

❧ Pavitt Cottage Press ❧

Summer 2015/16

The trustees have pleasure in bringing you another edition of the Pavitt Cottage Press...

FRIENDS OF THE PAVITT COTTAGE

Bookings for the cottage have been a bit disappointing this past year. And due to a 2014/2015 newsletter not going out, donations are down too! Dick Fernyhough's financial report (see below) spells out the effects of all this. The trustees ask you to please renew your *Friends of the Pavitt Cottage* memberships and if you are able too—please include a donation. From now on we'll endeavour to remind you annually!

If mailing—send these to:

Bryan Tichborne
16 Rue Balguerue
AKAROA 7520

Cheques payable: Pavitt Cottage Trust

Direct Credit payments to:
BNZ Akaroa
A/c No. 02 0832 0002076 83
Reference: PCT15/16

If paying this way would you kindly let Bryan know (tichborne@watercolours.co.nz) when you've transferred the funds and how much. It being a trust account, we don't have online access and have to wait for sporadic hard copy statements.

Due to the financial situation, we had to delay the installation of a new (outside) toilet this year. We are hopeful it will be in place in early 2016.

We recently had members of the Lauchlan clan (Pavitt descendants) stay at the cottage for the first time. See Murray's comments on page 2—we hope these will inspire you to come and stay too.

FROM OUR TREASURER (DICK FERNYHOUGH)

The Trust's financial statements for the year ended 30 September appear on the Pavitt website:

www.pavitt.co.nz

The Trust recorded a net deficit for the year of \$3,322 compared with a deficit from the previous year of \$1,806. This is obviously a concern, as deficits of this magnitude cannot be sustained indefinitely. The liquidity position is also going in the wrong direction, with working capital (current assets less current liabilities) of \$6,426 at 30 September 2015 compared with \$10,105 in 2014.

While income from accommodation contributions increased from \$2,360 in 2013/14 to \$3,540 in 2014/15, the comparison is misleading to the extent that 2013/14 was adversely affected by the cottage being closed because of water supply problems.

Donations were well down in this last period because a newsletter was not published during 2014/15 and, as a consequence, donations receipts fell.

We also incurred legal costs this year arising from Trustees' concerns about the legal structure of the Trust and its inability to qualify as a registered charity. These issues are ongoing and further legal costs will be incurred in 2015/16.

So, for the Trust to remain viable we need to increase income from the use of the cottage and encourage family and friends to renew their subscriptions to the "Friends of Pavitt Cottage" and/or make donations.

2015/16 Friends subscriptions and donations are currently being received and can be made by either internet banking or mailing a cheque. ***Details in the previous column.***

WORKING BEES 2015

Thanks to a loyal corps of southern supporters, we had two successful working bees in 2015. The first one in March clearing storm debris from both creeks and cutting back the invasive willows. Some tidying of the grounds and cottage was also undertaken. As usual, sustenance was

provided by other team members—with food and beverage breaks given

top priority! These days involve hard physical labour but are always enjoyed by the participants. The second, smaller work party in October tackled the elimination of the March debris etc by means of a splendid bonfire. This took most of the day to complete and a tasty Akaroa fish & chips meal was enjoyed afterwards. One team member stayed on overnight to ensure the embers didn't cause any trouble if the wind got up!

We'd been planning this event for a couple of months—having to postpone it several times owing to unsuitable weather conditions. Thanks to the George family and Ben Tichborne for coming over at short notice to help us get the job out of the way and the paddock clear.



The end of the day and last of a huge pile of debris... The heat was so intense we couldn't get much closer than this!

THEY'VE DONE IT AGAIN!

Our near neighbours Annette and Chris Moore of the Olive Grove have taken top honours again in the NZ Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards. Your chairperson and secretary always have a can of their product on hand—can't live without it. Next time you're in the area be sure to call in on them—to taste and buy the best olive oil in the country.



The Lauchlans in residence

A FIRST STAY IN THE COTTAGE...

Over the weekend of 6th-8th November, three of the grandchildren of Reginald Heathcote Pavitt (grandson of John Pavitt) made a long-overdue pilgrimage to the family home in Robinsons Bay. As an appropriate place in which to catch-up and commemorate the passing of their mother Ruth Lauchlan (nee Pavitt) two years prior at the ripe old age of 97—we have good genes from the Pavitt line it would seem! Heather (Wellington), Bruce (Omokoroa) and Murray (Nelson) along with partners Wilf, Shirley and Sheree enjoyed a wonderful weekend in the cottage and soaked up the atmosphere and history... as well as a few wines of course.

While in Akaroa we caught up with Bryan and Nancy, who were wonderfully hospitable and answered many of our questions over lunch about the history of the cottage and associated family members. They also directed us to the appropriate cemetery where we were easily able to locate the gravestone of John Pavitt.

Apart from dealing with Edina (the toilet with attitude) the facilities in the cottage were as good as many a modern motel and the beds were even better. We couldn't recommend highly enough to others to take advantage of the unique asset we have in this historic cottage, so kindly bequeathed by the late John Fernyhough to all Pavitt family descendants. Make sure you use the cottage and support the Pavitt Cottage Trust by taking out the cheap-as annual subscription and booking a stay there.

Murray Lauchlan
Blenheim



BEYOND THE FAMILY TREE...

By Helen Leach

(Prof Emeritus & Pavitt/Watkins descendant)

Whether they are called family trees, *arbres généalogiques*, *whakapapa*, or by any other name, records of lineages and kinship links have existed in most human societies for thousands of years. Some were committed to memory, while others were written down. For most of their history they have been intimately connected with rank and inheritance, topics that had to be handled with the utmost care to avoid disputes and even violence. Today we let legal professionals sort out inheritance using official documents, and we work on our genealogies for different reasons.

In a colonial society it is common to trace the arrival and dispersal of a founding family. *The Pavitt Family of Banks Peninsula*, compiled by Rex and Adrienne Evans (Evagean Publishing, 1996) is an excellent example of this type. Even more common are family trees that start with one person living today and try to establish his or her ancestors and kin back in time, as many generations as possible. With the help of on-line searching and even DNA analysis, this type of research produces a tree that branches back through time—a truly ego-centred view of the past.

The amount of work required for either type of family tree is massive, and the appearance of a published volume is often taken as the end of the process, at least until another generation is ready to be entered, or more distant records are digitized. However if you look up particular ancestors in your published family tree, you may find that some entries are accompanied by a virtual obituary, while others offer little more than dates. A prime example of this can be found in the Pavitt family tree. In 1862 John and Elizabeth Pavitt's youngest daughter Elizabeth Ellen (c.1842–1925) married Stephen Watkins (1830–1894) in Akaroa. While one sentence sums up Elizabeth Ellen's long life, 23 sentences describe that of her husband. This is not a criticism of the book, for it is normal for family trees to restrict detail to dates of births, marriages and deaths, and sometimes their locations. My point is that family trees place individuals in time and space and it is up to descendants to find out the details of their lives through on-going research.

So here goes—with the help of Papers Past, Akaroa historians, archivists and genealogists....

Elizabeth Ellen Pavitt's birth was registered in Epping (Essex) in October 1842, the ninth child of John Pavitt and his second wife Elizabeth Mumford. She had one big sister, Mary Ann who was seventeen years older, seven older brothers and just one younger brother. From what we know of John Pavitt's life as an established tenant farmer, she spent her first seven years in a rural part of Essex.

In 1849 the family of ten emigrated to New Zealand on the ship *Monarch*. It turned into a nightmare voyage, but the ship finally reached Akaroa Harbour on 2 April 1850. Captain Bruce piloted them in, and the passengers were accommodated at his hotel for two weeks. Provisions had run very low while they waited to make landfall and Capt. Bruce brought new bread, butter, and fresh watercress out to the ship. Their first dinner at the hotel cost 2s 6d per head.

After two weeks looking around the harbour, 41 of the passengers decided to stay. It is likely that the Pavitts had already been in negotiation with the co-charterer of the *Monarch*, Charles Robinson, to buy his 100-acre bush-covered block and valuable beach frontage at Robinson's Bay (originally part of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company land purchase). While the four eldest Pavitt brothers and Mary Ann's husband Samuel Farr built a house and water-powered sawmill at Robinson's Bay, and were selling timber by early 1855, John and Elizabeth leased a farm in German Bay (Takamatua) and lived there with their five youngest children. On the electoral rolls for 1853–1856 John was consistently described as a farmer living in German Bay.

On 25 October 1856, the Robinson's Bay house occupied by the four eldest brothers was razed to the ground and only a few possessions were saved. If John and the younger children were still in German Bay at the time, they were spared this disaster, though not the financial implications for the family as a whole. Elizabeth Ellen was fourteen when the fire occurred. At home she was probably adding pioneering skills such as bread- and cheese-making to her house and farmyard duties, including helping her mother cook for the large family. There was a school in Akaroa by 1851 and German Bay was close enough for her to attend.

In 1857, the Pavitt family relocated to Woodlands, the name of the 100-acre block in Robinson's Bay. A large house was constructed, along with two cottages for the newly married sons. One of these we believe to be the Pavitt Cottage that has survived to the present day. We should not forget that Mary Ann and her husband Samuel Farr lived in Akaroa town, until they shifted to Christchurch in 1862. Elizabeth Ellen could have stayed with them while she took part in Akaroa's social life and educational opportunities.

Stephen Watkins arrived in Lyttelton on the *Roman Emperor* in January 1860, and quickly joined his father and family who had been in Akaroa since the arrival of the first four ships of the Canterbury Association. He was soon integrated into the Watkins' businesses. Dr Daniel Watkins, his father, was semi-retired, Henry ran a chemist shop, and 25-year old William was helping his father establish what they called a 'fruit garden' and nursery on Daniel's 50 acre Rural Section 61. Stephen had just turned 30 and was probably under pressure to find a wife. At eighteen, Elizabeth Ellen Pavitt was petite and pretty, and a practical housekeeper. They married on 29 April 1862 at St Peter's Church, Akaroa.

Where did they live? I think it likely that Elizabeth lived with her father-in-law, her husband, and Daniel's youngest son Alfred who was still a minor. By the time of their marriage, Stephen's father had had his house cut into sections and re-erected back behind its original site on the corner of Beach Road and Church Street. The new position was within the nursery occupying the gentle slope behind Jolie Street, where Stephen carried out his business as fruit merchant and nurseryman. The new site was far more suitable for raising a fresh generation of children than the hub-bub of the wharf, general store and Bruce's Hotel.

In 1876, Daniel and Stephen had a new family home built in Jolie Street, number 115, which was rescued from dereliction by Barbara and Dick Allison in the 1970s. Elizabeth, Stephen



Fig. 1. Elizabeth Ellen Pavitt as a young woman. The hair style and costume suggest a date in the early 1860s. (Photo supplied by Mary Browne)

and their by now large family lived there until 1889 when they moved to Christchurch. If we ask what Elizabeth did between 1862 and 1889, the obvious answer from the family tree is that she was pregnant for nearly eight and a half years and raising children continuously from May 1863 until the last left home about the turn of the 20th century. Elizabeth Ellen gave birth to three boys and two girls in the 1860s, two girls and a boy in the 1870s, and two boys and one girl in the 1880s. Only one child died as an infant. Families of this size were not uncommon in the Victorian era in New Zealand—a time when contraception was ineffective and the colonial diet nourishing. Raising a healthy family and bringing out the talents of all the children was almost a lifetime's work.

Elizabeth Ellen may have had help with cooking, cleaning and laundry, either from paid 'girls', or from her own daughters. The children worked in the nursery and fruit garden, judging from the names attached to prizes awarded at the annual or bi-annual Akaroa Horticultural Show. Elizabeth Ellen also contributed to these shows. In the 1860s she won first and second prizes for her table bouquets, pelargoniums, a 'floral device' and a collection of fruit. In the 1870s when 'industrial' (arts and crafts) sections were added, she exhibited and won prizes for collections of dried ferns, a case of ferns, and oil or watercolour copies of the masters.



Fig. 2. Dr Daniel Watkins with Stephen Watkins (left) and Elizabeth Ellen (née Pavitt) (right) outside Dr Watkins' house. The child may be their first-born son Oswald (born in 1863). The young woman on the far left may be Theresa, Stephen's youngest sister.
(Photo supplied by Mary Browne)

She judged the ladies' needlework sections along with other leading women. In the 1880s she exhibited collections of pansy flowers, ferns, seaweeds, lace and patchwork, as well as copies of paintings. The whole family assisted Stephen with each of the horticultural and industrial shows—he was the secretary-treasurer for sixteen years, but his family had to provide the labour that lies behind a successful event.

The move to a property called The Pines in Opawa, Christchurch in 1889, released Stephen and Elizabeth from the hard seasonal work of the orchard, increasingly beset with codlin moth, from the small town criticism of his views expressed at meetings of Borough Council and the Domain Board, and the twice-yearly organization of the shows. Moving to Christchurch meant that his younger children could get better education, and that Stephen and his daughter Ethel could practise art and teach privately from a Wilson's Road studio. Their new life in Christchurch came to a sad and premature end when Stephen died from a lung haemorrhage at home on 14 April 1894, aged 64. He would have been gratified to read the occupation entered on his death certificate: 'artist'.

Elizabeth Ellen was left with three children under sixteen (Gladys, Ivon and Eric), but would have received help from her as yet unmarried daughters Alma and Ethel who lived at home. However her three eldest sons had taken up positions in Wellington and Elizabeth soon followed them. The electoral rolls from 1900 to 1919 show her living at various Wellington addresses, initially near Laurence in Brougham Street where she was joined by Harold, then at the Oriental Bay and Karori residences of her daughter Ethel Watkins who married Reginald Hamerton in 1904, and then at Ellice Street. She died and was buried in Nelson in 1926, where her daughter Alma lived after marriage to Thomas Eastcott in 1905.

We have two descriptions of Elizabeth Ellen when she lived in Wellington. One was written by the late Doreen Cromarty in answer to an enquiry from Mary Browne in September 1988:

"I only met Stephen's wife Ellen on a visit to Wellington to stay with Aunt Ethel Hamerton en route to Nelson to apple and raspberry pick with my Warnock cousins. Wynne Watkins and Neville were always very ready to meet me and Wynne took me along to visit my Grandmother for the first time. She lived right by Wellington Harbour at Oriental Bay [96 Oriental Tce]. Wynne rang the bell and a dear little old lady with a lace cap on and nice black dress came out to greet us. Wynne pretended to slip and fall down the steps much to her consternation. However he put his arms round her and lifted her up and all was well. Then she met me and took us in for a cup of tea. I was shown a lovely altar cloth which she was embroidering—a beautiful passionfruit design which Aunt Ethel had done for St Mark's Church where Uncle Laurie was organist. I was very impressed. But that was the only time I was to see her. My trip to Wellington was a rare one and the next time I passed through Wellington she must have gone to live with Aunt Alma Eastcott. Her husband was a Chemist in Nelson. Granny died in Nelson and Bob and I found her grave in a Cemetery there. But she was so dainty, gentle and petite. I am glad to have that memory of her."

The second was written by Neville Watkins in October 1988:

"You asked about my Grannie (née Pavitt). She was an attractive old lady, very neat, and small—always in black. She had had a fine singing voice, and, having lived for a long time in Akaroa, French was her second language. She was well-educated and spoke nicely. I think she appealed to all who came to our home in Dufferin Street, because of her great femininity, and her obvious cultural background."

Elizabeth Ellen Pavitt's life in New Zealand began with a near shipwreck, but ended with the satisfaction of seeing ten children reach adulthood with a range of skills and talents, making their mark as accountants, brokers, businessmen, artists and musicians. All knew the meaning of co-operative work. While her husband worked as a nurseryman and fruit merchant, but yearned to be a professional artist, Elizabeth Ellen devoted her life to being an excellent wife and mother. I believe that would have brought her great satisfaction.

Helen Leach

(great-granddaughter of Elizabeth Ellen)

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, 16 Rue Balguerrie, Akaroa 7520, New Zealand

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