

Pavitt Cottage Press

April 2010

The trustees have pleasure in bringing you another edition of Pavitt Cottage Press (PCP).

In this edition we cover:

- ✂ **Bookings**
- ✂ **Maintenance**
- ✂ **Finance**
- ✂ **Donations**
- ✂ **The old sawmill and water wheel**
- ✂ **Papers Past—an exciting way to learn more of our ancestors**
- ✂ **Proposed walkway**

Bookings

The occupancy rate fell 2% below the annual average in 2009 (year ended 30 September) which is of concern but the total number of people that stayed in the cottage was about average measured over a six year period.

Income from occupancy levies is the major source of income for the Trust. Occupancy by family members and their friends should constantly be encouraged so as to secure a level of income sufficient to meet ongoing maintenance costs over the longer term. Akaroa is a wonderful holiday destination with much to do and see, and for family members there is the additional attraction arising from the historical Pavitt links to Banks Peninsula and Canterbury. So, if you haven't yet stayed in the cottage please give it your serious consideration. You do need to have your own transport as Robinsons Bay is 5–6 minutes drive from Akaroa and the cottage is 1km up from the seashore.

Pavitt Cottage Occupancy Statistics Summary:

	Years ended 30 September					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Occupancy						
Nights occupied	48	50	65	47	60	47
Occupancy rate %	14.3	13.7	17.8	12.9	16.4	12.9
People						
Number stayed in cottage	92	76	93	79	70	80
Average per night	1.9	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.7

Maintenance

It is almost eight years since the restoration of the cottage was completed and time is beginning to take its toll on the general appearance of the buildings and in particular the exterior paintwork, and the south facing roof slates of the cottage and shed. A quote to have the exterior repainted is being sought but at the time of writing has not been received. What we do know is the cost will, at best, seriously deplete Trust funds or, at worst, exceed current cash availability (\$8,500 approximately). It is for this reason trustees are seeking your additional generosity this year to enable the painting to be carried out before winter sets in and to build up cash reserves for future maintenance requirements. It is important the cottage be maintained in good order as the longer maintenance is deferred, the more costly it will become at a later date.

Trustees are also keen to make further improvements to the cottage and have discussed the possibility of installing, what would look like, a "long drop loo". It would in fact be a conventional loo which, if feasible, would connect to the existing septic tank. While the cottage can sleep eight people, the reality is that with too many guests one loo is impractical. While the infamous "Edina" loo is now operating normally and as intended by its manufacturer, it cannot cope efficiently with a large number of people.

In the meantime, there have been two working bees since the last newsletter, (2008), the most recent being December 2009, and these were both productive and enjoyable occasions (see following pages for photos).

Sawmill Road corner post

In November 2008, Brent George and Helen Leach located what may be the original corner posts of the Pavitt's 100 acre block, Rural Section 579. One can be seen near the top of Sawmill Road, and the other is close to the bridge where the stream flows under the highway to Akaroa. Associated posts show evidence of post-and-rail construction which preceded the use of wire. The Sawmill Road post looks like a totara trunk, used without any splitting or shaping. A photo of the post at the upper end of Sawmill Road is below.

Finance

A copy of the Trust's financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2009 can be found on the website (www.pavitt.co.nz) A small loss was incurred for the year and cash on hand amounted to \$8,217.

Continued



The corner post, located near the top of Sawmill Road

Clearly the Trust must do better than this if it is to remain viable and the cottage is to be retained for future generations to enjoy. We must never lose sight of the fact that this cottage is of historical importance, not only for the extended Pavitt family but nationally as well. There are not many buildings remaining in New Zealand from the mid 19th century in such good order and it would be a tragedy if the Pavitt Cottage was left to deteriorate because of a lack of interest from family members.

2009/2010 Friends subscriptions & donations

We didn't call for these last year—all contributions will thus cover two years. We'd like to say that we gave everyone a break due to the recession but the truth is that we didn't manage to get a *Pavitt Press* out in 2009!

As already noted, the Trust is heavily reliant on donations and "subscriptions" from the Friends of Pavitt Cottage. This is in addition to the modest charges made to guests when staying in the cottage. Trustees therefore implore you to renew your Friends' subscriptions and, wherever possible, make a donation to the Trust no matter how small that may be. They collectively all help and assist in maintaining the viability of the cottage. The subscription to be a Friend is \$20 per person or per family—not a lot but it all helps. Subscription forms are attached to this newsletter for completion and return to:

Bryan Tichborne
The Secretary - Pavitt Cottage Trust
RD 2
AKAROA 7582

Proposed walkway

Recently, Jack Tregear—a descendant of Thomas Hughes who was also a saw miller in the Robinsons Bay area in the 1850's—made a request to Council seeking support for a possible walkway and historic precinct with the focus at the junction of Sawmill Road and Robinsons Bay Road, near the Pavitt Cottage. Tregear presented his idea at a meeting of the Akaroa/Wairewa Community Board in May 2009, indicating that it would be an appropriate way to commemorate the historical pioneers of the location, and acknowledge their contributions to local and provincial history.

He suggested that establishing a walkway with signage would become "quite a tourist attraction" and could use existing paper roads for access creating a circular route. Development of a cycleway along the route could also be considered. The idea as presented did not indicate any proposed routes; cost estimates; details of places of interest; suggested text for the signage; landowner's support or consent; or predicted visitor numbers etc.

After consideration, Council noted that development of a walkway would be difficult, and the Board has decided to refer the Tregear correspondence to Council staff and the Historic Places Trust for comment.

Of course, there would be significant due process to be followed that would take a very long time before such an idea would come to fruition—assuming it gained Council support in the first instance. Most importantly, affected landowners (including the Pavitt Trust) would need to be consulted and their agreement obtained before such concept could proceed.

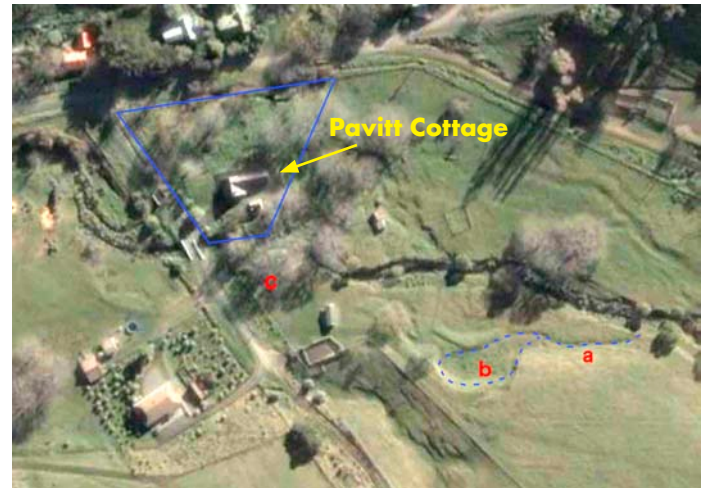
The Trust will be maintaining a watching brief on this issue.

Brent George

The old sawmill and water wheel

Family and friends may be interested in the physical historical aspects of the landscape in the area adjoining Pavitt Cottage.

The following aerial photo image depicts the cottage section in blue—the buildings and Robinsons Bay Creek can be clearly seen. If one looks more closely (and marked by dashed lines for ease of identification) you can see the man-made earthworks of a gravity fed water race (marked "a") leading from the creek eastward and "up-stream" of the cottage, that fed a holding dam ("b"). An overflow channel took the water back into the creek.



A direct wooden flue would have run from the dam headworks to the main buildings of the Pavitt sawmill—and the vertical saw powered by the Farr-designed overshot water wheel. This is within the area near the road east of the cottage and close to where the current old water wheel stands ("c"). The New Zealand Historic Places Trust has long ago installed an information plaque near the old water wheel. Murray Thacker owns this land so permission should be sought before exploring this area on foot. The image is from Google.

Brent George



The remains of one of the waterwheels that powered the sawmill.



Site of Robinson's Bay sawmill, started by the Pavitts but later operated by other owners before the timber ran out.

Working bee Dec 2009



Happy workers after a great day's effort.



Ian Pavitt and Bryan Tichborne feeding the fire.



Roger "Crumpy" Thomas. Tricky work with concealed fresh cow pats.



Pleasant lunch on the verandah.



Mike Browne fixing the wooden gutter of the shed.



Lewis George carefully trimming the cherry tree.



Janey Thomas covering an exposed water pipe.



Papers Past—an exciting way to learn more of our ancestors

Helen Leach explains how



What is Papers Past?

Just type the follow address into your favourite internet browser:

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

You will have in front of you a treasure-chest of information about New Zealand as it used to be. From it you will be able to trace important events in the lives of many of your ancestors, as well as learning about the conditions under which they lived. Over one million pages from 52 New Zealand newspapers and periodicals have been microfilmed then digitised, covering the years 1839 to 1932 (depending on the publication) and many parts of the country. The site is run by the National Library of New Zealand, and in my opinion is one of the best government services that our taxes support.

How do you use the Papers Past resources?

There are two main options, browsing and searching, as well as combinations of them. Browsing delivers a digital copy of a newspaper to your screen that you can sit and read just as you do the newspaper delivered to your letterbox each morning. For example you could ask Papers Past to bring up a copy of the provincial newspaper that the Christchurch-based Pavitts read on Thursday, October 1st, 1868. This was the Christchurch Star, at that time a modest four-page publication with two pages of advertisements. On this date, J. Hughes listed the entire stock of his Stationery Warehouse in Cashel Street. This included expected items such as account books, but also boxes of watercolours, ebony ink stands, fishing lines and rods, violin strings and valentines. Elsewhere in the paper shipping movements and cargoes were described, while political issues received significant attention, especially the latest news of the 'Native troubles' in the North Island. Wanganui was thought to be in imminent danger of attack from the 'rebels'. It is not surprising that the paper reported the recent activities of the Christchurch Artillery and the Lyttelton Volunteer Artillery in much detail.

The Magistrate's Court news always makes interesting reading. In the October 1st Star we read that two cab drivers were charged with 'furious driving', another man with violently assaulting his wife. Assaulting the bailiff and using threatening language to also led to court appearances, as well as 'loitering about the city doing nothing'. If you read the court news long enough, you will conclude that very little has changed over the past 141 years.

Searching

is rather more exciting than browsing because you have no idea what might appear when you push the 'search' button. You may want information about a particular person, organization, place, or topic. Your search can involve all 52 digitised publications or just the one or two relevant to the location you are interested in. Put in the name Pavitt and you will get 6529 results over all publications. Refine your search to find references to Pavitt in just the Christchurch Star and you will get 2871. At this point it might make sense to sort the list by date, earliest first. The very first entry in the Star is an advertisement

for timber on May 14th, 1868 placed by Thos. & E. Pavitt, Gloucester Street, followed by their advertisement for coals from Newcastle (Australia). At this point you might want to exclude advertisements. Click on the 'Refine Search' button and instead of 'All content types', select just 'Articles'. Now there are 2085 results to examine.

Again you could refine your search by inserting the Christian name of the Pavitt you are interested in. But if you type in Thomas Pavitt and tick the 'Exact phrase' box, it won't pick up Thos. Pavitt, the name under which the advertisement appeared. You may need to perform two separate searches. Articles in the Star mentioning Thomas Pavitt total 32 while those referring to Thos. Pavitt are 35. Don't assume that they will all be relevant. For example in the earliest result for Thomas Pavitt, the search engine brought up the results of a cricket match in which someone with the surname Thomas was bowled by a Pavitt (Christian name unknown). The next reference to Thomas Pavitt is on target, for on March 7th, 1871 he was chosen foreman of the jury in a case of horse stealing. The latest references are to Mrs Thomas Pavitt on September 5th, 1907 and to John Thomas Pavitt on March 8th, 1909. Papers Past's coverage of the Star finishes in 1909, so you would be advised to include all publications in the search if you want later references. The latest I could find was from Wellington's Evening Post reporting the marriage of Charles Pavitt, son of Thomas Pavitt, to Ethel Rouse on September 17th 1913.

Looking for material on John Pavitt, the founding father, who died in 1865, is rather frustrating because earlier Canterbury papers, in particular the Lyttelton Times, have yet to be digitised. However a search for John Pavitt in Papers Past brings up the death notice for "Elizabeth, widow of the late John Pavitt of Woodlands, Robinson's Bay; in her ninety-first year" (Star, September 25th, 1893), reminding us of the spiritual importance of the Pavitt property in Robinson's Bay to the family, long after they ceased to live there. There is also a fine obituary for Francis Pavitt, son of John Pavitt, from the Star, December 23rd, 1909.

A warning

Digitising newspapers involves the process known as OCR [Optical Character Recognition], and these clever scanning programs convert most old, messy printed columns to crisp clean words in modern fonts. But they are sometimes fooled and reproduce the old type as 'gobbledegook'. New Zealand doesn't have the resources to get every page on Papers Past checked by a human reader for errors. This means that if you put in a word, the search engine will not find every instance where it appeared, and it will find some places where it thought it was present but was misreading it. The longer the word or exact phrase you enter in your search box, the more likely you are to miss examples. A typical instance of this was a search I did for 'lamington' that failed to pick up the first New Zealand example of the recipe printed in the Otago Witness in 1902, a recipe that I already knew was there. A tiny gap between the 'g' and the 't' had been interpreted as a word break. If I had searched for 'laming ton' as an exact phrase I would have been successful (Otago Witness, March 2nd 1902). Good luck with your searching!

Helen Leach

Friends of the Pavitt Cottage membership form

Please renew/sign us up as a member of the Friends of Pavitt Cottage. I/we enclose a cheque for \$20.00 payable to "Pavitt Cottage Trust" to cover membership for the current calendar year. Should you require a receipt, please include a stamped self-addressed envelope. Any donations along with the membership fee would be gratefully received. Current membership can be viewed on the Pavitt website: **www.pavitt.co.nz**

Date: _____ Name _____

Address _____

_____ Phone _____

Please supply your email address if you have one: _____

Post to: Bryan Tichborne, Secretary, Pavitt Cottage Trust, RD2, Akaroa 7582, New Zealand

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