

A message from Megan

I am continuing to add records to our PastPerfect data base as they are donated to the museum. The Watson collection continues to grow as Paul Watson finds and donates more treasures. Frances Powell donated records from North Bank and Te Rou school and Betty Boyce donated records from the Women's division of the Renwick RSA. We have also received several smaller donations. As we have changed the exhibitions in the museum items from previous exhibits have been catalogued and returned to storage. A very busy year.

Volunteers

If you have a keen interests in the history of Renwick please consider becoming a volunteer. At the moment we open on a Monday but we are flexible about this if Monday is a difficult day for you. We need help with every aspect of the museum from housekeeping through to cataloguing. Please email us if you are interested in joining our small and happy team.



The Museum

This museum is run entirely by volunteers. We rely solely on grants and donation to keep the museum running on a day to day level as well as to upgrade our displays.

Services available at the museum

LOCAL FAMILY HISTORY

GENERAL LOCAL HISTORY

ARCHIVES

MEMORIAL LIBRARY

PUBLIC LENDING LIBRARY



Renwick Museum
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Renwick, 7204

www.renwickmuseum.nz
FB Renwick Museum
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Christmas

Greetings

from
Renwick Museum
and
Watson Memorial
Library



2016



A message from our President.

All our museum bays have undergone upgrades over the last year and we have to thank Ray and Sandra for all their hard work in achieving this. Thanks also to our museum advisor, Megan, who has worked tirelessly throughout the year to keep all our artefacts catalogued and professionally archived. Shirley has looked after our scrapbooks for many years now and she has continued this throughout the year as and when her health has allowed it. Our new volunteer, Pam, has only just joined our team and we look forward to her enthusiastic contribution. We had a successful open afternoon recently, as part of the heritage festival, when Paul Watson gave an interesting talk on the history of the Watson family. Devonshire teas were served afterwards. This was so successful that we are planning to repeat it in the near future.

With Christmas a few weeks away I would like to wish you all

A HAPPY AND SAFE TIME AND ALL THE BEST FOR 2017.

Gwenda Hodson

A message from Sandra

One of the biggest projects that I have been involved in this year has been the upgrade of the signage of the bays. We were fortunate to receive a grant and with this we designed more professional looking signage to enhance our displays. This is still a work in progress. We also decided to change the look of the foyer and chose an evocative picture to display there, taken in 1923 it features local Renwick people. We are hoping in time to put names to faces and for this to happen we will need the help of their descendants. If you feel you can help us with this please call into the museum on a Monday, or by prior arrangement. It is going to be an interesting project.

Does anyone recognise any of these gorgeous little girls?



A message from Ray

Researching the history of Renwick is a fascinating pastime and every now and again you come across a brain teaser that gets you thinking. While researching Mr John Godfrey I went to the Omaka Cemetery records compiled by familytreecircles user ngairedith. Ngairedith has done an amazing job cataloguing the graves in there and linking them to newspaper cuttings of the time making for some interesting reading (sadly this research seems to be no longer available). When looking up the grave of John Godfrey I found the following comments:

"The deceased was the son of the late Dr Godfrey the patenteer of the medicine "Godfrey's Cordial" and with his brother Henry came to the Wairau and cast in their lot as settlers in the New Zealand early days."
So what was this mysterious Godfrey's cordial supposedly invented by John's father? A quick search on Google revealed that "Benjamin Godfrey's Cordial" was a notorious patent medicine used in the 1800's and also known as "The poor mothers nurse". The elixir, was a mixture of opium and treacle in water and was used to "pacify" unruly children and to quieten screaming babies! It was so addictive that thousands of children ended up hooked on it and many died.

So could it be that our Godfrey's own father was the inventor of this devilish brew? I tracked down the obituary in the Marlborough Express on Papers Past and sure enough that is what the article claimed:

DEATH OF AN OLD SETTLER.—John Godfrey, of Picton, well-known in Marlborough as a settler of 38 years standing, breathed his last at his residence, Picton, to-day. The deceased gentleman for many years took a prominent part in local politics, being more especially active in assisting to obtain separation of the present Marlborough Provincial District from the then Nelson district. Perhaps throughout Marlborough no more self-reliant or independent man lived than the late John Godfrey. Of late years he occupied most of his spare time in the advocacy of Single Tax as laid down by Henry George, and few men in the colony so thoroughly understood the principles of "Progress and Poverty," as did the deceased. Painstaking almost to a fault in his explanation and advocacy of this cause he never lost an opportunity of acquiring adherents where possible. The deceased was the son of the late Dr. Godfrey, patenteer of the medicine known as "Godfrey's Cordial," and with his brother Henry came to the Wairau, and cast in their lot as settlers in the New Zealand early days. Subsequently Mr John Godfrey settled in Picton where he continued to live till the day of his death. Mrs Godfrey, who survives her husband, had four children to him, all of whom are settled in Marlborough, and will receive widespread sympathy in their bereavement.

I decided to do a bit more research into this Godfrey's Cordial and eventually came across this:

Godfrey's Cordial

A patent medicine (HMS 4).

Thomas Godfrey (d.1721) produced a cordial of opium, saffras and treacle in Hertfordshire; nothing is known of Godfrey's life other than that his will describes him as a surgeon. Its manufacture continued long after his death (probably by rival quacks appropriating his name), the concoction remaining popular, addictive and sometimes deadly until the early years of the 20th century. The recipe was imported to America during the mid-18th century, with its local variant apparently becoming known as Dr Benjamin Godfrey's Cordial (see James Harvey Long The Medical Messiahs, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

Apparently the evil brew was invented and patented in England by this man Thomas Godfrey. The patent was much abused and copied by many others. The recipe eventually made it's way to the US where it became known as Godfrey's Cordial.

Thomas Godfrey was born around the late 1600's so could not possibly have been our Godfrey's father so what was the connection?

I decided to go to the genealogy website of the Godfrey family in Oxfordshire and as you might expect it turns out John Godfrey's father was called John Godfrey! It seems he was a surgeon and a well respected one with a practice in London and not the type to be selling cheap patent medicines! So where had this strange piece of misinformation come from? Even Norm Brayshaw had referred to it in an article and believed it to be true. I began searching Past Papers again using random lines from the original article and eventually came across this article in the Nelson paper "The Colonist" : Identical to the original but with the offending lines missing. The Colonist article was printed a week after the ME one. It seems that the Godfrey family

DEATHS OF OLD SETTLERS.

THE 'Marlborough Express' of July 6th, states :—

Mr. JOHN GODFREY.

John Godfrey, of Picton, well-known in Marlborough as a settler of 38 years standing, breathed his last at his residence, Picton, to-day. The deceased gentleman for many years took a prominent part in local politics, being more especially active in assisting to obtain separation of the present Marlborough Provincial District from the then Nelson District. Perhaps throughout Marlborough no more self-reliant or independent man lived than the late John Godfrey. Of late years he occupied most of his spare time in the advocacy of Single Tax as laid down by Henry George, and few men in the Colony so thoroughly understood the principles of "Progress and Poverty," as did the deceased. Painstaking almost to a fault in his explanation and advocacy of this cause he never lost an opportunity of acquiring adherents where possible. The deceased was the son of the late Dr. Godfrey, and with his brother Henry came to the Wairau, and cast in their lot as settlers in the New Zealand early days.

had noted the error (presumably added by an over enthusiastic reporter) and had it removed in the later article.

So there we have it. John Godfrey was not the son of a notorious quack after all but the son of a well respected English doctor but why he came to New Zealand well that's another story...

http://www.stsepulchres.org.uk/burials/godfrey_john.html

