

# THE SIREN



NEWSLETTER OF THE ASHBURTON FIRE MUSEUM

ISSUE ONE

SEPTEMBER 2015

Welcome to the first edition of The Siren, the newsletter of the Ashburton Fire Museum.

**The Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade has a long and proud history as well as one of the best historical collections of any brigade in New Zealand. But volunteer fire-fighters are busy people, holding down full-time jobs, raising families as well as serving in the brigade. With high volume annual call-outs it's been obvious for some time that there needs to be a fresh look at how the historical collection is managed and operated.**

To that end, the AVFB Executive have called on former brigadesman David Eddington to put together a group to maintain, extend, develop and operate the collection based at the Plains Vintage Railway and Historical Village at Tinwald, with the brief "to make it the best fire brigade museum collection in the country."

Dave has taken to the task like a duck to water, assembling a small and enterprising team around him to develop and drive the future of the collection. Already much has been planned and achieved, the details of which are outlined throughout this newsletter. We will also meet the core team, and around this a wider community of members will be encouraged to get involved to help make the whole thing tick. It's exciting, its dynamic and its "water on" as we set out into a new era.

There will be ample opportunity for any brigade personnel, past or present to assist with special projects along the way. The AVFB has always been a very special "family" and this new development represents an extension of that.

Much has been achieved over time in the past, but it's now time for fresh enthusiasm as we pay tribute and give thanks to all those who have helped in any way build and operate the collection over the years, and now do our bit together to take it forward . . . . and into the future.

The SIREN is compiled and edited for the Ashburton Fire Museum by Peter McQuarters.

Suggestions, articles, photos, views and comment for future editions welcomed.

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## The Broad Picture

After assessing the current museum building at Tinwald, it was agreed that some sort of extension was called for, to enable better potential for display of the gear and to allow for the later era machines currently stored off-site. Initially a simple “push-back” extension was considered, but the Ashburton Fire Museum committee also considered a much larger space allowing for present and future needs. Initial site plans were drawn up and after canvassing the newly formed **Plains Museum Trust Board** charged with taking over responsibility for all site development within the Domain, huge encouragement was forthcoming for “the larger option.” In fact Chairman Ian Cullimore was emphatic. “Build the big one !!”

Spurred on and buoyed by the response, the team decided we needed to “do this once and do it right.” The new building will sit on the rear of the existing at right angles, with the main doors facing Maronan Road. It is intended that there will be access between the two parts of the museum with the ends of the existing raised display area opening through into the new extension. The new space will be much greater in area than the existing Ashburton Fire Headquarters appliance room.



Design imaging credit: Stefan van Vliet

Basically, there will be space for around eight appliances, along with probable storage/workshop space.

Special emphasis will be placed on quality visual historical displays, the use of audio video screens to portray both the history and modern day workings of the brigade.

Welcome to the team . . . there's a place for you.



Photo Credit: Ashburton Guardian

Hello folks and welcome to the Ashburton Fire Museum. When the AVFB approached me to head up a team to take over the development and running of the collection at Tinwald, I knew it was a great opportunity to move the collection forward and bring people together under this common bond of the fire-fighting fraternity and the desire to see our history not only cared for, but presented to the wider public at every opportunity.

It's probably fair to say that when I first started assembling my small team, little did I know that we would relatively quickly establish that there was sufficient potential (and space available) to really showcase what we have and are planning to have.

It is no secret that our Ashburton collection is considered without equal in New Zealand. For a single brigade to have such an extensive and rare collection is something we have to be grateful for to our brigadesmen and executives of times past. This collection is their legacy and our duty is to see it properly cared for and I'm excited to have the opportunity to make this happen.

We just need another member to add to our team, . . . YOU !

We all have certain skills and the Ashburton Fire Museum is an opportunity to use them and become part of a great team. The history of the AVFB is not just about equipment, it's primarily about people, . . . continue the tradition, . . . why not come on board !

**David Eddington. Chairman.**

## So what's going in the new development . . . . .

Probably for a start, one or more of the machines from the existing museum fire station. Probably including the Dennis as it's closest to the next generation of appliances.

We are hot on the tail of the brigades old 1965 Commer. We've spoken to the previous owner who sold it from Auckland down Waikato way about four years ago. More elsewhere this issue.

There's the Jeep, the International, plus another machine you'll learn about further on, and we've allowed room for a representative appliance from the 90's to early 2000's as it won't be long before they too are part of the history chain. If we don't do that, we are doing the long term history of the AVFB a disservice. I know, . . . hard to imagine a Scania in the mix. Maybe it'll be the later model Dennis stationed here not all that long ago?

The new extension will open out towards Maronan Road so the visual appeal as visitors enter The Plains complex will be quite dramatic. The frontage will be designed in an empathetic way to reflect a working fire station and will feature doors that are totally secure but afford an "anytime" view through toughened glass panels. Probably a modern sectional type door system that can be opened up and right out of the way when the museum is alive. But still look in keeping with the theme. Aspects of the frontage flanking the doors will contain old time "false frontages" so the building doesn't visually overwhelm the site in scale.

There will be ample space on the apron in front of the doors and that in turn will open onto a clear roadway which runs along the current old shop fronts and extends to the existing white picket fence.

So there's not going to be a cramped or crowded feel to the frontage of the building.

It will be spacious, and attractive. And certainly look like a fire station.

One of our side projects is to produce a DVD that will play on a screen in the museum.

It will tell the story of the brigade from its inception and will feature some of the senior and retired guys with recollections of life in the brigade from decades past, as well as material from CFO Burgess talking about how the role of the brigade has developed over the years, where it's at now and where its heading. As well as the hard stuff, it is intended to pepper the production with some of the lighter moments from life with the AVFB ! There are plenty of yarns. We want to get a few of them recorded for posterity. Our grateful thanks to Donna Wylie of Zoom Visual Productions who has come on board as one of our very valued supporters. We hope to be "shooting" key elements of this production shortly.





Ashburton Fire Museum team met with Mayor Angus McKay and Rangitata MP Jo Goodhew back in June to brief them on our plans.

Both Jo and Angus expressed considerable enthusiasm for the project.







## MEET THE TEAM:

**Chairman: David Eddington:-** Dave served in Fire Brigades in the Mid Canterbury area from 1967 to 1987. Through work obligations he moved between three brigades during that time, Methven, Ashburton and Rakaia. He has brigade life “in the blood” and following an approach from the Ashburton Brigade to head up a new team to revitalise, develop and manage the collection at Tinwald, it was a case of “right project, right time.” Dave set about hand picking his team to join him for the job, and we get to meet the guys below.

**Secretary: Craig Wakelin:-** Craig is married with 2 children. His interest in the NZFS started when his family had a holiday home in Sumner. Craig says he used to watch with envy when the guys had a call so one day went over to see if he could be any use to them and so joined late 2005. Approximately 2 years later Craig transferred to Ashburton and thoroughly enjoys all aspects of being a volunteer fire-fighter and also the camaraderie. Craig doubles as Secretary for both the Brigade and the Fire Museum

**Jim Reed:-** Jim Reed was a serving member of the Ashburton Brigade from 1989 for 16 years. Is the managing Director of Jim Reed Builder, a locally-based and highly respected building company which tackles a variety of projects throughout Mid Canterbury. Jim has been a great supporter of the brigades historical collection including assisting with transportation of the vintage treasures to display at Warbirds Over Wanaka. He has cheerfully come on board as part of our close-knit team and taken on the role of “Building Project Manager.” We really appreciate his expertise in this area.

**Peter McQuarters:-** Hanging around the station as a youngster in the 1960’s with his dad Alan, left a lifelong impression on Pete. He remembers the Sunday morning station duty rituals and in his minds eye can still mentally walk through every nook and cranny of the old station. He set up the association between the brigade and The Plains to establish the vintage fire station back in the 1970’s. Over the years Peter has owned a number of vintage appliances and is pleased to be carrying the torch for “Mac” who has a lifetime of interest and involvement with the brigade.

**Warren Maslin:** Works for BNZ Ashburton.” SFF Ashburton with a 13 year history in volunteer brigades. Married to Tracy and with three children, Warrens day job as a banker has taken him to Akaroa and Kaikoura as a firefighter after having his enthusiasm for brigade life ignited earlier in his Gore days. Immersing himself in UFBA events with a special interest in competitions, Warren brings great skills to the Ashburton Fire Museum Team.

**Nik McCulloch** comes from a background in the rural sector and works for the BNZ Ashburton. Nik joined the Ashburton brigade in January 2015 as a way of becoming involved and assisting the local community, along with the opportunity of meeting a new group of people. We are thrilled to have Niks enthusiasm on the AFM team, offering a very welcome younger perspective and his relatability to a new generation who will ultimately be charged with maintaining and caring for the brigades history.



## Flashback 1976 . . . nearly 40 years ago



Above: With the old meeting room and social room gone to the rear, work begins removing iron from the old station roof, including the 1956 front extension.

Below: Work continues in the background on the demolition of the old station, whilst tradesmen apply finishing work to and around the new station. Plans, specifications and estimates were approved in May 1975 with the new station Ashburton Fire Headquarters officially opened on December 11, 1976 at a cost of \$244,329.





The final throes of the old station.

The distinctive doors were salvaged for installation at The Plains and the old tower, designed and built in the 1930's by the Ashburton Electric Power Board, was relocated to The Plains some time later in March 1982.



# Official Ashburton Fire Museum Launch

**Saturday August 22<sup>nd</sup> dawned fine and clear, a great omen, as present and past members of the Ashburton Brigade, along with supporters met on site at The Plains to hear details of plans for the new development of The Ashburton Fire Museum.**

The retired appliances acquired in more recent time but held in storage, were brought to life by our head mechanic Ken Peck and lined up along with the three Ivecos from town.

Chairman David Eddington welcomed everyone and outlined our plans with support from Jim Reed, our building project manager, who outlined aspects of the construction. It's great to have Jim's expertise on our team, his knowledge of the industry and guidance through the build will be a great comfort to the rest of us !!

David called on Peter McQuarters to brief the meeting on funding aspects and Peter outlined sources of funding that had been identified and covered progress to date.

For the record, funding is being sought through the Lion Foundation (via The Ashburton Trust), The Community Trust of Mid & South Canterbury, Air Rescue Service & Community Trust, Fonterra, Ashburton Rotary and Plains Rotary.

There are various funding strata that have been set for other support and they are as follows.

Major Supporter: \$25,000; Platinum Supporter: \$10,000; Gold Supporter \$5000; Silver Supporter \$2500; Bronze Supporter \$1000. Supporter: \$100 up to \$999

A deposit has been paid to Alpine Buildings of Timaru, and building work will start when the full cost of the construction has been raised.

Following an invitation for General Business from the floor, it was proposed, moved and seconded that there be a membership subscription for The Ashburton Fire Museum as follows: Individual Member \$30, Family Membership \$40, Life Member (individual) \$500, Family Life Membership \$600.

Special News from the day was the announcement of ALAN MCQUARTERS as Patron of the Ashburton Fire Museum. CFO Burgess addressed the meeting, thanked everyone and expressed his pleasure that the Collection was in great hands. Following formalities, everyone adjourned into the sunshine to inspect the line up of appliances old and new, and enjoy a sausage sizzle provided by the crew.

***A great to start to an exciting new era. Thanks to all who came along to be a part of it.***



## So, where IS the Commer???? EU5967

That's the question many have been asking for some time.

November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1965, the Ashburton brigade took delivery of a shiny new Commer VAKS appliance. The smart Dennis F8 went to the number 2 position, and the Commer took the limelight. It wasn't universally popular and not without its vices. The late Arthur Wolfreys struggled to find anything enthusiastic to say about it. Current CFO Alan Burgess remembers it as a "bit gutless." For all that it was quite a striking looking appliance. It was regarded as being underpowered and whilst the fire service generally repowered their similar machines around the country with V8's, Ashburtons machine solidered on with the straight six engine until it became a promotional vehicle much later in its life. It now has a 318 V8 fitted.

Like other examples it was fitted with the distinctive bi-fold doors in the rear crew cab, and Dave Eddington remembers the doors "flying open" on rounding a corner on the way to a call on occasions. Again, Arthur may have fixed that as CFO Burgess recalls that he was responsible for swapping out the rear doors for more conventional ones.

The facts we know are:

After Ashburton, the machine was placed with the Springfield Brigade, then Fox Glacier. It had a private South Canterbury owner before being acquired by the late Bill Lynn for his collection near Christchurch. After sale by Bill, it ended up heading north and we've spoken with the man who had it until just a few years ago. He sold it to a chap in the Waikato and that's where we are currently digging. We have a few scouts in the area helping, but as yet, nothing positive. A press release outlining our intentions has been sent to the Waikato Times. Hopefully, we are getting close to nailing it.

*Pictured below before it was restored as a promo vehicle. Last seen wearing L J Hooker advertising livery.*





## Wheels Week Parade 2015





## **“MAC” APPOINTED FIRE MUSEUM PATRON**

**With a life-long interest in the Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade and 47 plus years of active involvement, Alan “Mac” McQuarters was an obvious choice when the Ashburton Fire Museum decided it needed a Patron. Macs appointment stemmed from a letter we received from former Ashburton fire voly John Hannan, now of Wellington.**

John has taken a very keen interest in recent developments concerning the museum, and suggested we should consider appointing a Patron and put Macs name forward for the role.

When the team discussed it, there was immediate confirmation that indeed we needed a Patron and Alan McQuarters was the man for the role !

Mac admits to being a “bit bowled over” when paid a visit by AFM Chairman David Eddington to seek his acceptance of the position. Once he established his composure he informed David that he would be delighted and humbled to accept the role.

Meeting for a handshake in the middle of the room and a warm pat on the back and the role was sealed.

Macs interest began as a youngster during the war years when he put up his hand at school to become a schoolboy member of the Emergency Precaution Scheme Fire Auxilliary. This involved responding when the siren sounded to join Percy Baker as a runner for the brigade. In 1954 Mac joined the brigade and gained his Gold Star in 1979. On retirement from his Retail Managers career in 1989, he was summonsed to “fill in” for a few weeks as Ashburton station-keeper after the passing of Ron Tait. The few weeks ended up being 22 ½ years giving Mac a total of 47 1/2 years service to the brigade.

Over the years Mac and the late Arthur Wolfreys have been the stalwarts who have held the museum at Tinwald together and according to him, it has been very satisfying to see the Plains project provided with a long-awaited new impetus.

A few years ago, Alan McQuarters was the recipient of a QSM for services to the Ashburton Community and his efforts with the Fire Brigade comprised a large measure of that.

Mac looks forward to continued involvement taking his usual place as a guide as at the Ashburton Fire Museum.



# What on ERF is that?

The Ashburton Fire Museum is indebted to the Fire Services Historical Society who have donated, unencumbered, a 1971 ERF appliance to represent the example that served for quite some time with the Ashburton Brigade.

Enquiries to Ferrymeads Brian Joyce revealed the actual appliance that served in Ashburton had been fully restored for display at Ferrymead, but there was an offer straight way to supply a “sister appliance” to represent the type. In fact both machines had served alongside each other brand new at Christchurch Central before heading off to other stations. There were some differences in the locker configuration, but essentially very similar.

Ashburtons original 1971 ERF 84PFS (DJ 8817) served at Christchurch Central, Ashburton, Kaikohe, Warkworth and Northern Relief, whilst the machine we have acquired for our collection (reg FS 5279) served at Christchurch Central, Lincoln, Christchurch Training, Brightwater and Appleby.

A “recovery mission” was duly mounted to retrieve the appliance with David Eddington, Jim Reed, Craig Wakelin and Peter Mac heading off early one Sunday morning for the task. The old appliance made the trip home under her own power and awaits her turn for a full restoration. It is hoped that sponsorship for the job will be sourced through a local auto restoration shop.

Pictured below as received, and on display at our launch function at The Plains.





# Heartfelt thanks to our early funders . . .

The Ashburton Fire Museum is stoked to announce Brendon & Michelle Price and Phillip Kenny Real Estate as GOLD SUPPORTERS of our museum. Both have committed \$5000. Wonderful gesture folks, and so very much appreciated. Brilliant ! THANK YOU !!!

## Our Opening Hours for This Season:

### SEPTEMBER 6 2015

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### OCTOBER 4 2015

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### OCTOBER 25 2015

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### OCTOBER 26 2015

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### NOVEMBER 22 2015

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### DECEMBER 27 2015

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### DECEMBER 28 2015

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### JANUARY 3 2016

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### JANUARY 10 2016

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### FEBRUARY 7 2016

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### FEBRUARY 21 2016

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

### MARCH 26 2016

11:00am 'til 4:00pm

11:00am 'til 4:00pm



We are on Facebook. Ashburton Fire Museum







## Launch day at The Plains . . . Sunday August 16 2015

Ashburton Fire Museum members, from left, Craig Wakelin, David Eddington, Peter McQuarters, and Jim Reed, outline plans for the new extended Ashburton Fire Museum.

Whilst below, some of the crew kick around after the formalities inspecting some of the old gear. Huge thanks to Ken Peck for his work on getting the older appliances running.



## **Pledge Card**

To be retained by AVFB for record keeping.

No.....

Company Name.....

Contact Person.....

Address.....

.....

Phone- Business.....Mobile.....

Email.....

**In support of the Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade for the Ashburton Fire Museum Project, please accept this pledge of \$.....**

Direct Credit

Cheque

Cash

Product/Services

Signed by.....For Donor

Signed by.....For AVFB

Date.....

Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade Bank Details      03 0835 0190308 00

AVFB Contact name:.....      Postal: PO Box 300

Phone Number:      .....      Ashburton

**Thank you for your support**



# **ASHBURTON FIRE MUSEUM**

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THE VINTAGE COLLECTION OF THE ASHBURTON VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE

HISTORICAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTRE    [WWW.ASHBURTONFIREMUSEUM.NZ](http://WWW.ASHBURTONFIREMUSEUM.NZ)

# **ASHBURTON FIRE MUSEUM SPONSORS**

Donations/ Sponsorship could be Cash, Products and Services

<b>Major</b>	<b>\$25000 PLUS</b>	Community Fund Trusts
<b>Platinum</b>	<b>\$10000</b>	Lump Sum or 24 monthly payments
<b>Gold</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	Lump Sum or 12 monthly payments
<b>Silver</b>	<b>\$2500</b>	Lump Sum or 6 monthly payments
<b>Bronze</b>	<b>\$1000</b>	Lump Sum or 2 monthly payments

The above sponsors/Donors will be promoted and acknowledged on the Ashburton Fire Museum website [www.ashburtonfiremuseum.nz](http://www.ashburtonfiremuseum.nz)

You will also be acknowledged in the printed media of The Ashburton Guardian, The Courier and the Mid Canterbury Herald.

You will be named in our news updates and also your name will go on the Sponsors Board that will be displayed in the Ashburton Fire Museum.

You will be invited to a Pre-opening Function to recognise your support.

You will also receive a permanent memento for you to display as you see fit.

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**Life Members    \$500 single or \$600 for family    (1 payment)**

**Supporters        \$100 - \$999**

You will be acknowledged on the Ashburton Fire Museum website at [www.Ashburtonfiremuseum.nz](http://www.Ashburtonfiremuseum.nz)

You will also be invited to a Fire Fighting Display/ Open Day to recognise your support.

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**Annual Membership    \$30 single or \$40 for family per year**

Your contribution will assist funding for news updates, website costs, Open days etc and you will be able to purchase branded Ashburton Fire Museum products at cost price ie. Caps, shirts etc.





Montage by the talented Jeff Harvey who has accepted the role of consultant for our displays and signage for the Ashburton Fire Museum. Thanks Jeff. We appreciate your talents.