



# the Duntroon DIGGER

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**Next issue:** 1st April. Please send your contributions to us at [duntroondigger@gmail.com](mailto:duntroondigger@gmail.com) by 26th March. See 'Digger dates' for this year in this issue.

## Domain Popular With Campers Over Summer

### Domain Report - Summer 2025 by Geoff Keeling

While the weather may not have played its part for those seeking sun and heat over the recent holiday period the Duntroon Domain has still been a very popular spot for young and old to spend time and relax.

Patronage has been strong with many nights from Xmas through to mid January regularly seeing 30 or more people staying. The peak night was 29th Dec. where there were over 50 adults and numerous young children staying. It's great to see lots of people on the sports field area playing in the open spaces - not like up at the lakes having to worry about traffic and being crammed in beside other people.

Thanks must go to our camp caretaker Steve who maintains the facilities to an extremely high standard of cleanliness at all times.

### Grounds:

At the recent LTP submissions, DDDA requested that the level of service at the domain be increased with more frequent mowing and at a lower height. This was accepted and has made a real difference, both in appearances and in suitability for the weekly summer cricket on Friday afternoons.

Significant work was undertaken by the council contractors to mow around the edge of the domain that had become unkempt and an eyesore over a number of years. The majority of the wild pampas grass has also been dug out and removed. The remainder will be sprayed out as required. Both the DDDA and council are keen to see these better maintained and will be planted in more suitable shelter.

Continued on overleaf

## DUNTROON PLAYGROUP

THURSDAYS 10-12 PM | BEHIND DUNTROON SCHOOL

COME AND JOIN US!

AN INCLUSIVE SPACE FOR RURAL  
PARENTS TO HANG OUT WHILE  
THEIR CHILDREN PLAY.

BRING YOUR LITTLE ONE'S  
MORNING TEA, THE JUG IS ALWAYS  
BOILED FOR THE ADULTS.

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP- DUNTROON PLAYGROUP FOR MORE INFO

## Domain Report - Summer 2025

Continued from front page

### Entrance:

Just prior to Xmas the entrance into the domain was significantly upgraded with a gravel track 100m in length from the gateway over towards the domain building. This gives a more defined path for vehicles and should hopefully substantially reduce the muddy track over wetter and colder months.

To help with that we will be requesting that the cricket and soccer families / supporters park outside the main domain area. To aid in this we have installed a pedestrian gate at the rear of the domain building for easier access.

### How the Domain Works:

The DDDA has an agreement with council to operate the domain as a campground. Camp fees are charged to all users and these are paid to the DDDA and virtually all expenses for the domain are covered from this income. The camp supervisor gets a percentage in return for cleaning toilets / kitchen / bathrooms and general day to day maintenance. All R & M, such as painting the building, repairing damage from the 2020 floods, repairing building floors, gas, power etc., are paid for from this. With increased usage we also need to look to provide better, modern and more robust facilities to cope.

The DDDA charge a management fee, which effectively covers volunteer time throughout the year and this then becomes DDDA funds to leverage for other projects. Any surplus profit after all the above then becomes council funds. This varies depending on patronage and the amount of improvements undertaken at the domain.

The DDDA has an excellent working relationship with council and we are always pushing council where to direct these surplus funds for improvements within the community that would otherwise go unfunded or incur a rates cost. The best part about the money generated from the domain is that it is 'outside' funds, not paid by any of us in our rates but rather by visitors to our community. Hopefully this visitor spend also flows through to the other businesses / attractions in Duntroon.

### Help us find the needle in a haystack

Chilean needle grass (CNG) is an invasive grass that can grow up to one metre tall. It has bright green leaves and distinctive long-tailed seeds with a pointed base. CNG has flowerheads between October-December that are drooped with a red-purple tinge.

CNG spreads easily on clothing, machinery, vehicles, feed and livestock and is very difficult and costly to control once established. Their sharp, needle-like seeds can also penetrate the flesh and eyes of livestock, causing serious injury and degrading meat and wool products.

If you have seen CNG or think you have it on your property, contact us on 0800 324 636 or email [biosecurity@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:biosecurity@ecan.govt.nz)

[ecan.govt.nz/chilean-needle-grass](https://ecan.govt.nz/chilean-needle-grass)



 Environment  
Canterbury  
Regional Council  
Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

## Community Garden and Share Shed

by Jan Keeling

The volunteers at the community garden space on Livingstone St continue to toil away keeping up with the production of veggies and pulling of weeds. Much of our produce goes into the share shed in the village or shared amongst the volunteers.

The share shed in the village has also been a busy place with donations of fruit, veggies, seeds and seedlings, as well as books for the bookshelf. Any money donated for the produce or books goes back into the DDDA account for the garden or other projects around the village.

If you would like to join in with our group of volunteers for any of our gardening working bees we meet from @ 1 - 3pm on Tuesday afternoons. It is along the south end of Livingstone St, approx. 200m beyond the cattle-stops. For more info. text or call Jan 0274979006.

## Please Be Seated by Karan Lawrence

It was a generous offer. The Duntroon Volunteer Fire Brigade was looking for a new home for a two-and-a-half-metre length bench seat and thought it would be an asset to the Duntroon Domain; they even delivered it.

Well, the domain caretaker Steve Smith looked at it and decided he could bring it back to its former glory, and so, it came to pass. First of all, he had to dismantle the seat completely. This revealed that the steel frame had sections of the gig wheels incorporated into the frame to create the arches! Every inch of the frame was sanded down and taken back to bare metal. The wooden planks were treated likewise. Some planks needed to be replaced. New macrocarpa timber was sourced from a local resident happy to contribute to the project, and this was planed and sanded to match the original timber. The frame was painted a lustrous black; even the bolts were painted and the timber was painted an old-fashioned burnt red to compliment the verandah in front of the domain building.

The gig wheels piqued interest and making enquiries from former residents of Duntroon, namely Marion and Lawson Baird and Doug Morris and Sally Pilbrow, it was revealed that the seat was one of two given to the Duntroon Fire Brigade. They had come from the outdoor bowling club.

You read that correctly, there used to be two bowling clubs in Duntroon. An indoor bowling club and a lawn bowling club. The latter was founded in February of 1949 and was very successful until membership waned and it went into recess in the early 1960s. Also, in 1957 a club for ladies was formed and this too flourished for a while then it was dissolved circa 1966.

So next time you are down at the domain and want to take the weight off your feet, feel free to recline on a piece of Duntroon history.



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## Nicol's Blacksmith Historic Trust Update by Jan Keeling

This year the trust is beginning a fundraising drive to raise money to restrain the exterior of the Blacksmith's building. It was restored and reopened in 2015 and now is beginning to show some wear and tear from 10 years in the elements. To ensure its integrity we need to re-stain to protect the timber cladding. I have started a Givealittle page to simplify donating to the project.

We need to raise some money from within our community to contribute to our grant applications. Currently the money we raise from the sale of metalwork created at the forge and donations from tour groups barely covers our running costs of insurance, electricity and compliance. If you are interested in visiting while the forge is working, we are open with volunteers on weekend days between 10-3pm.

We offer "have-a-go sessions" for school age children for a donation. Half day beginner lessons are also available. This is volunteer dependent and needs to be booked. For more information call or text Jan Keeling 0274979006.



## Long-Term Plan Consultation

Community engagement meeting in Duntroon - Duntroon Hall 20th February 6:30-8pm.

Waitaki District Council is currently preparing its Long-Term Plan. This is effectively a document outlining council's work plan and budgets for the next 10 years. Ahead of approving this plan in June 2025, Council will shortly be putting out a consultation document which outlines the key areas that council is working on and seeks feedback from the community on a wide range of topics. We will be holding community meetings and providing a lot of communication around this over the next month, so that we can get as much feedback as possible in order to take the community's views into consideration in finalising the Long-Term Plan. Document is on our website at [Fit for the Future - Waitaki's Long Term Plan 2025-2034](#) | [Let's Talk Waitaki](#)

## Important Information from the Council Regarding the Community Halls in the WDC's Proposed Long-Term Plan

**A communication recently received by the hall committee from the council:** I wanted to let you know in advance, that community halls are one of the topics that we are specifically looking into and asking for the community's thoughts on. This is an area of focus for a number of reasons that many of you have shared with us in recent years, including:

- The need for and use of halls has changed. Many of our halls are under utilised or barely used at all anymore.
- The costs to maintain the buildings are significantly increasing and some of the buildings are no longer fit for purpose.
- Costs like insurance and electricity have increased massively in recent years, and it hasn't been possible to increase rental income enough to cover the increased costs.
- The change in governance and reporting rules and regulations for hall committees has added an increased burden on those responsible for managing the halls. Some hall committees are struggling to find people to take on these roles and meet the new requirements.
- There may be an opportunity or desire that we are unaware of, to sell, or re-purpose a hall, and use the money to fund another community initiative.

We have a two-page spread in our consultation document that asks ratepayers "Do you really need that community hall?" It informs the community about the points noted above and provides a list of all halls across the district. We have also outlined the amount of rates each household pays, the total running costs, and the total rates collected for each Hall. We hope to raise awareness about community halls and see if any good ideas come out.

Windsor Hall is a good example of this. The hall is currently on the market, and if sold, the Committee intends to use the funds to build a purpose built shed that will meet the wider needs of the community. The rates will still be sort in the normal manner but will instead go towards servicing the new building. The committee has done a great job seeking feedback from the entire Windsor Community and coming up with an idea that suits the changing needs of the community.

We are very aware that many of the halls are well utilised, and we are also conscious that there is strong sentimental value attached to our halls, even if they are no longer being used. We are simply asking for the community's views and ideas at this time. You are very welcome to provide your own feedback and encourage members of your community to provide feedback also.

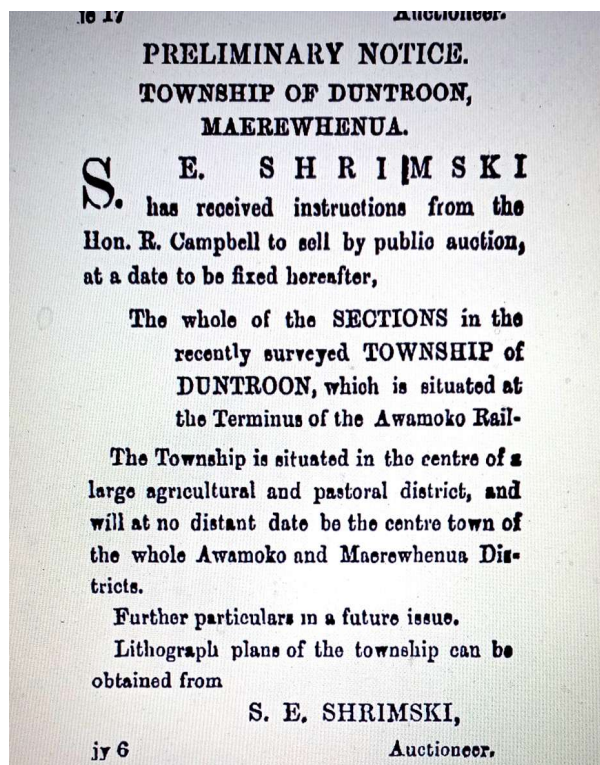
I would like to stress that no decisions or changes can or will be made without consultation with the relevant hall committee. We will share any findings we have with you, and you may choose to look into any options further.



# Historic Duntroon: The Survey of 1875

by Anne Phillips-Vira

It seems fitting to launch into this sesquicentennial year with an article on where it all began for the township of Duntroon. I started my research with a series of advertisements from The North Otago Times (Township of Duntroon, 1875). Several of these ads were published between July and October 1875. They raised three questions for me: why did Robert Campbell have the land surveyed and auctioned off in October 1875, where was the 'lithograph' mentioned in the ad. and who carried out the survey of the township of Duntroon?



*Township of Duntroon, 1875*

With those questions in mind, I began my search.

Eventually I came across an article in The Otago Daily Times which mentions 'another new township' (1875, p.2) cited on the west bank of the Maerewhenua and that the name of the township was to be Duntroon. The 1875 article also states that the land "forms a portion of the extensive property of Robert Campbell" (p.2) and that lithographic plans were in circulation with a view to the sale of sections taking place in October.

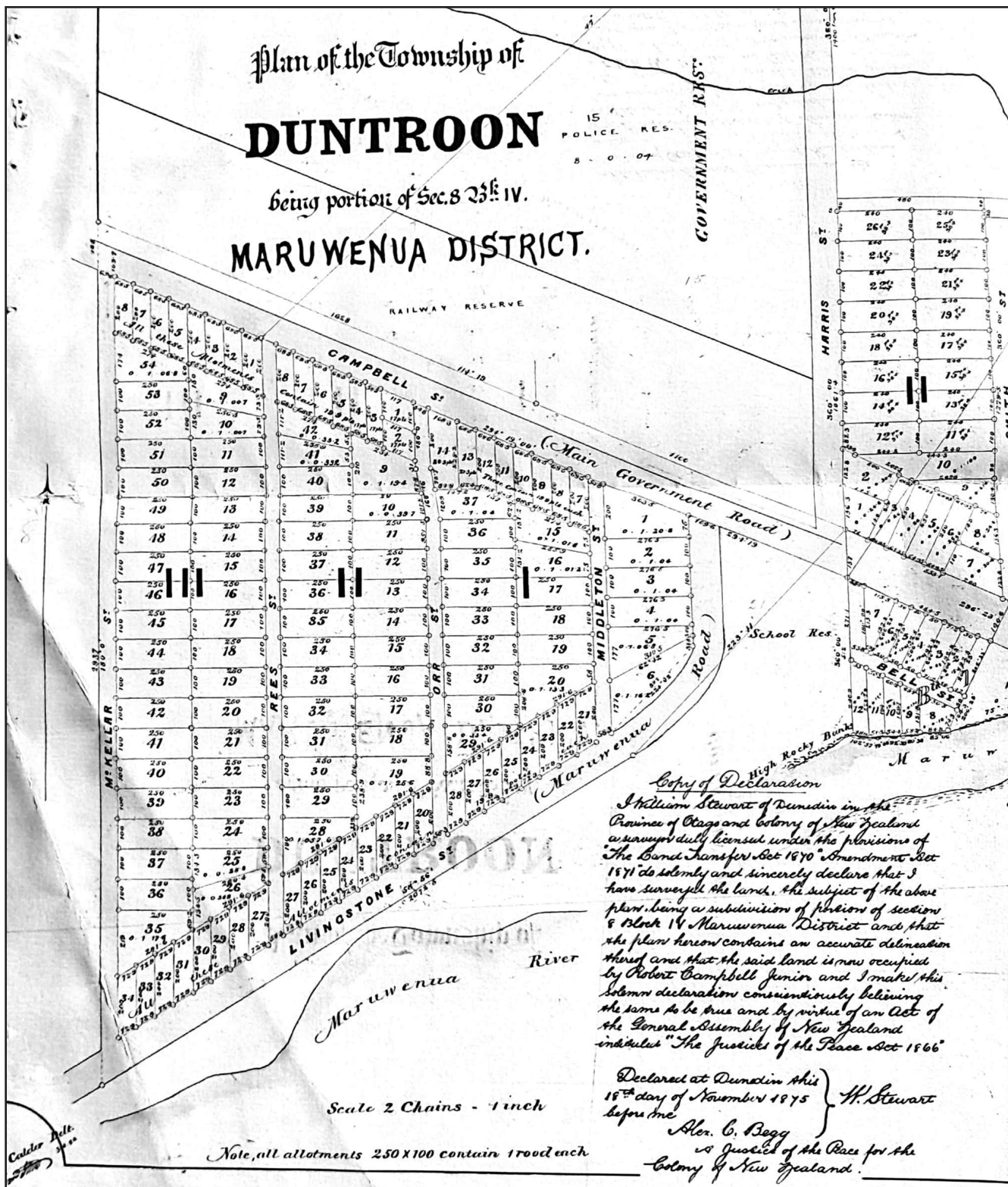
In the Duntroon Centenary booklet (1979), Joyce Fridd states that Campbell's intent was "to establish a village for his many workmen" (p. 37). Monteath-Walker (n.d.) also claims that Duntroon was the "village where Robert Campbell's workers lived while working on Otekaike" (p.140) and Selwood (n.d.) mentions that while Campbell was in England between 1875 and 1876, he dispatched Scottish tradesmen to build Campbell Park. However, I couldn't find any hard evidence to support the notion that Duntroon was established for Campbell's workers. Were there perhaps other reasons why he decided to found the village of Duntroon?

McDonald (1940) asserts that "many ... runholders were mere speculators" (p.26). He uses the Maerewhenua Run as an example of land that was sold three times in its first year with a significant profit being made on each occasion. McDonald also mentions that "several landowners took advantage of rising land values to sub-divide their estates and offer sections for sale" (p. 113). Campbell's name comes up with reference to the sale of 850 acres at Whitstone (on the Weston-Ngapara Road) in 1878. The land had been purchased for just £1 an acre a few years before but was sold for £20, 280. Perhaps the sub-division of the "prime site just north of the Maerewhenua River" (Fridd, 1979, p. 37) offered up an opportunity for Campbell to gain revenue as was the case in the sale of Whitstone.

Another point that grabbed my attention in McDonald's research was that after Campbell's election as the first Chairman of the Waitaki District Council in 1877 there was some discussion over whether Oamaru or Duntroon should be the county town. According to McDonald (1940) "an amendment in favour of Duntroon [was] defeated by seven votes to two" (p.112). I checked the minutes of the 1877 WDC meetings. Unfortunately, there was no mention of the content of this discussion or of who voted in favour of the amendment. This raised the question whether it may have been Campbell's intention, as the district's largest runholder and first chair of the WDC (McDonald, 1940), to have Duntroon declared the county town?

Next, I wondered about the naming of Duntroon and its streets. I mentioned in an earlier article that the name Duntroon came from the Campbell ancestral home in Argyll, Scotland (Monteath-Walker, n.d.). It's noteworthy that Duntroon's main street is named after Campbell and that Middleton, Orr, McKellar and Rees, were all the names of Englishmen who had close connections to Campbell (Pinney, 1981). All of them worked for Campbell but it appears that only one of them, Robert Roe Orr, ever lived





Plan of Duntroon Township R25795743

in Duntroon. Most were managers of Campbell's many stations and lived further afield. There will be more on their relationship to Campbell in upcoming articles. So perhaps Duntroon was not established for Campbell's workers. He may have had greater aspirations for the township than many of us initially believed. The answer to the 'why' question remains open for speculation.

Finding the lithograph mentioned in auctioneer Shrimski's ad. (Township of Duntroon, 1875) was not as straightforward as I expected. After trying several sources without success, I eventually received a positive response from Archives New Zealand, only to learn that a loss of government funding meant that they couldn't provide the service to send me the survey map. However, they suggested that I might

access it by way of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists. I was thrilled to receive scanned copies of the original lithograph just two days later courtesy of a Wellington based NZSG volunteer. He explained that the map was quite large – almost a metre square and unusual as it was printed on a “sort of waxy cloth” (R. King, personal communication, January 16, 2025).

I now have an uncertain answer to my ‘why’ question and a certain answer to my ‘where’ question. Details on the men who carried out the 1875 survey and those after whom Duntroon’s streets are named will be explored in the next issue. Thanks to Jan Keeling for providing me with files containing the initial advertisements and articles from Papers Past. I would be happy to receive your thoughts, feedback or any further clues regarding the origins of the Duntroon township.

#### References.

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## DDDA Annual General Meeting 2024: Summary of Chairman’s Report

### Duntroon Domain:

- Power sites upgraded, funded by Meridian.
- Enhanced Annual Plan (2024-2025) submitted to WDC by Geoff Keeling
- Council have agreed to - allocation of \$7000 per year for mowing
  - \$25000 to improve entrance way
  - consider upgrade of toilets in future LTP
- Pampas grass removal completed / gate access for pedestrians in progress
- Thanks to Steve Smith for caretaking and Geoff Keeling for management of the domain

### Nicol’s Blacksmith:

- Steady forge activity through 2024, new interest from Kurow and beyond
- Park bench installed on grounds
- Thanks to Judy Waterston and Jan Keeling for keeping things going

### Duntroon Gaol:

- Proposed repair and maintenance to include: enhancement of picket fence, repairs to floor, window trims, fascia boards and overall paint

### Duntroon Wetland:

- Numerous working bees throughout 2024 have resulted in:
  - Installation of track edge at rear of gaol (thanks to Fielding family for timber)
  - Planting of @ 450 grasses along track edges
  - Maintenance of access walkway foot-loop (ECAN funded)

Continued on overleaf

## DDDA Annual General Meeting 2024: summary of Chairman's Report Continued

- Cutting back of flaxes from track edges
- Spraying and mowing to eradicate willow, blackberry & gorse thanks to Habitat Restoration. Total cost \$7400, \$3600 of this funded by MEL
- Thanks to Lloyd Grafton, Geoff Keeling, Katrina & Daniel Moffat & all volunteers for ensuring the awesome appearance of the Duntroon Wetlands

### Duntroon Website:

- Thanks to Karan Lawrence for the continual updates of the website and Facebook page

### Community Gardens/Duntroon School Garden:

- Thanks to Jan Keeling and volunteers for ongoing production of vegetables for the share shed. All cash donations go back into the gardens.

### Wetland Trapping Group:

- WDC sustainability fund for trapping and tracking project has been granted/implemented
- Traps purchased and installed together with DOC traps has resulted in successful trapping of possums & hedgehogs. Thanks to Faye Ormandy & Richard White for their support

### Community Liaison:

- Duntroon Digger is now produced by Gill Gee, Allan Kynaston and Anne Phillips-Vira. Thanks to Mike Gray for his long commitment as editor and to Alison Simpson for her support with historical information.

### Local Issues:

- VAS system is back in place (shared with Maheno)
- Bollards and signage for Village Green installed/improved to prevent damage, enhance safety
- Thanks to Katrina Moffat for cleaning and keeping the Public Toilets looking neat
- Thanks to fellow committee members and all volunteers for their continuing commitment & contributions

Owen King (DDDA Chairman)

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## Duntroon Digger Dates 2025

Dear Readers

We are providing the following table as a guideline/reminder of Digger dates for 2025.

The table below also provides a 'pre-digger' deadline date for those of you who wish to send in content such as advertisements, letters or articles. Please note that we do not advertise items for sale. We suggest that this be done on the Duntroon Facebook page.

We intend to email The Digger on the same date as publication. Hard copies will be distributed by our deliverers as soon as possible after publication.

| Month    | Pre-Digger Deadline | Publishing Date |
|----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| February | 29/01/2025          | 04/02/2025      |
| April    | 26/03/2025          | 01/04/2025      |
| June     | 28/05/2025          | 03/06/2025      |
| August   | 30/07/2025          | 05/08/2025      |
| October  | 01/10/2025          | 07/10/2025      |
| December | 26/11/2025          | 02/12/2025      |

Thank you for your ongoing interest in The Digger. We look forward to receiving your news items, comments and letters in the year ahead. Please send to Gill at [duntroondigger@gmail.com](mailto:duntroondigger@gmail.com)



# The Maerewhenua Hotel and its Publicans by Allan Kynaston

This is the first of three articles tracing the history of Duntroon's three hotels and to a degree, the general history of the town. My research began as a lockdown project and was then put aside. Over the last month there has been a flurry of renewed activity involving building on the original research and attempting knock the resulting mass of information into a readable state. The resources I have used have included Papers Past, Births, Deaths and Marriages and the Waitaki Archives, all of which can be accessed on line.

## Out on its Own

The Maerewhenua Hotel, which existed as a licensed premises for a least 21 years, was established in c1862, a good thirteen years before the town of Duntroon was surveyed and officially came into being. In the early years the hotel was the town so to speak.

The hotel was strategically located at a place where the Maerewhenua River could, with relative ease, be forded by bullock and horse drawn traffic travelling up and down the Waitaki Valley. Quite apart from being a convenient overnight stop, it was a tempting place to pause and take refreshments prior to, or after, fording the river. When gold was discovered in Livingstone district, in 1868, it would have also benefited from the considerable traffic heading up and down up the Maerewhenua Valley. Then of course, as far as the bar trade was concerned, there were the workers from the surrounding pastoral runs.

19th century country hotels, such as the Maerewhenua, were more than just places that provided bar facilities and accommodation for travellers. They were, in fact, equally in the business of housing and tending to the needs of the travellers' chief means of mobility; horses. As such, they provided stabling and grazing and usually employed grooms. Hotels on main roads were normally spaced so as to provide staging depots, where stage coach operators could change their horses. A team of horses always needed to be on hand and ready to go. Country hotels were also places where meetings and functions, such as dances and weddings, took place.

## The Rise of Duntroon

The township of Duntroon came into being on 27 October 1875 when Oamaru auctioneer, S. E Shrimski, acting for the Hon. Robert Campbell, sold 33 recently surveyed sections. Subsequently, the town's business area quickly developed. Edwin C. Smith relocated his general store operation from the Maerewhenua goldfields to Duntroon in 1876 and a year later Oamaru based, Spence & Bee, opened a branch of their business in competition. The new Terminus Hotel and its extensive livery stable opened in 1877 and by 1878 there were also reported to be blacksmithing, tailoring, leatherworking and shoemaking businesses in operation.

What probably helped spur on the development of the business area was that, after the Waitaki Valley Railway reached the east bank of the Maerewhenua River in Dec. 1875, Duntroon had become an important trans shipping centre, where goods were transferred from rail to road transport and vice versa. The town was apparently particularly busy during the seasons when grain harvests and wool were being brought down the Waitaki Valley to Oamaru. After the first passenger trains began running in August 1876 Duntroon also became the Valley's stage coaching terminal. All goods and passenger vehicles had to ford the river to get to and from the east bank Maerewhenua Railway Station, and so travel past the Maerewhenua Hotel. As such, it continued to do good business. However, the boom years were short lived for both the hotel and the town. Plans to bridge the Maerewhenua and continue the railway to Kurow were soon to be implemented.



*The loft of the Maerewhenua Hotel's two storey stone stable. Tallentire, H. (n.d.) Courtesy of Alison Simpson.*

## Duntroon Eclipsed

The building of the bridge was underway by October 1877 and the construction of the Duntroon - Kurow section of railway began in 1879. The bridge, which was a combined railway/road structure, was completed on July 1881 and the laying of the tracks was finished in November 1881. With the opening of the railway Duntroon soon lost most of its trans-shipping trade to Kurow and its businesses naturally experienced reduced patronage. By this stage the town had acquired a third hotel in the form of the, still existing, Duntroon Hotel.

Both the Duntroon Hotel and the previously mentioned Terminus Hotel had the advantage of being sited on the main road and close to the new Duntroon Railway station, whereas, the Maerewhenua had been bypassed by the

new road alignment and, as such, had lost its vital passing trade. While it continued to function its days were numbered. It seems the licensing authority regarded it as no longer fit for the purpose and had also decided there would be not enough trade for three hotels. In September 1883 its license was cancelled.

After the railway opened some Duntroon business people saw a better future in Kurow. Naturally the stage coach operator, William Goddard, relocated to Kurow and so did the saddler/leatherworker George Raven. Also, two of the Maerewhenua's former publicans, Arthur Smith and Bernard Delargy, saw the town as offering good prospects. In 1892 George Raven, commented "he had himself been engaged in trade here [Duntroon] where he spent many happy years." He went on to say: "Unfortunately Duntroon had not been very flourishing since the passing through of the railway." Duntroon still had a district to serve, however, and, while no longer flourishing, it still seemed to offer many opportunities for business people to make a reasonable living. The subsequent breaking up of the big estates in the district and the resulting intensification of farm ownership would help the town maintain its status as a comprehensive service centre for decades to come.

## The Maerewhenua's Publicans and Milestones

Over its 21+ years of its existence the Maerewhenua had eight known publicans. What follows is a look at the lives of each of these men and, where known, their wives, and the events that took place during their tenures. Women played a prominent part in the 19th century hotel trade. While running a country hotel was generally a joint effort, many publicans wives, who outlived their husbands and decided to continue running their hotels, pretty much proved that their husbands had been surplus to requirements. Some of these widows, such as Julia Eichardt of Queenstown, were known to be exceptionally business savvy, but of course, with children to feed, they needed to be.

### 1. JAMES and KEZIAH LITTLE - A Time of Racing and a Holdup

It is most likely that the Littles were the first hosts at the Maerewhenua Hotel, but there is no certainty. I have yet to find any reference which will answer the questions of when and by whom the Maerewhenua Hotel was established.

The earliest reference to the hotel, I have found, appears in the Otago Daily Times (ODT), 9 Feb. 1863. Here it is recorded as 'Little's Hotel, Maruenua' in a list of accommodations houses, situated along the route between Oamaru and Clutha Ferry (Albert Town). This reference, at least, confirms that the Littles were the hosts at that stage and that the hotel must have been established before 1863.

Another early reference appears in a report on a horse stealing case, published in the ODT on 2 June 1863. I quote: "Mrs Dansey gave him (the person from whom it was stolen) a mare to ride down to Marewhenua where he arrived about dusk. He put up at Little's accommodation house,...". The highly detailed account of the evidence went on to reveal that the hotel had a bar, a stable (not quite completed), and at least one upstairs room.

In early December 1864, perhaps in an effort to publicise the hotel, but more likely because of his interest in race horses, James advertised a racing and sports day to be held on Boxing Day. The racing was to take place on a course, "1 mile around", situated on his land adjoining the hotel. This course was probably laid out on the area which includes the modern day Duntroon Domain. It was later reported that the day was a great success and well attended. Popular race meetings continued to be held at the venue until a new course was established on the flats, just east of the corner of Earthquake and Racecourse Roads.

In July 1865, the Littles came in for a bit of unwelcome excitement when the so called 'bushrangers', Alfred Davis and William Evereste, dropped by in the midst of an aimless crime spree along the Waitaki valley. Davis held James and his groom, James Thompson, at gun point and demanded horses. A shot was fired at Thompson but fortunately it missed. Davis and Evereste were later apprehended further up the valley.

From reports of the subsequent court case, we learn that James' wife was named Keziah (spelt Kezia in one report) and that they had children. However, Beyond those snippets of information James' world remains a mystery. I have found no information regarding the Littles' backgrounds or their lives subsequent to

ON  
BOXING DAY, 26TH DECEMBER.

**A** RACE MEETING will take place at the Marewhenua, on Boxing Day. Open to all horses that have not previously ran for public money,

The first prize competed for will be a MARE, the property of

MR JAMES LITTLE,  
Of the Marewhenua Hotel,

And valued at L30, which will be run for by 10 horses, at an entry of L2 each. The winner will be guaranteed L25 for the Mare.

SADDLES, BRIDLES, etc., etc., will then be offered for competition, full particulars of which will be hereafter made public.

OTHER SPORTS,  
Of a varied character, will take place during the day.

BOXING DAY,  
MONDAY, 26TH DECEMBER.

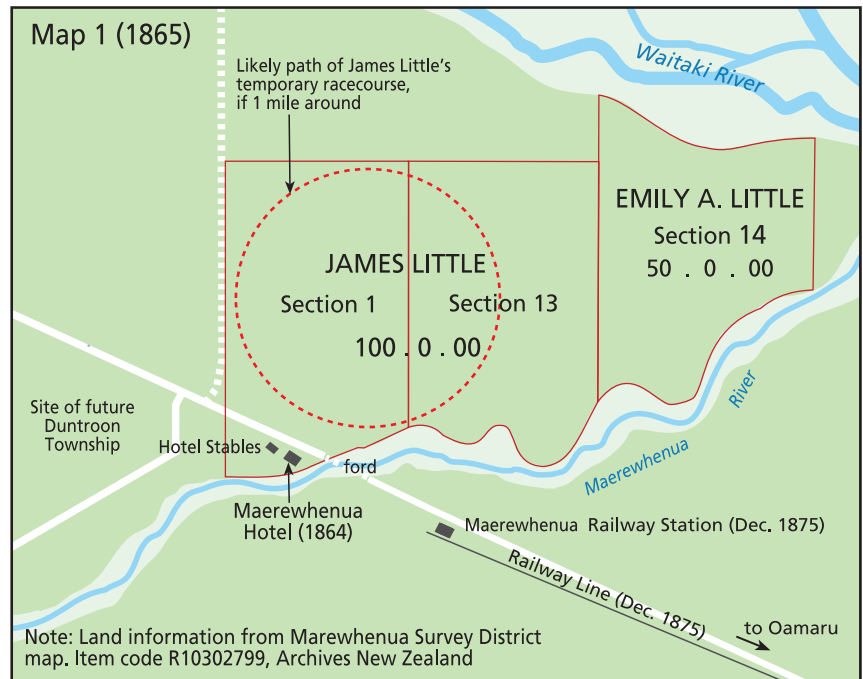
*North Otago Times, 15 Dec. 1864*

leaving the hotel trade or, indeed, anything about their children. It does not help that there were several James Littles living in Otago during the late 1800s, none of whom I can verifiably link to our publican. Then there is the mystery of how Emily A. Little was related to James. Her name appears on an 1865 map (see Map 1) as the owner of the property adjoining his. I would be very interested if any readers can throw some light on any of the above holes in my research.

hotel and property up for sale in Feb. 1866. Advertisements described the property as being: 100 acres of land, 20 of which were in crops, and the improvements as being: a hotel, newly built, partly of stone, of 13 rooms with bar and kitchen, a large stone stable

with 6 stalls, a stockyard, bryres, a dairy [milking shed], and a fowl yard. On the 8th June 1867 James transferred his license to Henry Newey, but it is unlikely the ownership of the buildings and land changed hands.

James was not finished with the Duntroon hotel trade. In 1877, he (I am assuming it is the same James Little) reappeared for a short time, as the first publican at the then new Terminus Hotel. The Terminus and its publicans will feature in the next article.



## 2. HENRY and JESSIE (nee Kennedy) NEWHEY

Prior to taking over the Maerewhenua Hotel the Neweys (who had married in 1864) had presided over the Clyde Hotel, in Hampden. Henry had been also a partner in the firm of Armstrong, Payne and Newey, which ran the Star and Garter Hotel in Oamaru, but he left the partnership on 22 April 1865.

The Neweys officially opened their doors at the Maerewhenua Hotel, on 22nd June 1867, with a sports day, which was advertised as including 'a pigeon match for a horse valued at 20 pounds'. The Neweys presided over the Maerewhenua Hotel until December 1868, when Henry swapped licenses with George Alexander (Alex) Harris, the then publican of the Kakanui Hotel.

## 3. GEORGE ALEXANDER (ALEX) HARRIS - A Long Term Duntrooner Arrives

Alex Harris was living in the Oamaru district by June 1863 and was in business, as a painter and glazier, by 1864. On 4th December that year he was granted a licence for the Kakanui Hotel, to which he made 'extensive alterations'. He also became the local postmaster and was chairman of the Lambourne Local Board.

Harris ran the Maerewhenua Hotel for over seven years before handing it on to Lachlan and Jessie Grant. After he sold the hotel he remained a resident of Duntroon and in late 1877 became the second publican at the then new Terminus Hotel, but more about his time at the Terminus in the next article. He was greatly involved in local affairs and was a member of the committee, formed in January 1878, to erect the Duntroon School. He was also involved in the North Otago Tuff Club.

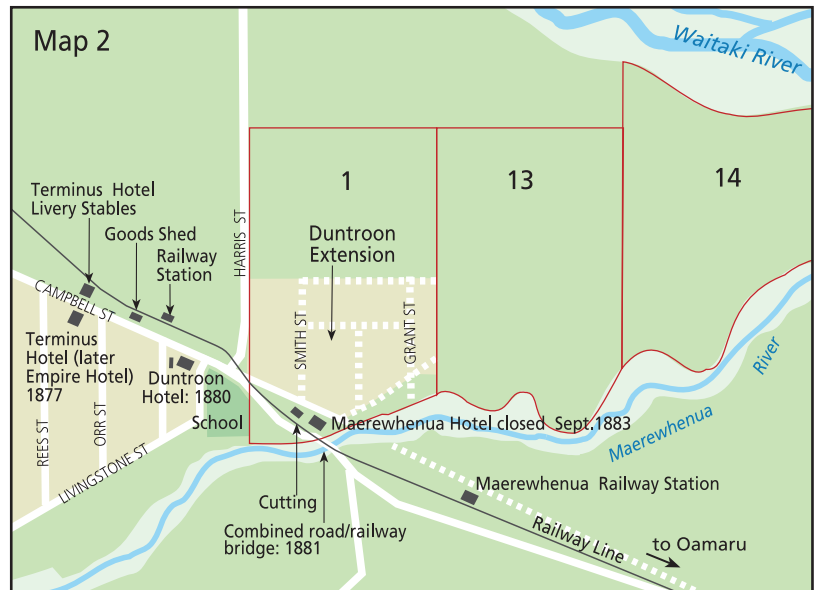
## 4. LACHLAN and JESSIE (nee Russell) GRANT - One Hotel Leads to Another

Lachlan Grant and his wife Jessie had taken over the running of the Maerewhenua Hotel by early September 1876. Born in 1832, Lachlan was a native of Cromdale in the Scottish Highlands, while Jessie was born in Inverness in 1841. Her father was an innkeeper and farmer. The Grants had seven children.

The first verifiable mention of Grants being in New Zealand was in January 1869, when Lachlan was reported as operating the accommodation house at Omarama. Advertisements, during the early 1870s, reveal that he was also raising thoroughbreds, hacks and cattle. During early and mid 1870s, he advertised the services of the stallion 'Waitaki', which first stood at Omarama and then on his property at Duntroon. It was a series of adverts offering Waitaki's services that allowed me to verify that the Lachlan of Omarama and the Lachlan of Duntroon were one and the same person.



In early December 1876, for reasons unknown, Lachlan began to cash up his assets. First he advertised the auction of his stock and farm implements. Also listed was the goodwill of the lease of the Omarama accommodation house. Then, in early 1877, he began advertising for auction, the Maerewhenua Hotel, together with furniture and stock in trade, and the adjoining 180 acres of land fronting the Waitaki and Maerewhenua Rivers, which included 100 acres of farmland and 80 sections [which had been surveyed off as the 'Duntroon Extension']. The auction was held on 14 April and it was reported that there was a very large attendance. The hotel did not reach reserve and was passed in. The sale of the Duntroon Extension sections was contingent upon the sale of the hotel and were withdrawn even though, according to the reporter, there were many willing buyers present. The 100 acre block was sold to Hislop & Greagh solicitors of Oamaru and the hotel was subsequently sold privately to Roderick Mackenzie.



*It would seem three of the surveyed streets in the Duntroon Extension were named after the Maerewhenua's publicans: Alex Harris, Lachlan Grant and A. A. Smith.*

Lachlan died in odd circumstances, on 30 July 1878. It was reported that he left G. A. Harris' Hotel (the Terminus) "sober" and was "found deceased near the old brewery [at the Brewery Hole], about 6 chains from the hotel, at 6.30am the following morning." A doctor who examined his body believed his death was caused by sanguineous apoplexy (cerebral hemorrhaging), due to exposure and intemperance.

At the time of his death Lachlan had title to Sections 1, 2 and 3, Block 1, Duntroon Township (dated 6 Dec 1875) and it was on these sections that the present Duntroon Hotel was built for Jessie. In Dec 1879 she applied for a licence and in a series of adverts appearing in the Oamaru Mail during 1880, she described herself as the proprietress and her premises as a 'First Class Family Hotel'. On the 3rd August, however, she married former police sergeant, Benjamin Welsh and, in line with the law of the day which forbade married women from holding hotel licenses, the license was soon transferred to him. But more about the Duntroon Hotel in the third article.

## 5. RODERICK AND MARY MACKENZIE - Time For a Rebuild

As noted above, Roderick Mackenzie purchased the Hotel in April 1877. It was reported that he had paid 1500 pounds for the hotel and 200 pounds for the furniture, and that he had bought the bar and bar business for valuation. The hotel license was transferred to him on 5 June 1877. The Mackenzies had been prominent in the Oamaru and North Otago hotel trade since the early 1860s.

In April 1877, the Mackenzie's architect called tenders to extend the Maerewhenua Hotel and, on 24 Sept. a North Otago Times reporter, who had just toured the area, wrote of the completed work: "The old Maerewhenua Hotel has been largely added to, renovated, and completely transmogrified." He went on say: "The Maerewhenua, like every house, which has had Roderick and his wife for host and hostess, is clean, comfortable, and well conducted." Then he gave a lengthy description of the extensions and improvement before saying: "I am sorry to hear though that the present host and hostess are shortly to disappear from the scene, having sold the lease for a term, it is said, to Messrs Lintott and Otterson for a good round bonus and a handsome rental."

The aforementioned Lintott & Otterson (George Lintott and Alfred Otterson) were the proprietors the 'Oamaru Brewery' (founded 1876). The partners were investing in hotels in an attempt create a network of tied houses, and apparently owned the original Bridge Hotel in Kurow before it was destroyed by fire in 1880. If Lintott & Otterson did buy the lease of the Maerewhenua Hotel (there is no indication that they had purchased the hotel buildings), it must be assumed that the incoming licensee, Arthur Smith, was beholden to them. Lintott & Otterson were declared bankrupt in July 1881, resulting in their brewery being sold. Whether the Mackenzies retained ownership of Maerewhenua Hotel, I do not know.

In due course the Mackenzies moved to Teaneraki (now Enfield), where they bought the Teaneraki Hotel (later the Enfield Hotel). Roderick died on 1st Sept 1879, aged 70, and was buried in the Oamaru Old Cemetery. Mary, however, continued to run the Teaneraki Hotel until 7th April 1888 when she sold it to Thomas O'Donnell of Oamaru.

## **6. ARTHUR and MARIE (nee Schleuter) SMITH - Coaching HQ for a While**

On the 4th December 1877 the Maerewhenua's license was transferred to local coach operator, Arthur Anthony (A. A.) Smith, who ran it for the next three years. Smith would have been familiar with the Maerewhenua Hotel business, as he had been using the hotel as his Duntroon - Omarama coaching service terminal and his booking office was located within the building. As well as presiding over the hotel, he continued to run the coaching business.

Arthur was born at Winchester, England in 1840. It is not known when he migrated to New Zealand, but it is recorded that he was working as a carrier in Oamaru at the beginning of the 1870s. It is also recorded that, in 1871, he married Marie Louise Schleuter (a native of Libenbourg, Germany) in Oamaru. The first indication that the Smiths had moved to Duntroon was on 12 Dec 1876, when A. A. Smith & Co., a partnership between Arthur, Charles Hille and W. G. Munroe, first advertised its Duntroon - Omarama Royal Mail coach service. The partnership was dissolved on 26 October, 1877, after which Arthur ran the business on his own account under the same name. Later he brought in William M. Goddard as a partner and on 21 Jan 1880 sold his interest in the business to him. Goddard retained the booking office at the Maerewhenua Hotel and it remained his coaching terminal until the Duntroon - Kurow railway became operational. At that point he transferred his headquarters to Kurow and launched a Kurow - Omarama coach service. His Duntroon - Omarama service ended in early October 1881.

Arthur was declared bankrupt on 4 August 1880, but was discharged in October. It would appear that he was still running the Maerewhenua Hotel on the 19th December, when, along with the publican of the Terminus Hotel, he objected to Jessie Grant receiving a license for the new Duntroon Hotel.

Like his former partner, William Goddard, Arthur moved to Kurow, where he commissioned the construction of the new Bridge Hotel and became its first publican. On 9 June 1883, he transferred the licence to Goddard and, shortly after, he and Marie moved to the North Island. His departure was much regretted by a Kurow correspondent: "as he ran a good house and was prominent in school matters". Subsequently the Smiths presided over a succession of large company owned hotels in the upper half of the North Island, before retiring to Epsom in Auckland, where Arthur died in 1923.

## **7. BERNARD and MARGARET (nee Davoron) DELARGY - A Time of Flying Rocks**

Bernard Delargy, a former West Coast miner and publican was the next licensee. It is uncertain when Bernard arrived in New Zealand, but in the late 1860s he was recorded as being a miner at Brighton, on the West Coast. In 1877, he married Margaret Davoren and on 26 May, that year, the couple took on the Royal Hotel in Kumara, which they ran until early 1879. It is unclear when the Delargys actually moved to Duntroon, but it was reported on the 27th Jan. 1881 that Bernard had been elected to the Duntroon School Committee.

Due to forces beyond their control the Delargy's tenure of the hotel was trying. As noted earlier, at the time the Waitaki branch railway was being extended to Kurow. The work included the building of a bridge across the Maerewhenua River and the blasting and leveling of an approach, which ran along a slope at the back of the hotel. The North Otago Times reported on 25 June 1881 that "the cutting through the rock at the back of the Maerewhenua Hotel has been a tougher piece of work than had been anticipated. Although this work was within a very few feet of the hotel and outbuildings, the manner in which these buildings escaped was little short of marvelous." However, a rock "the size of a wheelbarrow" did go through the wash-house roof and the hotel, itself, was damaged by a similar sized projectile. In such circumstances the renewal of Bernard's licence was in doubt. At the licensing meeting, on the 15th June 1881, an objection was raised by Sergeant Major Thompson (of the police) to the rewarding of the license because of the dangerous proximity of the railway line to the hotel and that the buildings were in a bad state of repair. Bernard, however, promised to put the house in repair as soon as the blasting operations were completed and so the license was granted.

The Delargy's stay was short lived. On the 6 March 1882 tenders were called by the owners "for the purchase of the freehold of the hotel (with furniture and stock) and sections 1, 2 and 3, block 1, Duntroon Extension." The advert went on to state that "The present lease expires on 31 March and the license will be transferred on payment of the balance." On 3 April 1882, Bernard applied to transfer his license to Thomas John Bunting at the June 1882 licensing meeting.

After a year running the Shamrock Hotel in Oamaru, the Delargys moved to Kurow where, in July 1883, Bernard became a partner in the Bridge Hotel with the previously discussed William Goddard. In June the following year, however, the partnership was dissolved, with the Delargys continuing the Bridge Hotel business and Goddard buying the rival Kurow Hotel. After Bernard died in 1899 Margaret assumed ownership of the Bridge Hotel, but leased its operation out. She died in 1928, aged 80 years. The Delargys share a grave in the Hakataramea Cemetery.

## 8. THOMAS JOHN BUNTING - End Leads to Trouble at Georgetown

In the Otago Witness, dated 3 June 1882, the Duntroon Correspondent reported: "One of our hotels, the Maerawhenua, has changed owners recently. On May 30 the incoming lessee, Mr T. J. Bunting, gave an 'open house' to his friends and patrons on the occasion of his so doing." Prior to taking on the hotel, Bunting had been a general storekeeper and wine and spirits merchant in Oamaru.

Five months after taking over the Maerewhenua Bunting filed for bankruptcy. However, it seems, this did not effect his lease. The Hotel was up for auction again in April 1883, but I do not know who the vender was and if it was sold. On 21 August 1883, Bunting was granted a renewal of the license "on condition that a new house is erected by the applicant within three months at Georgetown, to which place he would transfer such license." It seems at that stage, the licensing authorities had decided that the Maerewhenua Hotel was no longer a suitable premises and, as Bunting's move to Georgetown was a self imposed condition, it would seem that he agreed with them.

As it turned out the Georgetown community objected to the prospect of having a licensed premises in their district and on 10 Sept. they presented a petition to the licensing committee in opposition to Bunting's plans. The committee took note and, as Bunting had made little progress with his Georgetown venture, his licence was henceforth cancelled. With that, it seems, the Maerewhenua Hotel closed for good. Bunting subsequently moved to Peebles, where he presided over the Peebles Hotel from March 1884 until 1885. In 1891 he moved to Melbourne. As for Georgetown, in 1888, a hotel was established in the village by Robert Forrest, but it was licensed for accommodation only. It would not be until the early 1900s that a liquor license was granted.

## What Happened Next?

What the old Maerewhenua Hotel buildings were used for after the license was cancelled, I have yet to establish. I do know, however, that buildings and the land they stood on came into the hands of Alex Harris sometime between March 1884 and March 85, when he was listed as the owner and ratepayer. It was reported that at the time of his death, in 1899, that he owned 'Sections 1, 2, and 3, Block 1, Duntroon Extension with the old hotel buildings and stone stables there on' and that his estate sold the sections to R. McGillivray.

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## The Dansey's Pass Trail Ride 22nd of March 2025

Located on Bushy Creek Road, 9km from Duntroon, via the Livingstone - Duntroon Road.

It is that time of the year, the time when a small group of dedicated locals throw all their energy into preparing a trail ride for motor bike enthusiasts.

Billed as "The longest one-day trail ride in both New Zealand and Australia! With over 165km of tracks through private high-country farms, braided rivers, forestry, native gorge and rolling farmland in the stunning Waitaki Valley" the Dansey's Pass Trail Ride has earned an enviable reputation. Every year riders are presented with completely new tracks to test themselves over. All levels are catered for and the event has a loyal following.

So much work goes into preparing for the event, which include meetings with land owners, Health and Safety planning, catering, sponsorship, rescue helicopters, St Johns, marshals, road crossings and all the hard yakka to develop the new tracks.

Since the first ride in 1999 it is estimated that over 20,000 riders have participated in the event. That's a lot of happy dirt bikers.

It also means that the pupils and teachers of Duntroon School and by extension, the community, have benefitted from the event as the money raised goes to the Duntroon School and is used for a variety of expenses, such as additional teaching, new computers, a heating system for the swimming pool, and astroturf for the tennis courts to name a few.

To quote again from the Dansey" Pass Trail Ride website "With a role of approximately 90 children, a village population of 115 and a greater population of 600, our little farming community in rural North Otago is the epitome of the volunteer spirit and can-do attitude! Over 200 volunteers work tirelessly over hundreds of hours every single year, to develop one of the most highly regarded and successful Trail Rides in New Zealand." Touche, well said.

Visit the website to register for this year's ride. If you can't ride the trail, consider buying some merchandise. You will be supporting a worthy cause and a marvelous bunch of people.

<https://www.danseyspasstrailride.org>



# Waitaki District Council Communications

Tuesday 4 February 2025

## Waitaki to get Fit For The Future with the Draft Long Term Plan

The Mayor and Councillors approved the Draft Long Term Plan consultation document this week, setting out the next nine-years of budget, projects and plans for the Waitaki District Council.

The consultation document, titled "Fit For The Future" proposes an average rate rise for the Waitaki District of 10.3% in the 2025/26 year. This reflects the increased investment on infrastructure upgrades that Council is required to make in coming years to meet legal regulatory requirements set by Parliament and growth in the District. It also accounts for the inflationary pressures on plant and materials for maintaining its existing roading and water networks, and the delivery of core Council services.

Over the nine year plan, rate rises will decrease to 5% or below by 2030. However, this also assumes that water services and charges for water, will be the responsibility of a new council owned water company from 2027 onwards as the Council's preferred option to meet the Government's Local Waters Done Well legislation.

At present the underlying numbers of the Draft Long Term Plan indicate that Waitaki District Council will run an unbalanced budget for the nine-years of the plan, however there are still some big decisions to make, following consultation with the district's communities. Last night, the Mayor and Councillors committed to ensuring that by the time it was adopted in June, the budget will be balanced.

Mayor for Waitaki District, Gary Kircher, says, "Council is going to use this consultation process to reduce spending further, and we're all committed to ensuring this budget is balanced by June. There's more we will do to reduce spending but we need to hear from the community about what they value, prioritise and want from us over the next nine years."

Tuesday 4 February 2025

## Development Contributions and Financial Contributions Consultation Opens

Waitaki District Council's proposed draft policy on Development Contributions and Financial Contributions opens for consultation this week.

The policy concerns the contributions those developing and subdividing land within the District make towards Council's infrastructure, to account for the additional demands on our network and reserves.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that ratepayers in general are not burdened unnecessarily with the cost of increasing infrastructure capacity for new developments.

Proposed changes to the policy includes remissions regarding Social Housing development, residential care for non-premium care beds and development on Maori land.

It also expands the definition of Development Contributions to reflect the Local Government Act (2002), reviews the definition of 'self-contained' and defines the interest rate basis to applied to deferred payment agreements between Council and developers.

The consultation opens today, Tuesday 4 February 2025 and closes Tuesday 4 March 2025.

Submissions can be made at [letstalk.waitaki.govt.nz](https://letstalk.waitaki.govt.nz), by emailing [consult@waitaki.govt.nz](mailto:consult@waitaki.govt.nz), by post to Policy On Development Contributions & Financial Contributions, Waitaki District Council, Private Bag 50058, Oamaru 9444, or by dropping off to any Council office or the Oamaru Library.

## Wellness Matters - A regular health column from the Kurow Medical/Mackenzie Health Centre Team - February 2025

Over 300,000 people in New Zealand have diabetes. Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs when the pancreas is no longer able to make insulin, or when the body cannot make good use of the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that acts like a key to let glucose from the food we eat pass from the blood stream into the cells in the body to produce energy. All carbohydrate foods are broken down into glucose in the blood. Insulin helps glucose get into the cells.

Not being able to produce insulin or use it effectively leads to raised glucose levels in the blood. Over the long-term high glucose levels are associated with damage to the body and failure of various organs and tissues.

**Type 1 diabetes** is an „auto-immune“ condition and symptoms can appear rapidly. The body does not produce any insulin (or very little). Different factors, such as genetics and some viruses, may cause type 1 diabetes. Although type 1 diabetes usually appears during childhood or adolescence, it can develop in adults. Treatment is directed toward managing the amount of sugar in the blood using insulin, diet and lifestyle to prevent complications.

**Type 2 diabetes** is the most common form of diabetes and occurs mostly in adulthood usually after the ages of 30 „40 years. You may have had type 2 diabetes for many years without realising it. It can be managed with diet and lifestyle changes and medication.

### Some groups of people are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes:

- European descent aged 40 years or older
- Diabetes in your family (grandparents, parents, brothers or sisters)
- Maori, Asian, Middle Eastern or Pacific Island descent aged 30 years or older
- High blood pressure
- Overweight (especially if you carry most of your weight around your waist)
- Diagnosed as having pre-diabetes (also known as impaired glucose tolerance) „this occurs when the glucose (sugar) in your blood is higher than normal, but not high enough to be called diabetes
- If you gave birth to a large baby weighing more than 9lbs / 4kg, or have had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)

### Symptoms of diabetes include:

- Feeling tired and lacking energy
- Feeling thirsty
- Passing urine often
- Getting infections frequently and slow healing
- Poor eyesight or blurred vision
- Often feeling hungry
- Abdominal pain, nausea vomiting (type 1)

### To try and avoid type 2 diabetes developing, make the following changes:

- Stay physically active and get regular exercise. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. Remember you don„t have to do all of your daily exercise at once. For example, three brisk walks for 10 minutes in the day may be more manageable than one of 30 minutes.
- Eat healthy food.
- Keep your weight in a healthy range.

Diabetes is diagnosed through a blood test. If you think you are at risk, contact your healthcare provider. We also support people with diabetes to self-manage and live well.

Information sourced from Diabetes New Zealand