

# **Opening Of Stoneycroft & HB Knowledge Bank**

**Date & Time:** 1-3pm 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012

**Venue:** Stoneycroft Reserve – 901 Omaha Road (Cnr of Omaha Rd/SH 50A). Entrance off Omaha Rd.

## **Ceremony Format:**

**1.00pm** Hastings Citizen's band playing in grounds

**1.20pm** **Town Crier** (Peter Trask) announce arrival of Mayor Yule : signals band to rest

**1.30pm** **Mayor Yule enter horse & cart**

**MC** (Mark von Dadelszen on front steps) welcomes crowd and Mayor Yule.

### **Mayor Yule acknowledges dignitaries**

MC tell story: There have been only five owners of Stoneycroft in its 137-year history. That's remarkable. Even more noteworthy is that we have representatives of each of those five families here today.

They are about to arrive in the next few moments.

Keep back from the shingled area to allow room for horses.

**1.38pm** **Enter Mr Birch on horseback** (Mrs Birch escorted to her seat) Mayor greet Birch.

**MC:** W. J. Birch founded Erewhon Station at inland Patea on the Taihape Road in 1867. From there he sent cattle to Lieutenant McDonnell's camp during the campaign against Te Kooti. He and his brother were active in Hawke's Bay County affairs and both served as councillors for the Erewhon riding. Their overriding objective was to extend the road from Hastings to Taihape but it was not until 1885 that the first coach reached the Rangitikei River. Thus he built Stoneycroft as his town house. Arriving here on horseback today is another Bill Birch, proud donor of memorabilia to the knowledgebank project.

**1.40pm** **Enter Mr & Mrs Beamish on horse and cart.**

**Note:** EIT Film crew to film cart at front door in reproduction of 1890 photo. Mayor greet Beamish.

**MC:** The next occupants of Stoneycroft, in 1890, were Nathaniel Evanson Beamish, his wife Elisabeth, their daughter Fanny, and youngest son Jack.

Nathaniel lived at Stoneycroft till his death in 1919, and the house remained in the ownership of the family until 1942. At this moment we are re-creating the top photograph of those you see around you. Again you see a cart arriving at the front of Stoneycroft with Bill and his wife, the oldest surviving Beamish aboard.

**1.43pm Enter Randal & Susan Simcox in vintage car Mayor greet brother and sister.**

MC: Now take heed of the ivy-covered Stoneycroft you see in the lower photograph. It was presented by Beamish's daughter Fanny who married Dr Penrose Barcroft in 1908, and left for England after her father's death. In 1934, after the Hawke's Bay earthquake, an interim certificate of title to Stoneycroft and its 2.0 acres has Fanny Lowry Barcroft, widow, Hastings as owner. Fanny died in 1957.

At some stage Mrs Jean Harrison, mother of Speaker of the House Sir Richard Harrison, leased Stoneycroft.

Among the Barcroft descendants today are brother and sister Randal and Susan Simcox.

**1.45pm Enter Mrs J. H. Wilson and Mr T.D.M. Edmonds in vintage car Mayor greet brother and sister.**

MC: In 1942 the Certificate of title was transferred to RPM Edmonds (Ships Officer of Wellington) and T D Edmonds (farmer of Hastings). Mrs Edmonds then lived at Stoneycroft. Apparently the Edmonds, friends of the Harvey family of Hastings befriended Dr Diamond Allan Ballantyne and his wife, Sybil Joyce, possibly at the County Club in Hastings.

Representing the Edmonds are, from Northland, Mrs J. H. Wilson and her brother, Mr T. D. M. Edmonds.

Their father, Terry, is more than 90 years old, has in pride of place in his rest home in the Bay of Islands, a noted watercolour of Stoneycroft; his main possession.

**1.48pm Enter Dr Tim and Jonathon Hull and Melissa Audeau (Hull family representing Diamond Allan and Joyce Ballantyne)**

MC: The County Club is now remembered in a remarkable display inside Stoneycroft. It is a coincidental link with Diamond Allan Ballantyne and his wife Sybil, for they bought the homestead in 1954 and their stewardship of the property led to the maintenance of the property in a significant way.

Their godson Dr Tim Hull is here today, along with his daughter Dr Mellissa Audeau and son Jonathon, all significant figures in the Stoneycroft story.

They have come, from Dunedin and Christchurch, to hear Mayor Yule declare the grounds of this place a reserve to be preserved in posterity by the Hastings District Council.

**1.50pm**     **Mayor Yule to speak and officially open Stoneycroft Reserve**

**1.55pm**     (Town crier) **Crowd moves from carpark round to other side of homestead (near Rose Garden) for the rest of the proceedings. Hastings Citizen Band plays during interlude.**

**2.00pm**     **MC calls to order and invites Mayor Yule to talk about the History of the homestead.**

**2.02pm**     **MC calls on Dr Tim Hull, representing Ballantyne Trust**

**2.04pm**     **MC calls on Dr Barry to present Melissa Audeau's posy**

MC: Another of Mr and Mrs Ballantyne's godchildren was Tessa Duder née Staveley, a New Zealand swimming champion and author of novels for young people, short stories, plays and non-fiction. She is primarily known for her Alex quartet. As an editor, she has also published a number of anthologies.

**Dr Barry:** Tessa send the following message:

I am sorry family commitments prevent me from attending the opening of Stoneycroft today.

As one of Joyce's five god-children, I was an occasional visitor to Stoneycroft from the 1950s onwards and was always entranced by the charm of the carefully restored interior and the spaciousness of the formal grounds.

She didn't often talk about the hard work this had entailed, though once, she mentioned the challenge posed by the wooden flooring. I remembered this because the image of Joyce on her hands and knees with sanding paper was somewhat at odds with the rather formidable personality she presented to the world.

I do know that now she would be enormously pleased to see her beloved home so beautifully refurbished and established as permanent civic asset for Hastings.

**2.05pm**     **MC calls on Dr Barry to present the HB Knowledge Bank**

Dr Barry's speech attached

**2.07pm**     **Mayor Yule to declare refurbished Stoneycroft and Knowledgebank open by cutting ribbon.**

MC: Now we come to a prime moment of this day, when, as people of Hawke's Bay we pay our complements to one of the province's most tireless historians.

**2.08pm**     **Mayor Yule to talk about Lily Baker Library**

**2.09pm**    **Dr Barry presents Lily's flowers**

**2.10pm**    **Mayor Yule declares Library open by unveiling plaque**

**MC Invites public to sign visitors' book as they file through the Knowledge Bank (front door).**

## **Lawrence's Speech**

### **History of Reserve (carpark side):**

In 2005, the Hastings District Council purchased the homestead and grounds to enable the community and visitors to appreciate the significance of this site as well as providing additional park open space within Hastings city.

The property consists of the homestead, several outbuildings and the surrounding gardens, all of which are subject to the provisions of a heritage covenant, put in place by the previous owner, Mrs Ballantyne. The covenant was established to ensure the conservation of the property which includes several notable trees, which are registered with the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture and also protected under the Hastings District Plan.

Following the granting of the new lease to Hawke's Bay Digital Archives Trust in 2011, Council began planning the redevelopment of the reserve to compliment the future use of the homestead. This included:

- the redevelopment of the formal rose garden, including the new pergola,
- installation of new signage to promote the reserve and its history to park visitors
- redevelopment of the carpark, including entry ramp and
- development of new perennial garden beds near the carpark and driveway entrance

Further development of the reserve will include additional tree planting scheduled next year.

Thanks to:

- NZ Historic Place Trust
- Creations Paving
- Evergreen Landscapes
- Opus Mayor Yule
- Council officers and staff from Council's Parks Business Unit for the work they have undertaken to transform this lovely park into an attractive public space.

### **History of Homestead (lease to HB Digital Archives Trust) - on Verandah:**

Stoneycroft is registered as a Category II Historic Building by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

The original building has remained largely undisturbed over the past 130 years. With the exception of the replacement of the roof, following the 1931 earthquake, the house otherwise escaped unscathed with no major damage.

Since its purchase from the Ballantyne trust Council has undertaken significant work particularly on the exterior of the building.

This includes the repaint of the homestead, which was based on the original colour palette and ensures the decorative details and forms of the house are accentuated. Yes, the alternate colours on this verandah roof are original.

In 2009 Council sought Expressions of Interest for the future use of Stoneycroft, from which the proposal from Hawke's Bay Digital Archive (HBDA) was approved. The lease was officially signed a year ago yesterday.

Thank you to the Trust, with the help of its members and a multitude of volunteers who have put in thousands of hours to restore the interior of the homestead. Their names are recorded on a digital display in the public room behind me.

The Ballantyne Trust, headed by the Hull family have been great contributors, not only financially but materially. This has led to the Ballantyne room upstairs, a memorial to Dr and Mrs Ballantyne and now a purpose-built oral history studio. It has also led to valuable items of furniture and works of art being returned by the Hull family on permanent loan.

One of the most significant contributors is Dr Hull's daughter Melissa, here today from Dunedin.

Other large cash contributors are the Eastern and Central Trust and the RD9 Historical Trust, publishers of the most successful book "West to the Annie", the story of settlement along the coach road leading to Erewhon.

In addition to the tremendous work by the newly-formed Hawke's Bay Digital Archives Trust and its volunteers have undertaken, I'd like to recognise the role of Council Officers, in particular Rob Collins who has greatly assisted with this project.

### **Formation of Lily Baker Library - on Verandah:**

Forty Years ago the New Zealand Society of Genealogists saw the need to establish a branch within the Hawke's Bay area. Initially there were only 6 members but at its peak membership numbers swelled to almost 150.

Over the years the members have collated thousands of references to people within Hawke's Bay which were initially transported to and from meetings in a suitcase. However in 2011, the Hawke's Bay branch was invited by the Knowledge Bank to use the facilities at Stoneycroft to host their meetings and to establish a permanent library.

Many hours were spent restoring the neglected building, which now houses compact shelving units and the original library cupboard.

In recognition of one of the Society's most dedicated members, the library has been officially named the Lily Baker Library.

Lily, sitting here beside me, is known throughout New Zealand as a genealogist, but she's more than that.

her work locally and nationally for the Historic Places Trust, on the all-important Hastings Landmarks Committee and the district's Heritage Trails Committee is but a small example.

The Hawke's Bay Digital Archives Trust had no hesitation in establishing the library as a tribute to her work. But that's not all, Lily is to be feted by her compatriot genealogists at their 40th anniversary dinner in Hastings tonight.

I now declare the Lily Baker Library open (unveil the plaque).