

## The Gorge Road

News of the Gorge Road has been to the fore lately, and for some it affects their livelihood.

The Manawatu Gorge divides the Ruahine Range and the Taraua Range, being carved through by the Manawatu River on its way to the sea. Rangitane legend says a giant supernatural being created Te Apiti, the pass- by forcing a way between the two mountain ranges. Known as a difficult and dangerous route, Maori crossed in a waka.

Later a road was dug into the southern side of the gorge. It began as a horse and foot track until a road was opened for carriages in 1872. The road was built using dynamite that fractured the rock, leading to more slips on the road side. But the size of the landslides we are experiencing in the gorge now are much bigger than what could be caused by using dynamite.

In the early days people travelled by horse and cart and it was often that people and stock travelled or walked the near 8 kilometre length.

In 1875 a toll for the road was introduced, collected at a small settlement called Gorge, at the Woodville end. In

1885 an English visitor described

' landslides, howls of wind and the carriage's closeness to the cliff's edge. Giant Totaras, ragged with age, draped with moss and lichen, tower in masses above the lower bush, which is thickly clung with creepers. The clang of the hooves of horses on the hard road, or the boom as we cross a culvert or bridge, echo from cliff to cliff'.

Later trucks were used as they were more efficient and cheaper. Heavy vehicle traffic through the gorge has grown, while rail cartage had dropped.

Major upgrades were made in the 1960s and 70s making a great difference to the speed and ease with which cars could travel through the road.

Earthquakes continue to weaken the slopes and over time lots of small shakes can combine to damage the rock mass and have a detrimental effect on the stability. Now roading officials are deciding on a new route between Manawatu and Hawke's Bay which could be completed within 5 to 7 years. The Gorge is a vital link for the whole country, and locally it's critical.

Excerpts from Manawatu Evening Standard and 'Stuff'. R H



Information display at car park and Gorge entrance

# Coach House Chronicle

Volume 10  
Issue 17

November  
2017

in association with  
**Feilding & Districts Community Archive**

## BUTTON STICK

At Smoko a piece of thin, flat brass, with shapes cut into it was placed on the table for discussion.

Quickly it was identified as a military issue, Button Stick; a tool designed to avoid getting Brasso on your uniform when cleaning and polishing the brass buttons, buckles, badges and other components of a soldier's uniform. Fittings on webbing were also polished to the highest standard. A soldier carried one of these in their personal kit.

Although 'stay bright' buttons were introduced in the mid 1950s, many units continued to use traditional brass buttons.

In a book on cavalry in the First World War, it was said that soldiers used their button sticks to dry their horses down and scrape off the dirt.

With thanks to **Keith Morris** who has this family memento in safe keeping for future generations.

R H



## Then and Now

The Archive have a very interesting display in the foyer of common household items from the turn of the century and their more modern equivalent. A clothes iron, a pen and ink well, with many more examples to make you smile and give food for thought and discussion. RH



We reported on 'The Early Settlers in the Feilding and Manawatu District' in the October **Coach House Chronicle** via Part One from Marilyn Wightman. Here is **Part Two** giving a written portrait of these pioneers..continued ...

**MANAGH:** Charles Managh came from Tyrone, Ireland about 1875. He married Amelia Schwass. One of their family photo albums is on display. Popular in the 1870s to 1880s, these portraits of family members meant a way to remember 'folk back home'. This style of photo was called 'cabinet photography'. Mounted on a firm card they were durable and specially designed albums to house the photographs in a safe way. Many Managh descendants farmed in the Halcombe area.

**MASON:** Early settlers to New Zealand in the 1840s, the Masons settled in Lower Hutt where 'Quaker Mason' had a 20 acre garden at Avalon. Horticulture was in their genes as a descendant Frank Mason settled in Feilding and established a plant nursery. All the Masons were prolific diarists and their efforts are held in the archive. Many locals will have purchased roses from the Masons or had bouquets of flowers arranged by them.

**MOUNTFORT:** Charles Mountfort, son of Charles Mountfort and nephew of his famous architect Uncle, designer of Christchurch Cathedral, was born in that city.

He came to Feilding in 1872 and was one of the initial surveyors for Manchester Block. He settled here and spent his working life all round the district. On display are his travelling shaving kit and gunshot flask. His daughter donated these items many years ago and noted he often shot his supper when out camping while completing surveying work.

**WONG:** In 1907 Wong Mong Jook came from China to join relatives who were market gardening in Wellington, then the Manawatu. He returned to China to marry and brought his wife and family to this area in 1919. The family continued to market garden on their return to New Zealand. Willie, their son was born and raised in Feilding and became Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge and his portrait is one of many in the Lodge Photographic Collection.

**WISHNOWSKY:** A widow emigrating and bringing her large family arrived in 1875 from Poland. They originally settled in Halcombe. One, an accomplished black smith, crafted dental tools which are on display. Also, there is a Lutheran baptism card of the 1870s. It folds up to become a compact square which, with clever design contributes to it surviving so well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Members of the Wishnowsky family farm in the Halcombe area.

With thanks to Marilyn Wightman, Archivist, FDCA.

## THE CARTWHEEL PENNY

Recently a well worn piece of money turned up at Smoko. It was a pre-decimal twopence, a coin worth one, one-hundred-and-twentieth of a pound sterling. It was only minted in 1797 by Matthew Boulton's Soho Mint. Minted in copper, it weighed 2 ozs, and had a diameter of 1.6 ins.

Before Decimal Day in 1971, two-hundred

and forty pence equalled one pound sterling. Twelve pence made one shilling, and twenty shillings made a pound. Values less than a pound were usually written in terms of shillings and pence, e.g. forty-two pence would be three shillings and six pence, 3/6, pronounced 'three and six'. Values of less than a shilling were simply written in terms of pence, e.g. eight pence would be 8d.

These coins were made redundant in 1860 with the advent of bronze coinage. It was believed that the face value of the coin should correspond to the value of the material it was made from, so each coin was made from two pence worth of copper – 2 ounces.

The large size of the coin, combined with the thick rim where the inscription was punched into the metal, led to the coins being nicknamed 'cartwheels'.

About 720,000 tuppences were minted.

On one side the coin features a right facing portrait of George 111 and stamped on the rim are the words GEORGIUS 111.D.G.REX. Dei Gratia Regina is a Latin title meaning By the Grace of God. Queen. On the reverse side is the left-facing, seated figure of Britannia. Above the rim is stamped the word BRITANNIA;



she is the symbol of British unity, liberty and strength and the Bank of England.

You could buy a good condition 'cartwheel' on ebay from \$10 to \$575, as an old world coin. Otherwise it has no monetary value now except as a collectors' item.

Thanks Norm Lind for bringing your 'cartwheel' along for us to view. RH

## Equestrian War Statues

Does the number of legs in the air of an equestrian war statue tell the fate of the rider? While on a British coach tour I heard this statement and thought it very interesting.

There is a commonly held belief that equestrian statues follow a sort of code, which essentially dictates how the rider died. The most common theory has it that if one hoof is raised, the rider was wounded in battle, possibly dying of those wounds. Two raised hooves meant death in battle; all four hooves on the ground, the rider survived all battles unharmed.

Sometimes, after much research it was found to be the rule for some statues, but there is no proper evidence that these hoof positions are right, but people believe it to be. It is true in some instances, but false in others.

The memorial shown with this article

relates to all World War 1 mounted soldiers and their horses, it is not depicting one specific soldier. R H

