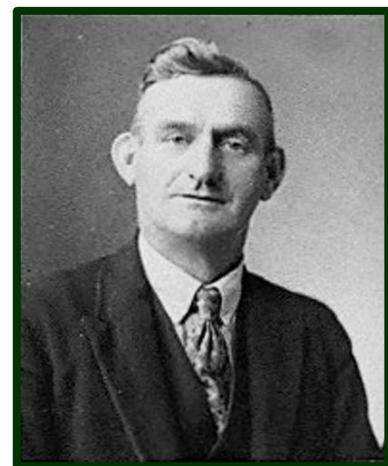
Benjamin Roberts was from Parkvale. His son Ben Junior married Lorna Smith, who was the daughter of Myrtle Jane Renall, 8th child of Roger Zachariah Renall.

A former Minister of Agriculture and Member of Parliament for Wairarapa from 1935 - 1946, The Hon. Benjamin Roberts died in Foxton on 20th November 1952.

He was widely known in Upper Hutt, as the district was within his electorate when he was a Member for Wairarapa.

In the political field, Mr Roberts was a staunch member of the Labour Party and for some years was Chairman of the Carterton Branch of the party. He was first elected to parliament in 1935 and was a member of the house until 1946, when he retired due to ill health.

During his term in parliament, he held the portfolios of Agriculture and Marketing, administering them with distinction.



Hon. Benjamin Roberts
1880-1952

JOHN RENALL — HON BENJAMIN ROBERTS

A native of Liverpool, he came to New Zealand in 1907 and established his home in the Wairarapa. For several years he worked as a farm labourer and then took over a wood and coal business in Carterton, during which time he spent 6 years on the Carterton Borough Council.

In 1916 he went on the land, taking up part of the Charles Rooking Carter Estate, where he had great success at farming, becoming a Jersey Cow breeder and exhibitor. He also became well-known as a grower of Tomatoes, growing as many as 30,000 plants in a season. A hard worker in the interests of Dairy Farmers, he was largely responsible for organising the Dairy Farmers Union in the Wairarapa, and was elected president of the provincial district. Benjamin gave many years of service on the Parkvale School Committee, Parkvale Co-operative Dairy Company and was a member of the Wairarapa Factories Federation.

Mr Roberts, who was a lay-preacher in the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches at Levin, was addressing the Methodist Men's Christian Fellowship Group at Foxton, when he collapsed and died. His subject was, "Seventy-Two Years of life". When he died, Mr Roberts was survived by his wife, three sons and four daughters.

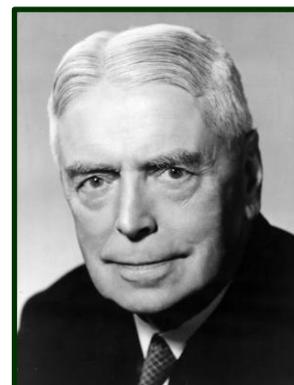
Sir Walter Nash described Mr Roberts as a Christian Socialist, who believed that the application of Christian principles to all forms of human activity was essential to progress and to a full life for the individual. Sir Nash continued by saying "Mr Roberts combined idealism with a practical and valuable knowledge of the means of extracting from the soil the best it could yield in the form of food-production resources. In parliament and Government, he was a friendly, efficient and progressive colleague, avid in his personal and public life, he never doubted the ultimate triumph of truth and the full achievement of freedom and self-fulfilment of the individual.



Benjamin Roberts with his wife Mary and children.



Benjamin playing tennis



Sir Walter Nash

A small tribute to one of our long-time members, Arthur Frank Celestin Spicer, who left this world on 13th November, 2025.

It was with much sadness that we learnt of the passing of our long-time member Arthur Spicer. Arthur was born and raised in one of the original cottages built opposite the Booth Sawmill in Andersons Line, Carterton. He spent nearly all his life living in the cottage, before he eventually moved into Roseneath Rest Home to live out the remainder of his life. Arthur was 94 when he passed away, but even during his last year he still managed to spend time visiting and would call into the society rooms for a catch up.

ARTHUR FRANK CELESTIN SPICER

7/01/1931 - 13/11/2025

Arthur rode a motor bike and was a member of the Ulysses Motorcycle Club which has the motto "Grow Old Disgracefully". In later years he gave up riding his bike and instead could be seen zapping around town on his mobility scooter. Arthur would call into our rooms for a chat and to look at his family history book, while we would ply him with questions about his early memories of Carterton. May he Rest in Peace.

Ann Nielson: Arthur, you had a wealth of knowledge and I loved hearing your stories. You will be missed. Your stories will live on and continue to inspire us all.

Robyn Ray-MacGregor: Sad to hear that Arthur has gone. I also remember him so well from my childhood days.



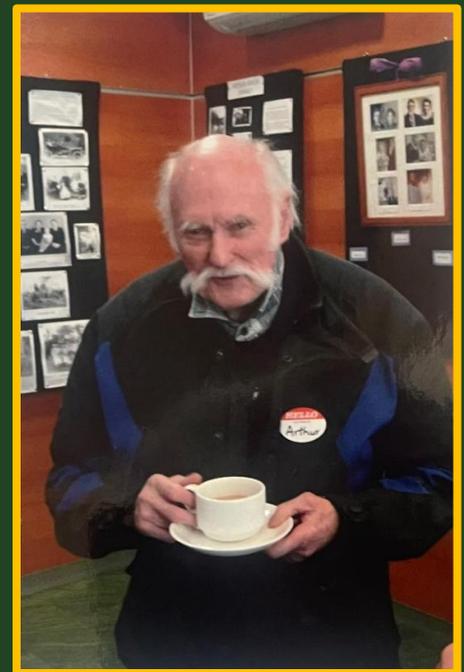
SPICER, Arthur Frank Celestin. Of Carterton.
On 13th November 2025, peacefully at Roseneath Lifecare. Aged 94 years.

Loved son of the late William and Florence.

Loved uncle of Norma and Sylvia.

Loved Papa of the Hurunui o Rangi and Papawai Whanau

Loved brother, brother-in-law, cousin, uncle, Poppa and friend to many.



Arthur always enjoyed a cup of tea and often joined us at our Annual General Meetings or Christmas Celebrations.



Arthurs Cottage in Andersons Line, Carterton

EARLY CARTERTON FIRES

1888, 1897 & 1927

As we move through the hot summer months, with the comfort of our heat pumps switched to 'cool' and knowing there's a great team of Carterton firefighters always ready for action, spare a thought for the early settlers of Carterton. Fire was always uppermost as a threat, as the town developed.

Several significant fires have occurred in Carterton's history, with major blazes recorded in 1888, 1897, and 1927. These fires often spread quickly due to the wooden construction of buildings and fierce winds.

13 February 1888 Wairarapa Daily Times

"TERRIBLE FIRE AT CARTERTON.

A Whole Block Destroyed. Immense loss of Property."

This was the headlines in the local newspaper as Carterton was smouldering from a fire which ripped the heart out of its township.

In the early hours of 13 February 1888, after a long and hot summer's day, fire ripped through the roof of an empty shop on the corner of Belvedere Road and High Street, Carterton.

It was spotted by storekeepers, Beecher and Dudson. The town's fire brigade was immediately alerted and the volunteer firemen rushed to the scene. Frantic early efforts to contain the blaze failed and it spread to an auction mart, T.C. Barnard's Watchmakers, William Catt's Fruit and Fancy Goods Store, W.G. Lindop's Chemist, and the town hall. All were destroyed. The entire block to the west of High Street was a mass of flames licking up towards the Marquis of Normanby Hotel.

Despite the time of night, townsfolk came out in their hordes, and it was only with their frantic help that the Marquis Hotel was saved. Private wells were siphoned to keep the manual fire engine pumping water. Buildings on the opposite side including Downard's Tailors, W.G. Beard - solicitor's office, Dudson's Saddlery, the BNZ, Moriarty's Boot Store, and Deller's Butchery caught fire a few times but were saved. By 4am, the fire was under control. Amazingly, the only casualty was one of Mr Catt's sons, Willie, who got a burned foot.

The Carterton Volunteer Fire Brigade had formed just a decade earlier in 1878. The town had a population of 448 people - and a burgeoning number of businesses including 14 general stores, six blacksmiths, four cabinet makers, three saddlers, two bakers, two jewellers, two banks, a barber, and a chemist. Four hotels, four churches and four halls catered for the spiritual and cultural needs of the community.

Next big fire was again in the heat of summer December 1896/January 1897. During a period of strong westerly gales, extensive bush fires raged around the broader Wairarapa region, including near Carterton. Three large sawmilling mills near Carterton were destroyed all on the same day.

On 18 October 1927, the offices of the Wairarapa Daily News building went up in flames. Fanned by a strong wind, the fire quickly spread to three adjacent buildings, two of which contained families who had to evacuate. The newspaper itself could not report on the fire as its office was the source of the blaze.



Carterton High St Fire C.1905



Wairarapa Daily News Building



WAIRARAPA WALKING FESTIVAL

Carterton Entertainment Heritage Walk Wairarapa Walking Festival 2025 Recap

A bright and sunny Friday morning set the perfect scene for this year's CDHS contribution to the Wairarapa Walking Festival as a small but attentive group gathered at Carrington Park to begin the Carterton Heritage Walk: Music, Memory & Main Street. Led by members of the Carterton District Historical Society alongside Wairarapa Film Festival director (Jane Ross), the walk traced the town's vibrant entertainment past and present, sharing stories of music, community, and creativity along the way.



Jane Ross

The route began at the Keinzley Agvet site (once home to Miss Berrill's Girls Club), before moving to Club Carterton where walkers were treated to a surprise behind-the-scenes tour of the venue. From there, the group explored the site of the Regent 58 Brewery & Alehouse and its earlier life as the Regent Cinema and Milk Bar, before strolling past the Live Lounge, Memorial Square, Community Courthouse, and finishing at the Wairarapa Events Centre – Carterton's contemporary cultural hub.



Miss Berrill's Girls
Club



Regent 58 Brewery



Wairarapa Events Centre

Along the way, walkers heard lively accounts of film premieres, concerts, community dances, and the town's transformation into a creative heart for the region. Participants appreciated the mix of storytelling, heritage, and sunshine that made the morning memorable.

The Carterton District Historical Society extends sincere thanks to the Wairarapa Walking Festival organisers for delivering such a well-run annual event, and looks forward to collaborating again next year.

Do CDHS members have ideas for future walks? We'd love to hear them! Please email us or visit the Society rooms on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 10 am – 2 pm.



DIGITAL NEW ZEALAND - UPDATE

Addition to Digital NZ

"The history of the Taratahi Hotel has now been loaded up on Digital NZ and can be seen by searching on the site or at: <https://digitalnz.org/stories/68d8b77c5c1bcf64952187f3>

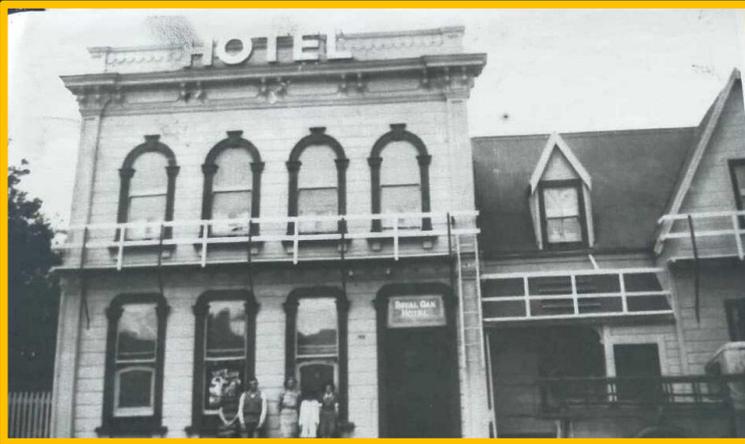
The Taratahi Hotel story is a simple history at the moment and like the story of the Royal Oak and Carter Court Rest Home, it will be added to over time with an abundance of information from many sources.

More Carterton and District Hotels will be added in the future in this "hotels" series.



Royal Oak Hotel

(<https://digitalnz.org/stories/67aaaaaf99db1deddaf13d61>)



Carter Court

(<https://digitalnz.org/stories/628ffa3b3edf07001d75f776>)

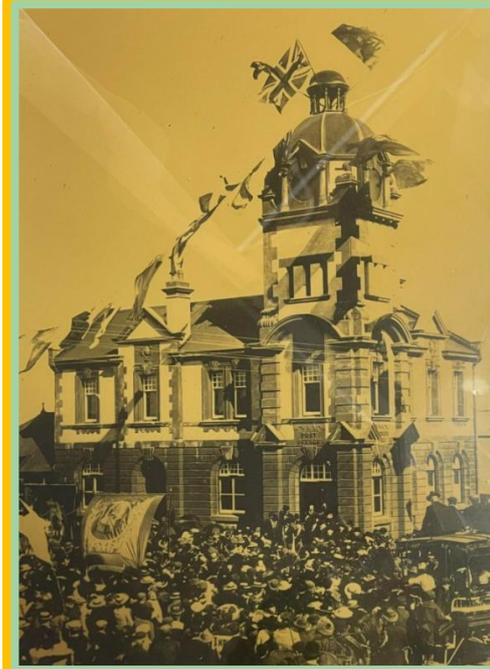


CIDHS FACEBOOK PAGE



It's always a challenge to find something of interest to put up on our Facebook page but this last quarter has brought us several items of interest to our rooms. Back in November we were donated a large framed photograph of the opening the Carterton Post Office in 1903. After the original contracts for building the Post Office came in too high the building was modified and new contracts requested. In December 1902 a new contract was accepted for a price of £2,928 with a time limit of seven months to build. The new Carterton Post Office was officially opened by Sir Joseph Ward on Monday 24th August 1903. Unfortunately, the 24 June 1942 earthquake severely damaged the clock tower and the entire Post Office building needed to be demolished.

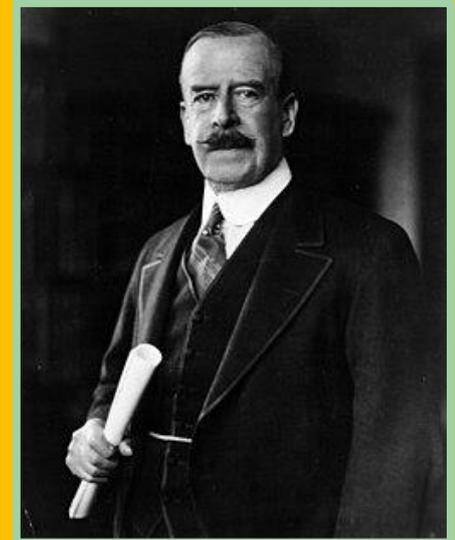
I also came across a photo I had not seen before dated 1902. It a photo taken at the North Island Bowling Association Tournament in Wellington and has several Carterton men whose name I recognised. There are 8 men in the photo and they are all named but it doesn't state back row or front row.



Carterton Post Office - 1903



Can anyone identify the men in the photo?



Sir Joseph Ward

We recently received an old Wairarapa Times Age newspaper dated 2 November 1955, just over 70 years ago. The Public Notices in the paper relates to water restrictions being applied to the Carterton Borough.

I just love the final wording of this notice. The penalty for a breach of the By-law is a fine of up to £5!!

So, that would mean receiving a fine of between \$170-\$200 in todays value.

Wairarapa Times-Age

MASTERTON, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1955. 3d. per copy.

S.	PUBLIC NOTICES.	PUBLIC NOTICES.	PUBLIC NOTICES.	FOR SALE.
TRY! MITE! AYS! AYS! S— NG — G — P.M. P.M. al Early p.m.).	CIVIC RECEPTION. A CIVIC RECEPTION for the Prime Minister and the Ministerial party travelling on the first rail-car to come through the Rimutaka Tunnel to Masterton will be held at Masterton Railway Station at approximately 5.37 p.m. on Thursday, November 3. The public are cordially invited to be present on this important occasion. E. G. CODDINGTON, Mayor.	SOUTH PARK. GRAND PARADE & BONFIRE. FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4. Guys assemble High Street gates, 7.15—Parade led by Wairarapa Caledonian Pipe Band to ring, 7.30—Mrs. Coddington and Mrs. Selby Judge Guys—Present prizes. Then the Mayor lights the GIANT BONFIRE. Three prizes. Ice cream for each Guy entered. BRING YOUR OWN CRACKERS.	CARTERTON BOROUGH HOSING RESTRICTIONS. PUBLIC Notice is hereby given that Section 6 of "The Waterworks By-law Amendment, 1918" provides that "no water shall be used or be permitted to be used through a hose or otherwise for garden purposes unless a person shall be holding such hose during the time it is being used as aforesaid." The penalty for a breach of the above By-law is a fine of up to £5.	ONE 21-piece Shelley Teaset umn shades. Never used. Mills, Timui, phone 435. 31/- PAIR at our Men's Shoes Men's Brown Weave. E Bumpers by Dunlop, 25 pairs We have been serving the Wairarapa with high grade footwe 81 years. Wairarapa Farmer FISH meals have added a when served with Beaver J Worcester Sauce. The Sauce the "spicy" flavour. CHILD'S five-piece bedroom in perfect condition, £22/10/- boy's bicycle, 24in. wheels, in order, £8/10/-. Phone 127 C ton. FRAM for sale, perfect cond Apply 16 Cole Street.
RRROW	COMMUNITY ARTS SERVICE. Present		MASTERTON AUTOMOBILES PROUDLY ANNOUNCE THE ARRIVAL OF OUR	

QUERIES, WALK-IN'S & REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

PLOTBOX

CDC - PLOTBOX



ANCESTRY

Papers
Past

PAPERS PAST

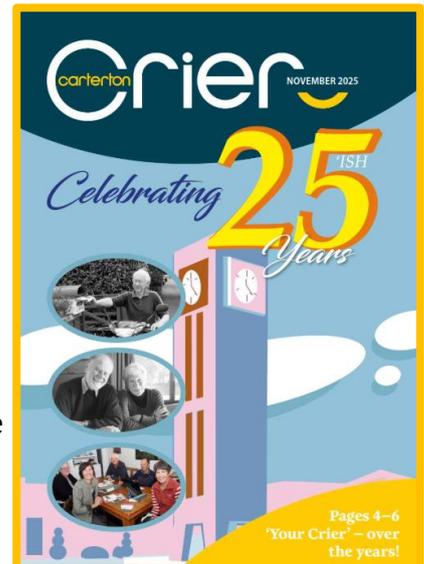


BDM

We continue to receive queries via email and our website locally, nationally and internationally. Early in December we received a phone call from Tasmania from a family wanting to find information about an ancestor who had lived in Carterton back in 1927/28. Information was taken and emailed between us and we were able to pin point the time the ancestors lived here in Carterton, what their address was, and where they worked. The family members were coming to New Zealand over Christmas and they called in to our rooms over Christmas. We are open by appointment if the visit is outside our normal hours. It was a very successful visit with the couple leaving us to go and explore where their relatives had lived and to get a feel of our town. They had photos taken in 1961 that they could identify with in Carterton today. This is one of the reasons we love working at the Carterton Historical Society. It is such a buzz when we can go back that far in time, nearly 100 years, and put pieces of the puzzle together.

During the Carterton Crier's preparations for their 25 year celebration, we were able to supply them with information they needed about past editors, their time frames and also provide early copies of the Crier which the Society holds.

The first edition, produced in May 2000 by Paul & Delyse Kitteridge and The Carterton Town & Country Development Group, had two pages. It was mainly hand-delivered to about 200 people who had shown an interest. The Carterton Crier continued to be produced by The Carterton Town and Country Development Group with John and Kathleen Gordon, in conjunction with Wairarapa Times Age, until January/February 2006 edition. For some time, Gracie Stanners was the editor and around 2005 Brian Poulsen took over the editor role. Brian remained editor until October 2015 when a new editorial group took over under the lead of Don and Jan Farr.



(Back): Paul Kitteridge, Michele Graham
(Front): Delyse Kitteridge, Duane Poulsen and Paul Dykes



We also had another interesting query from a gentleman wanting proof that a photograph in a book on Waihi was actually a photograph of Carterton High Street. We were able to send him other photographs of High Street and Broadway with notable buildings such as our Carterton Post Office as proof.



OUR VALUED VOLUNTEERS

Carterton District Historical Society is run totally on a voluntary basis and we meet every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. We have five regular people who join Maria and Vivienne, helping to get our collection in order. Ann Nielsen, Richard Hart and Yvonne O'Dowd are working their way through our photographs and also working on a project to update the information on all the businesses on Carterton High Street. This is a massive job making sure that all information is correct and up to date. It is a slow process and the High Street is forever changing. Two other volunteers who help out regularly are Allan Renall and Heather Hamill and all helping hands are appreciated. We often say at the end of the day that what we planned doing gets side tracked with other things that occur but we all leave feeling like we've accomplished something during the day and are one step forward.

If you are interested in the history of Carterton come along and join us.

We won't throw you in the deep end.



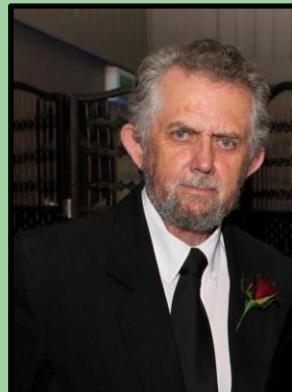
Vivienne Hawken



Maria Thompson



Ann Nielsen



Richard Hart



Yvonne O'Dowd



Allan Renall



Heather Hamill

CDHS MEMBERSHIP

The support that the Society receives from members and the community is essential to ensure the continuation of the Society's work in collecting and preserving the history of Carterton.

Your involvement by joining, will ensure this work carries on.

See the attached Membership Form as shown here, complete and return to our email address carterton.hist.soc@gmail.com

or mail to

The Treasurer
11 Philip Street
Carterton 5713



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

Email:

Signature:

	Single Subscription	\$30.00
	Joint Family Subscription	\$40.00
	Donation tax deductible CC10932	\$
	Total	\$

Bank A/c no for direct credit: 030609 0100925 00

Please include your name and the reference as Annual Subs 26-27

Please scan and email this form to: Carterton.hist.soc@gmail.com

OR Post to:

Carterton District Historical Society, C/- M. Thompson, Treasurer, 11 Phillip Street, Carterton 5713

We aim to collect and store the history and heritage of Carterton district for the use of future researchers. We welcome the opportunity to receive or copy your local photographs and records.

Your continued support to the Carterton District Historical Society is appreciated and helps towards keeping the Society operating.



Carterton District Historical Society 2026 ©

Thanks to our **Carterton District Historical Society Sponsors:**

Click on the Logo's to view their Websites



TRUST HOUSE



Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Taratahi
CARTERTON
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Wong Liu Sheung

COGS

Community Organisation
Grants Scheme



Li INTERNATIONAL



Eastern & Central
COMMUNITY TRUST

