

THE CHRONICLE

Coach House Museum

Newsletter of The Coach House Museum

February 2026

In association with Feilding & Districts Community Archive



Built in 1909 on Kimbolton Road. The Court House was reblocked and renovated in the 1950's. In late 2011 it was closed as being an earthquake risk.

Top: Original building

Left: 1979

Manawatuheritage.pncc.govt.nz

For the first Chronicle of the year, we have the final entry of Charlotte's Diary

DIARY OF CHARLOTTE COUCHMAN VOYAGE OF THE 'ARETHUSA'

NOVEMBER 24th to DECEMBER 6th 1879

Monday, Fine but not moving along very fast – now the rain pours down with the evening air – what a rough night.

Tuesday, I have been washing all day and tired hanging them out. All our bedding and clothing expecting every week will be our last wash on board Arathusa.

Wednesday, the weather is dry but cold and the sea keeps washing over the deck so it is not safe to walk about or sit down for we get a drenching.

Thursday, November 27th. We have been busy all this week cleaning up our bunks and shelves and lockers. Everything about the lower deck is clean, ready for landing. We expect to land in about a week. The school children have been receiving their prizes for their lessons and conduct. Martha had a beautiful guilt edged book presented to her. She gained the first prize in each class and Willy got a very nice book of tales. I wish we were going to meet some of our brothers and sisters out here but we shall strangers in a strange land.

Sunday, No service again. A fine day and all passed inspection in a satisfactory manner. Now we are eagerly looking forward to the sight of land. I am so sick of the sea.

Monday Dec. 1st. Very steady. Rather a damp on our spirits for we are becalmed. Midday, Blowing quite a hurricane. Going along 12 miles an hour so you can see the difference in a few hours. We are troubled to sit, stand or lay the ship rolls about so much.

Tuesday. We have had an awfully rough night and the waves are as high as mountains, it is quite a grand sight to see for the water is quite black and we seem to lay in a hollow and cut through the heavy waves. The men have caught 14 more albatrosses today. We have gone 280 miles since yesterday. We have 500 more to go and if the wind keeps in our favour we shall do it in two days.

Wednesday Dec, 3rd. Still on the sea nothing else to look at. I wish I had something better to eat. Our bread is musty, our pork is salt and our beef is rank, and the preserved meat is all gone – everything seems stale and bad.

Thursday Dec. 4th. Fine weather but not going along very fast. The people are almost despairing. Music and dancing on deck all the evening to pass the time away.

Friday. Very foggy. The sailors are obliged to be using fog horns night and day. We sighted another ship this morning some distance off – that is the first we have seen for some time. Good news – fair winds.

Saturday. South Island visible. We are running through Cook Strait. We are only 50 miles from land but this being Saturday they will not take us into harbour till another fair wind. We have just passed Cape Farewell and the light house. They are going to hoist a flag (the Union Jack of Old England) to bring us a pilot. Thank God. We have sighted land on both sides of us, but oh, it does look a wild country.



We are looking forward to the next Boys and their Toys Day in April. We are getting together a few new exhibitors like the Palmerston North Aeroneers and Tony Shannon's Mad Max Smoker. If you know someone who may be interested in putting together a display, please ask them to get in contact.

A DARK MAN AND A DARK ACTION *Evening Post December 15th 1879*

Thomas Wisdom, *alias* Murray, a man of color, was charged with the larceny of two sovereigns, one £½ note, and 7s in silver from Robert Richardson, on board the ship *Arethusa*, at Wellington, on the 13th December, 1879. The prosecutor, who is also a darkie, deposed that he was cook on board the ship *Arethusa*. Prisoner was a seaman on board, and had his bunk a few yards from prosecutor's. On Friday, the 12th, on going to bed he had in his trousers pocket the £½ note, two sovereigns, and some silver. He placed his trousers underneath his bunk. When he arose on Saturday he went on shore without noticing that the money was gone. He found it out when he returned five minutes afterwards. He suspected the prisoner, and accused him of having stolen his money. He called in a policeman, and had him searched, but no money was found on him. Mary Ann France, a married woman, residing at the Mount Cook Barracks, deposed that she had been a passenger by the *Arethusa*. She knew the prisoner. She saw him early on Saturday morning at the barracks. She saw him carry a piece of old wood or flooring to a place outside her bedroom window. She afterwards met him and had a conversation with him. He told her that the little cook had lost his money and had accused him of it. Something induced her afterwards to go and see what it was the prisoner had been doing with the piece of wood. She found it, and underneath it she discovered that the sod had been disturbed. On scratching the earth away she found a piece of a handkerchief, containing exactly the money lost by the prosecutor. She and her husband took it to the captain, by whose instructions they handed it over to the police. Constable Christie deposed to arresting the prisoner, and also finding under the mattress in his bunk a piece of a handkerchief corresponding to that in which the money had been found. Edmund Edwards, the second mate of the, *Arethusa*, corroborated the constable's evidence as to finding the handkerchief. The prisoner, who pleaded not guilty, was committed for trial.

Resource: freepages.rootsweb.com/~ourstuff/genealogy/ArrivalArethusa1879.htm

Trevor Hobman's Models

Currently on display is a collection of the late Trevor Hobman's handmade wooden models of aircraft, boats and other vehicles.

Born in 1927, Trevor picked up his first pocket knife and whittled away with wood right up until his passing in 2020.

A section of models are New Zealand shipwrecks, including models of the Wahine, which ran aground in 1968, and the Rena, a container ship that sunk off Tauranga in 2011. Hobman's favourite model is of the Mikhail Lermontov (pictured), a luxury Russian cruise ship that sunk in the



Photo: WARWICK SMITH / STUFF

Marlborough Sounds in 1986. The boat took Hobman three months to make. A fire claimed about 30 of Hobman's models in 2003 but he soon rebuilt his collection and opened his shed, that held over 200 beautifully detailed models, as a museum welcoming many visitors. Our collection of Hobman models were donated to the Coach House by his family.

Now where did that word come from?

Posh When sailing from England to the eastern parts of the Empire (India etc) the north (port) side of the ship was more comfortable as it was shaded from the sun in the southern sky. When returning it was the starboard side that was to the north, shaded, and preferred by the passengers. Wealthy travellers could afford to pay extra for these preferences and therefore their baggage was marked P.O.S.H..... Port Out Starboard Home.