Kapiti Coast MUSEUM

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2024

The Cheney Talking Machine (or Wind-up Phonograph)

The Cheney Talking Machine Company was founded in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1914 by Forest Cheney (1864 – 1925), a concert violinist of the early 1900s. He designed the Cheney Talking Machine, or phonograph, to suit his ideas, as in a period advertisement, '*the tonal system employs new principles of acoustic science which place the Cheney in a class alone'*.

This wind-up machine was state-of-the-art in the 1920s. It was about this time that 78rpm became the standard speed for records, but in the early 1930s, at about the time of the introduction of radio, electrically driven record players became the norm.

Our example dates from about 1925. It was originally owned by the Plimmer family of Reikorangi. It was used in their home and in their woolshed, where there were many social occasions up to the 1960s.

Barry Plimmer passed the phonograph on to Rick Goodman in the late 1960s. It was in poor condition, and Mr Goodman carried out a restoration of it, and it was used by the Goodman family before they generously donated it to our museum.

Volunteer Receptionists

When the museum is open we prefer to have 2 people on duty. The committee is finding that each month an extra volunteer or two would be desirable. If you could offer assistance on a once a month basis, please email manager@kapiticoastmuseum.org.nz, and we will discuss how you could help.

From the Chair's Notepad – Winter 2024

Greetings to all members, both old and new. We are now firmly in winter's grip with grey skies, cool temperatures and rain the order of the day. I must admit that this is always the most challenging time of year for myself – and probably most volunteers – to spend 3 hours on duty when the Museum is open, but the weather is bad and visitor numbers are down. So, well done to all our volunteers who fill in the roster and cheerfully turn up without complaint and in good spirits to welcome our visitors.

On the good news front we have been successful with two grant applications, receiving $2000 from Te Papa's Helping Hands Fund and $7,500 from KCDC's Heritage and Museum Development Fund. The Helping Hands grant has been used to buy two new kitset glass display cabinets that will replace the two big Perspex display cabinets in the reception area which have proved impractical to get in and out of. These kitsets have now been assembled after a few false starts owing to very limited assembly instructions and components being easily interchanged by accident! Well done to Rob Adams for sticking at it and solving problems one by one. We got there in the end.

The second grant from KCDC will cover two initiatives. These are a) an upgrade of the Museum's website, now underway, and b) the purchase of a third display cabinet for the Port Family display overhaul which is currently being undertaken by Judy Edwards and Carolyn Krebs. There is also a small amount of money for the printing of several storyboards being developed for this display. You should start to see work underway on this project very soon.

It is pleasing to report that we have agreed with KCDC our operational funding for the current financial year 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025. This funding helps us to pay the bills for rent, power, phone, broadband access, housekeeping items etc. We are grateful for this Council support as it enables us to use our other grant money to make improvements to displays and enables the purchase of capital items such as a new printer and improved shelving.

Finally, from the Discover Kapiti Heritage Group on which I represent our museum, we will be supporting the Wellington Heritage Festival which takes place regionally. It will have a weekend 9/10 November 2024 devoted to Kapiti heritage attractions. Also confirmed is that this year's very successful Clue Hunt event will be repeated over Wellington Anniversary Weekend 2025. More details to follow.

Neville Queree
Chair

KCDC have erected a new Heritage Trail sign for our museum (we are No. 6 on the trail). Please come and read a summary of postal services in Waikanae and the history of the site and the building—and then enter (between 1 and 4pm, Fri., Sat. or Sun.) and see how it used to function as a home and a post office.

This grandfather clock has 'Made in Germany' printed on the clock face. It was a wedding present to Mr & Mrs R A Speirs of Levin, from brother Mr R N Speirs of Foxton. R N Speirs Ltd, a building supplies business, was based in Foxton, with a branch in Anne St, Waikanae (in 1964 it became MSD -Speirs Ltd after a merger with the Marton Sash & Door Co. Ltd). The Waikanae business closed down in 2020.

This clock is believed to date from the 1930s, but more research is needed to determine its age and maker. It has been donated to the museum by Maurice Speirs of Waikanae.

The recently donated Grandfather Clock

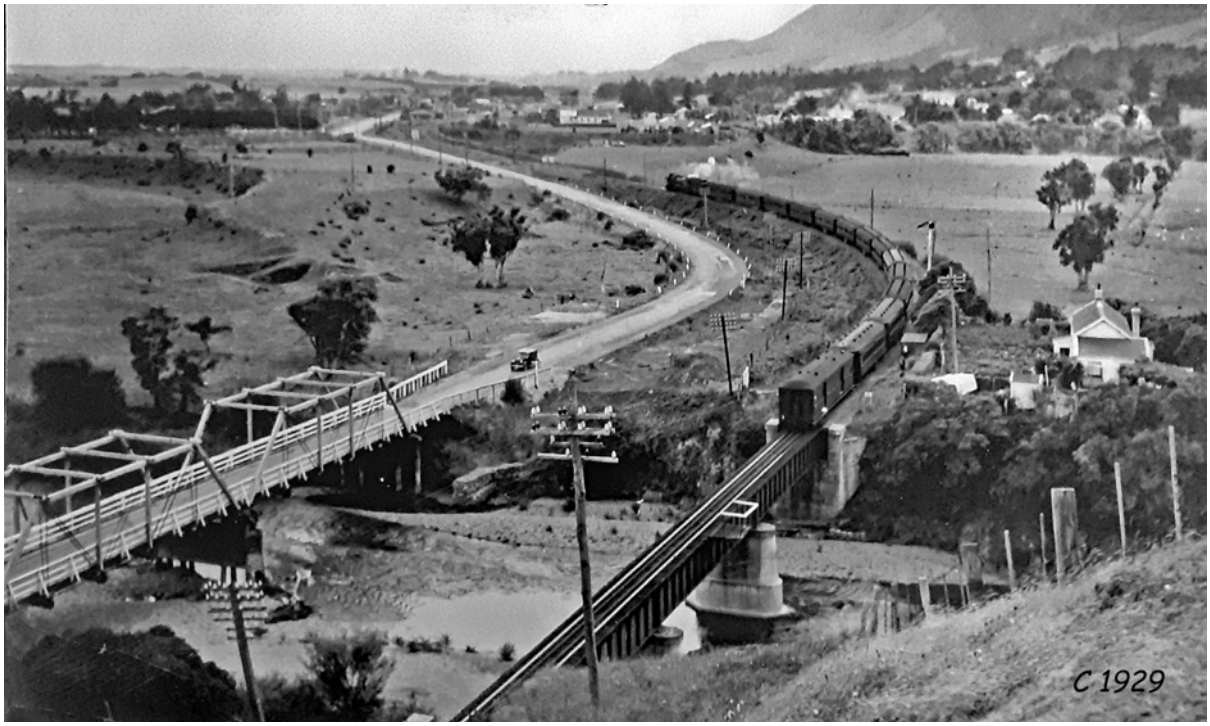
We are grateful to George Baird, Emeritus Professor of Building Science, Victoria University of Wellington, for visiting the museum recently and enlightening us about this light meter that we were unsure about, as in the last newsletter. He and his colleague *Christopher 'Kit' Cuttle, PhD FSLL FIESANZ FIESNA* have confirmed that it is not for photography but for measuring light levels inside buildings.
There is a scale on its reverse from which we should have realised this—see photo. George took it outside on a dull day and found that it works—around 400lux (into the blue/violet range), although it is likely that the meter's accuracy is somewhat diminished.

UNUSUAL ITEMS IN OUR COLLECTION - The Weston Lightometer

MUSEUM HOURS: FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1-4PM

PRIVATE & GROUP VISITS BY ARRANGEMENT

PHONE: 04 905-6313
ADDRESS: 9 Elizabeth St, Waikanae
WEBSITE: www.kapiticoastmuseum.org.nz
EMAIL: manager@kapiticoastmuseum.org.nz
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/kapiticoastmuseum
INSTAGRAM: www.instagram.com/museumonkapiticoast/



The Waikanae River Bridges

This photo has recently been unearthed within a calendar from a few years ago. We plan to include it in our current group of 6 photos taken from this viewpoint.

Our existing photos range from 1886 to 2011, but there is a big gap between 1902 and 1960, so this 1929 image will fit in very well. We may look at getting a 2024 photo, now that we have a cycle/walking lane attached to the road bridge.....

The committee is looking at producing a display of these photos so that they can be presented in a better, more standardised fashion, but the beautiful, large framed 1886 photo will stay 'as is'.

New Members:

The following members have joined us during the last 4 months—Clare Gleeson, Dee Halliday, Jeremy Smith, Robyn Smith and Amber van der Heyden.

Welcome, and thank you for your support.