

The Delivery Bicycle

Recently a partially restored delivery bicycle was handed back to the museum by Keith Farrow, alias Egbert McGerkinshaw. This is the sort of work some of our volunteers finish for patrons to enjoy. There is not much known about the bike, except that it was covered in bright yellow paint, but now looks great with its coat of black enamel.

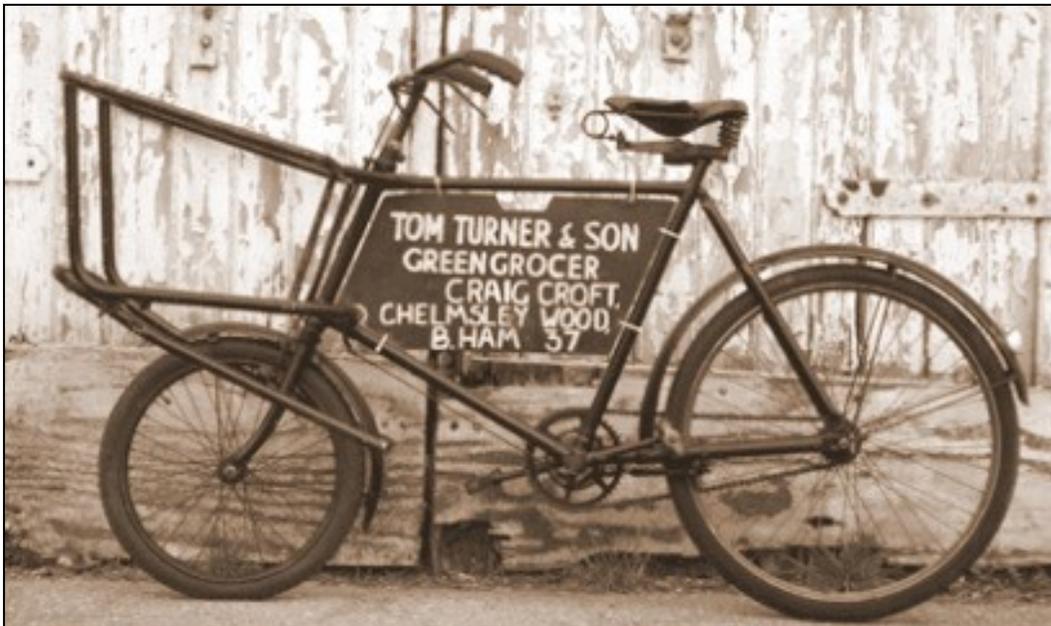
I wonder what sort of story this bike could tell?

They were human powered and designed and constructed especially for transporting loads. The 'cargo area' consisted of an open box, a flat platform, a wire or cane basket and was usually mounted over the front wheel. It may have been known as a Tradesman's bike, the Butchers bike, Cobbes' bike, the Milkman's bike or the Mailman's bike, or just the delivery bike.

This bike had a front carrier, a wicker basket.

In the 1920s many small businesses relied on these bikes, carrying goods to be delivered. They were ridden by employees rather than the owners. A baker may have had a load of bread; or a butcher the meat for his clients; or urgent deliveries may have been made by the chemist. In 1939, in London, there were 4,000 ice cream bicycles. Did they become the modern day 'Mr Whippy'? Some were used by families to deliver their children to school.

I know, my husband completed deliveries round Feilding from 1952 to 1954, of parcels to customers of Cobbe's Department Store, on a bike like this. He can recall other firms who had delivery bikes were Malcolmson's Butchery, McGruers' Furnishing, Groombridges' Sweet Shop and theatre and Smith's Grocery R H



The delivery bicycle recently accessioned at The Coach House is similar to this bike. There is no signage on the bicycle we have.

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A collection of interesting items for friends and supporters of 'The Coach House'

What is a Veteran?

A 'Veteran' whether on active duty, discharged, retired or reserve is someone who, at one part of his life, wrote a blank cheque made payable to 'Queen and Country', for an amount 'up to an including his life'.

That is Honour, and there are way too many people in this country today who no longer understand that fact.

Pride Runs Deep

From *Patrick Nolan's* 'Coach House display' for Anzac Day.



Soldiers Remember
New Zealand Veterans complete a pilgrimage.

Home Guard

We observe specific events of wars and the part the Army, Navy and Airforce played, but for those at home in New Zealand the Home Guard was also a part of their lives.

The Home Guard was a wartime service during World War 11 that was established with the primary objective of defending New Zealand from the threat of invasion. It was modelled on its British equivalent and was formed in 1940. Membership was initially voluntary.

Pressure grew for a citizen army to defend home and for the rural militia to guard the coast. Ex-territorials and returned soldiers, farmers whose production responsibilities held them to the land, deer stalkers and rifle clubs eventually were gathered together. Fit men aged 18 to 55 years trained in the weekends and evenings by returned men, armed and organised by the government, ready to repel any invasion.

One of the main responsibilities of the

Home Guard was to destroy bridges that could be used by invading forces. Farmers with experience from World War 1 were used to construct beach obstacles such as barbed wire entanglements and to build concrete pillboxes. Blackouts were imposed and enforced by the Home Guard.

Initially the guard were not supplied with uniforms and had to make do with armbands. For a long time there was a shortage of weapons as well. However, by 1943 training and resources had improved so that 100,000 guardsmen had uniforms. The basic unit of the guard was the platoon. Platoons were intended to provide defence of their own localities, although some also patrolled the beaches.

Much of their training was completed locally and I remember stories my father told of grenade practise, without grenades, where they tossed dried cow pats at the 'enemy' while crawling on their stomachs in their Army type uniforms, when at the end of the exercise their uniforms were smothered in cow muck.



New Zealand 'Home Guard' Soldiers at lookout points around the coastline, dressed in their, long awaited, Army issue great coats.

From early in 1940, New Zealanders began to live in fear of attack or invasion, first by the Germans and later by the Japanese.

Members of the Home Guard who served for 28 days full-time or 6 months part-time were eligible for the New Zealand War Service Medal.

Also, for our mothers with young families, they lived in fear of invasion, after being instructed to have minimal essentials packed, and to be ready to be taken to the hills, if need be. R H

Excerpts from: Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand.

A Child's Life

Ina Law remembers that the children were expected to do after school tasks which were allotted to them, without any further telling from their parents. The boys were responsible for the wood supply; kindling wood was split from Totara, Matai was brought to the back porch, cut into suitable sizes for the stove; Maire was used only for the open fires, because of the intense heat and it burned with a gentle flame and left very little ash.

As brother John got old enough he did his fair share with milking the house cows, feeding the calves, and pigs.

The girls were responsible for setting the table and washing up after the meal was over. We used a big basin and washed the dishes on the kitchen table. They filled the basin using a big enamel jug with hot water from the stove.

A closed mill site nearby gave the children lots of discarded timber which they used to build and make things from. An immense pile of clean sawdust was a favourite place for children to play.

Saturday mornings were a busy time for the girls. They were expected to clean all the cutlery, the brass taps and door knobs. All the boots were cleaned too, the best ones ready to wear to church and the school ones for Monday morning. All the door steps were scrubbed and lino polished.

However Saturday afternoons were free for playing, a time to go for long rides on their ponies.

At an early age they were taught to knit

and crochet- their first attempt were usually baby booties. They knitted garters for their Granny, which were long strips of knitting about one inch wide, which wrapped around her legs with the loose end firmly tucked in.

Another pleasant chore was to make a small button-hole of flowers ready for their father to wear to church every Sunday.

Perhaps if some of these ideals were introduced again our idle youth would be more occupied. R H

Further excerpt from: 'Tall Totara - Deep Gorges', by Ina Hair, a pioneer's daughter.



Hide and Seek
A favourite childhood game.