

# THE SIREN



NEWSLETTER OF

## THE ASHBURTON FIRE MUSEUM

ISSUE FIVE

APRIL 2018

### HOORAY . . . and up she rises



A word from our Chairman of the

# ASHBURTON FIRE MUSEUM

***EXCITING TIMES !***

**November 2017:**

**The Ashburton District Council approves our plans and grants a building consent.**

**December 2017: Ground breaking ceremony on-site.**

**Jaunary 2018: Stuart Tarbotton Contracting Limited completes site preparations and Alpine Buildings prepares and pours concrete floor for our new extension.**

**February: All construction materials on-site and building ready for erection. Construction wrapped up by the end of March.**

Now that the main vehicle display hall of the new extension is built, Jim Reed Builders will swing into gear and construct the intermediary section which joins the two buildings together. My sincere thanks to all who have responded to working bees etc to get the project to this stage. We will include a current wrap of all big sponsors in the next Siren.

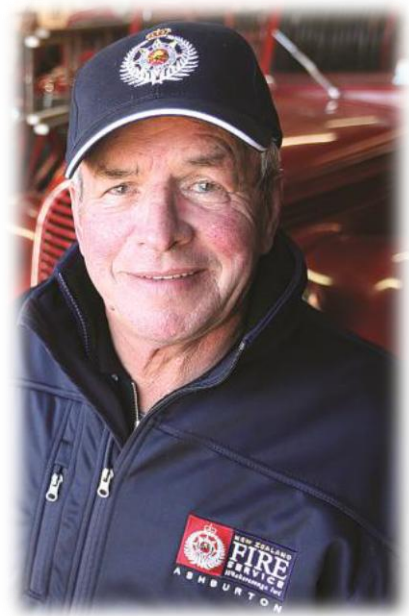
Frank Sandys is a great example of our recent donations from his Christmas Lights display.

The talented interior fit-out group of Alan, Peter and Lorraine McQuarters, working with signage and display expert Jeff Harvey of Harvey Signs, have been busy planning the new interior elements so we can all look forward to something real special come opening day.

To all our generous sponsors, donors, my committee, the passionate groups of guys doing the hard yards behind the scenes, a HUGE THANK YOU for getting the project to this stage.

As you read though this edition of The SIREN there are more details of some of the projects that are currently underway or planned.

I look forward to your ongoing support and please feel free to encourage others who you feel may like to join us in preserving and presenting Ashburtons rich fire-fighting history for this and future generations. We are on Facebook, follow us there: **Ashburton Fire Museum**



*Dave Eddington* Ashburton Fire Museum Chairman



# Breaking Ground Sunday Dec 3rd



Above: D Eddington, A McQuarters, A Burgess.

Watching on (pictured right), Mr Stu Tarbotton, generous provider of groundworks for the project, and Mr Jim Reed, Project Manager





# The build in pictures







Patron Alan Mac and Bill Hart look happy with the result.





The third fire station for the AVFB was in Burnett Street alongside where the current fire station is now located. This was originally the old Ashburton Borough Council building and when offered by the Council as a new base, was rejected outright by the brigade.

In fact such was the feeling within the brigade, then situated in the Triangle where the old Plunket Rooms building now is, they tendered their resignation, en-masse.

The resignation was accepted by a doggedly determined Council and when the call went out to form a new brigade, many of the former brigadesmen signed up again !

The former custodians house can be viewed at the right of the picture where 111 calls were received right up to the 1970's, and in the 1950's an extension was added to the front of the appliance room of the fire station itself to accommodate the new 1958 Dennis F8 appliance, and later the mid-60's Commer. This brought the appliance room right up to the footpath and featured doors that were ultimately salvaged and used on The Plains Fire Station at Tinwald.

The old wooden tower was replaced much earlier by the metal tower designed by the Power Boards boss Pete Kemp, the first electric welded structure to be built in Ashburton. That tower is now part of the Ashburton Fire Museum over at The Plains.

So where was the very first Ashburton Fire Station located? Right on the site where Farmers retail store is now located on East Street.

There were two other stations set up separate to the AVFB for a time.

The Western Fire Brigade on the triangle of land near the Catholic Church and another Dodge appliance and crew based in a Council building in Allenton between where the shops are now and St Davids Church.



## Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade - History: -

A P (Percy) Baker

C.F.O. - 1964 – 1971

**A P (Percy) Baker joined the Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade during wartime in 1941.**

He arrived in time to see the introduction of the Ashburton Auxilliary Fire Service - E.P.S. - formed to cover wartime fire protection requirements.

The E.P.S was equipped with a brand new Colmoco Ford V8 Trailer pump built by the Colonial Motor Company in Wellington.

During his time with the brigade, he rose to the rank of Foreman in 1944, Third Officer in 1954, Deputy Chief Fire officer in 1958, and ultimately Chief Fire officer in 1964.

When Percy joined the brigade, the Ford V8 open-cab appliance was still smelling like brand new, the Chev was new on the block, he saw the arrival of the Dennis F8 in 1958 and was CFO when delivery was taken of the new Commer appliance in November 1965.

Sons Maurice (1964 – 1972) and Graham have both served the brigade, and of course Graham who joined in 1966 has completed substantial service as a double Gold Star and long standing Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

Service to the community is well and truly in the Baker family blood.

Percys daughter and son-in-law have recently made a substantial donation to the Fire Museum in Percys honour. Details in this issue of The Siren.



# Commer – FULL STOP.



Huge thanks to George and Val Henderson for enabling us to fill the Commer gap in the AVFB collection.

As you may be aware we have conducted a widespread and extensive search for our original appliance over the past two years and despite dozens of leads and countless emails and phone calls, we've drawn a blank.

We think it may well have been scrapped. The trail has gone completely cold.

How fortunate then, that right on our doorstep a sister machine has become available, once owned by the Cromwell Fire Brigade and discovered many years ago on a Hororata farm and restored by Peter McQuarters and Keith Pickford about 15 years ago.

Keith has been the owner for the past ten years and has agreed to release it to our collection, thanks to the generosity of the Hendersons. The 1966 machine is only months apart from our original one, although has the bare aluminium side panels as many did back in the day. We've taken the decision to paint it out to more closely represent the Ashburton Commer and it still runs strongly with its original straight six motor.

It was restored and driven to the UFBA celebrations in Dunedin back in 2004.

It's an appropriate gesture by the Hendersons as Vals father Percy Baker was Chief Fire Officer at the time the Ashburton brigade took delivery of its factory fresh Commer, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1965.



Here's how The GUARDIAN covered the arrival of the Dennis F8, 1958

## New Fire-Engine Is Delivered

Ashburton's new fire engine—bought at a cost of £15000—arrived yesterday afternoon from Dunedin. The engine had arrived in New Zealand last month, but was road tested and painted in Dunedin.

Two Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigadesmen went to Dunedin on Monday and accompanied the driver, Mr J. Faulkner, on the delivery journey. They were Messrs A. McQuarters and L. Woods.

The new engine, which is powered by a Rolls Royce motor, was voted a huge success by the many children who quickly assembled shortly after it had arrived. At one period it was difficult to see the engine for climbing youngsters.

Mr J. C. McKessar, a staff officer of the Fire Service Council, road tested the machine soon after it reached Ashburton. The machine would have to meet stiff specifications, Mr McKessar said. The inspection would include checking all the accessories, the lighting, blinking lights, siren and hose reels and the extension ladder. Pumping tests were carried out last evening.

The machine is similar to modern fire fighting equipment in the main cities in New Zealand, Mr McKessar said.

Provision for brigadesmen in a cab is one of the features of the new engine, which has a 200 gallon water carrying capacity. It is capable of pumping water at the rate of 500 gallons a minute. Part of the equipment is a 32ft suction hose. The extension ladder will reach a height of 35ft.



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Photo credits: David Miller



# Crate Stuff



Arriving just prior to Christmas was this rather large crate containing special elements to help create our signature Steamer display upon entry to the newly developed Ashburton Fire Museum. Special thanks to Jonathon Ward and the Wilsons Bulk Transport crew for transport and storage assistance.

We're not allowed to show you the contents just yet, but this significant project was funded by four local families.

Wilma & the late Arthur Wolfreys; Graeme and Jenny Baker; Brendon and Michelle Price, and the estate of Darcy Robert (Bob) LeComte via Bill and Yvonne Hart.

What we can tell you is that the contents were professionally created for us in London, England, rather pleasingly from the same birth city as the Shand Mason back in 1889.

Along with the contents of some other cartons recently received from the Netherlands and funded via a contribution by our Patron Alan McQuarters, and the estate of Kerrie Anne LeComte, the scene will be well and truly set as our visitors come through the door.

We said right at the outset, if we were going to take on this project we were going to do it right.

And these acquisitions with help from such generous supporters, will well and truly put us on that track.



# Meet our new recruits . . .

## **Meet the newest recruits for the Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade.**

Due to expert newspaper advertisement spotting by our Fire Museum Chairman, David “Eagle-Eye” Eddington, the Ashburton Fire Museum was fortunate to successfully bid for these new recruits at a recent Christchurch liquidation sale.

We had some competition from another menswear retailer, but they “choked” before Eagle Eye Ed did.

These firefighters were employed previously as salesmen for the Meccano Menswear store in Christchurch. Welcome to the Brigade/Museum fellas.



# New member . . *with a cheque*



The Ashburton Fire Museum warmly welcomes our newest member and friend, Dennis Dixon.

Dennis had been following our application for funding with the Council and decided he wanted to step up and help the museum out.

Although a modest man not wishing for any fuss or limelight, it's fair to say his cheque presented to David Eddington for the museum blew us away as he asked us to open the envelope and check the details were correct.

Your generous support will surely help us in our endeavour to present a wonderful display and preservation of our towns proud fire fighting history. We all want to say thank you so much for this significant contribution.

Not only that, but Dennis has become a great friend of all of us and actively involves himself in our project. Wonderful to have you on the team Dennis.



Great news as we can confirm plans are underway to lower the old tower during the winter, have it sandblasted by Max Cawte and repainted by The Finishing Company thanks to great deals by these businesses and generous sponsorship of the residual costs by EA NETWORKS.

This is especially pleasing as the tower was the first electric welded structure in Ashburton, designed by Pete Kemp and built by the Ashburton Electric Power Board.

This will be the first attention the tower has received since it was removed from the old fire station in Burnett Street and moved to The Plains.

**EA networks**



Ashburton Crane Hire - Tim Westwood  
Cullimore Engineering Ltd

ASHBURTON POWDERCOATING



## Classic International Joins The Museum Fleet

Thanks to our supporter Dennis, this ex-Nelson, Stoke and Mayfield **1972 International C1800** is joining the collection in a stand-alone role as the Ashburton Fire Museum workhorse.

We have felt for sometime it would be good to have an appliance that can bear the brunt of the work, kids photos, museum PR vehicle, special occasions machine, firefighters daughters to the school ball etc and take some of the “heat” off our prized exhibits. Pictured early in its life at Stoke and (lower) as currently stored at the defunct Wellington Fire Museum.



Above:

Looks very nice  
in the early scheme  
don't you agree.

A real classic.

Right: Now in  
storage in  
Lower Hutt.







# A New Era

## Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Ashburton played a pivotal role being the roll-out location for the event which marked the transition from the old New Zealand Fire Service, to the new Fire & Emergency New Zealand.

Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup> saw a street parade of local emergency vehicles from both the Urban and Rural operations followed by formalities under a marquee at the Ashburton Showgrounds.

Work commenced a few months later on refurbishing the Burnett Street station into a functional venue to host both Urban and Rural firefighters and their vehicles.

Under Chief Alan Burgess (Urban), and Greg Bruce (Rural), the ensuing arrangement has been heralded a success and a template for the rollout of combined units for the rest of the country.

What was the norm in emergency services a year ago, has now passed into history and a new era has commenced. Proof enough that the recording of our history is on-going.



The July 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 Street Parade held through the Ashburton CBD under wet conditions.





From left: Urban CFO Alan Burgess, FENZ boss Rhys Jones and Rural Chief Greg Bruce.

