

THE CHRONICLE

Coach House Museum

Newsletter of The Coach House Museum

July 2026

In association with Feilding & Districts Community Archive



The Dairy Display now has Moo-vement

Brian Schnell and the team have been busy working on the dairy display area getting things in motion. A once static display now showcases the milk's journey from udder to milk can. Daisy will undertake the 2 minute milkings with every push of the button, she's a trooper. This display is based on a 1950s two cow milking plant with sight glass and releaser. The releaser

lets the milk out without effecting the vacuum. (*my learning for the day*)

To add to the display, Barry Rasmussen has built a stand to house various dairy items such as a cream cooler, butter churns, paddles and moulds. There is also an early hand crank centrifuge for measuring the butterfat content of milk in the farm dairy and also some testing bottles.



The first milking-machine trial was made in New Zealand about thirty years ago. Following that, several makes of machines were imported but none was successful in milking cows clean enough, and; with the labour of milking the cows by hand after finishing with the milker, there was little advantage over the old hand methods. In 1900 a Scottish machine was introduced, which, although not entirely satisfactory, paved the way for later improvements, and helped to break down the prejudice among dairymen who had insisted on adhering to the old methods.

After various milkers had been introduced with some changes in type and number of buckets, a dairy farmer in the Taranaki district designed the releaser plant, which eliminated the use of buckets and conveyed the milk direct from the cow to the receiving tank. This meant a great saving of labour, but it was not an unqualified success. In comparison with the bucket plants the releaser system had two drawbacks; it did not milk the cows as clean nor was it cleansed so easily as the old system. These drawbacks have since been overcome, and now the entire system, pipes and all, can be taken down and washed thoroughly. The releaser system so popularised the milking machine in New Zealand that at the present time about twenty different makes are in use in some twelve thousand plants, and supply about half the milk of the Dominion.

The advent of the milking machine demanded a special type of milking shed, and what is now known as the "walk through" shed has been found the best suited to the needs of the average dairy. The stalls are ranged on both sides of the alley-way, and each stall is seven feet wide, divided into 'two equal sections to accommodate two cows. The cow is held by a chain or rope round the hindquarters, and when she has been milked and stripped by hand a door is opened at the head of her stall, and she is turned out so that another cow may take her place without delay. This shed permits the handling of a maximum number of cows with a minimum of time and labour. Each set of cups milks, on an average, ten cows per hour, that is to say, a four-cow plant will milk forty cows per hour with two attendants.



Mr Holben with the First Milking Machine in New Zealand

Four of these machines were set up in the Rongotea area by Mr Holben. The first four farmers were Samuel Knight, Fred Richmond, Carl Anderson and A Broadbelt. These four Rongotea farmers were the first in New Zealand to install milking machines. The installations were made by Mr E R B Holben of Palmerston North on behalf of the Cunningham Pulsator Milking Machine Company, Christchurch. This was before the introduction of oil engines and so one was driven by man power, two by treadmills and one by a steam engine. It was not long afterwards that suitable internal combustion engines were introduced and mechanical milking became accepted practice. The body of one of these machines was used as a water trough on T G Gloyn's farm (Avalon Banks Line) until it rusted out about 1960.

What is Matariki?

Matariki is the star cluster most commonly known across the world as Pleiades. This cluster is part of a larger constellation of stars called Taurus. It is one of the earliest recorded groups of stars in human history, with a record that dates back some 17,000 years.

Around the world there are many names for this group of stars. In Japan, it is called Subaru, which means 'to come together'. In China it is Mao, the hairy head of the white tiger, and in India it is known as Krittika. In Greek mythology they are known as the seven sisters, and in Norse mythology the Vikings knew them as Freyja's hens.

For many cultures, these stars are connected to celebration, planting, harvesting, weather, and life. For Māori, the rising of Matariki signals te Māhaki o te Tau, the Māori New Year. The appearance of Matariki in the morning sky is a sign for people to gather, to honour the dead, celebrate the present, and plan for the future.

In 2022 Matariki became an official public holiday in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is the first public holiday in Aotearoa to recognise te ao Māori. Matariki happens during the coldest time of year. For the ancestors of Māori it was a time when the major work activities had come to an end: the harvest was over and food from the gardens had been gathered and stored away in pits and pātaka in preparation for



Night at the Museum: Search of the Stars

Friday 3 July 5pm – 8pm

Grab your little torch and join us
for a family fun night!

★ Search the gallery and find the stars.

★ Mini disco

★ Hot Chocolate

\$2 Child \$5 Adult

\$12 Family (2A+3C)

127 South Street, Feilding

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winter. When the Matariki stars rose, it was a time to come together to farewell the dead, spend time with loved ones, share kai, stories, waiata, and celebrate the New Year.

Matariki is the name of the entire cluster as well as its brightest star (also known as Alcyone). Māori believe that this individual star is the mother of the other eight visible stars in the

group, and she has a strong connection to health and well-being. There are over 500 stars in the Matariki cluster – but only a handful are visible without the use of a telescope. Each of the stars has their own unique characteristics that Māori acknowledge and honour. Pōhutukawa connects us to our loved ones that have passed on. Tipuānuku determines the bounty of foods grown from the ground. Tipuārangi is linked to birds and other elevated foods such as fruits and berries from trees. Waitī is associated with all freshwater bodies and the food sources that are sustained by those waters. Waitā is associated with the ocean and all life within this domain. Waipunarangi is associated with the various forms of rain that we experience throughout the year as it falls from the sky and washes over the earth, nourishing all living things. Ururangi connects us to the different winds. Hiwa-i-te-Rangi is the star to which our dreams and aspirations are connected too.

Information resource: Te Papa

The Manawatu Historic Vehicle Collection Trust (MHVCT) We have many new members and volunteers who may be wondering; 'Who and what is this MHVCT?' The organisation is a registered charitable trust. In early 2000 a group of historic minded people, who were concerned at the number of horse drawn vehicles that were being lost to the community, decided to do something to address the issue. The MHVCT established the Coach House Museum in 2002 opening at 78 Bowen Street, Feilding. The museum's purpose is to collect, preserve and display local heritage. The Feilding and Districts Community Archive was added in 2008. However, the gift of the Ferg Crawshaw , John Deere tractor collection was the catalyst to look for new premises. So here we are today, with the assistance of the Higgins family with this building. We opened at the new South Street location in 2012. We would not be the fabulous world class Museum and Archive without the dedication and knowledge held by our team of Trustees.

Below: 2026 MHVCT Trustees and me, the short one. Left to right: Simon McKay, Tom Fitzsimon, Ian Wightman, Brian Guy (Chair), Glenys Taylor, Piki Fairbairn (Administrator), Brian Schnell and Royden Seymour.



James Mackenzie: Outlaw or Folk Hero?

James Mackenzie was a Scottish-born shepherd who became famous for livestock theft in the 1850s. He was accused of stealing over a thousand sheep from a Canterbury station. Authorities arrested Mackenzie, but he escaped custody multiple times. This raised questions about law enforcement at the time. He was eventually caught and sent to prison. After claims of unfair treatment and lack of evidence, officials reduced his sentence and later pardoned him. Many people saw Mackenzie as a symbol of resistance against wealthy landowners. The **Mackenzie Country** in the South Island is named after him.

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