

THE CHRONICLE

Coach House Museum

Newsletter of The Coach House Museum

April 2026

In association with Feilding & Districts Community Archive

FIELD DAYS *Origins* As A&P shows became primarily entertainment, another type of event emerged. This was the Field Day—a display of new machinery and technology for the modern farmer, often demonstrated under working conditions. The idea developed in Australia after the Second World War and began in New Zealand in 1953 with the South Island Agricultural Field Day. ***South Island Field Days*** The first South Island Agricultural Field Days were organised by the Christchurch District Young Farmer's Clubs, but since 2003 have been run by a society. They are held in conjunction with Lincoln University and the permanent site is on the university's research farm. The biennial event alternates with the Southern Field Days, organised since 1982 by the Eastern Southland Young Farmers Club and held at Waimumu, near Gore.



Photo taken at the Central Districts Field Days poss. 2017

'Shows and Field Days' by
Jock Phillips

Central Districts Field Days celebrated its 30th year in 2023 and continues to be one of the largest regional Field Days in New Zealand, generating over 50 million dollars in economic impact, it's roots stretch back to 1993 when it was introduced by Don Eade as an annual event.

First beer brewed in New Zealand 1 April 1773

In an attempt to concoct a preventative against scurvy, Captain James Cook brewed a batch of beer on Resolution Island in Dusky Sound, using Rimu branches and leaves. An attempt by Lion Breweries to recreate Cook's beer in the 1980s resulted in a brew that some called 'awful' and others 'revolting'.

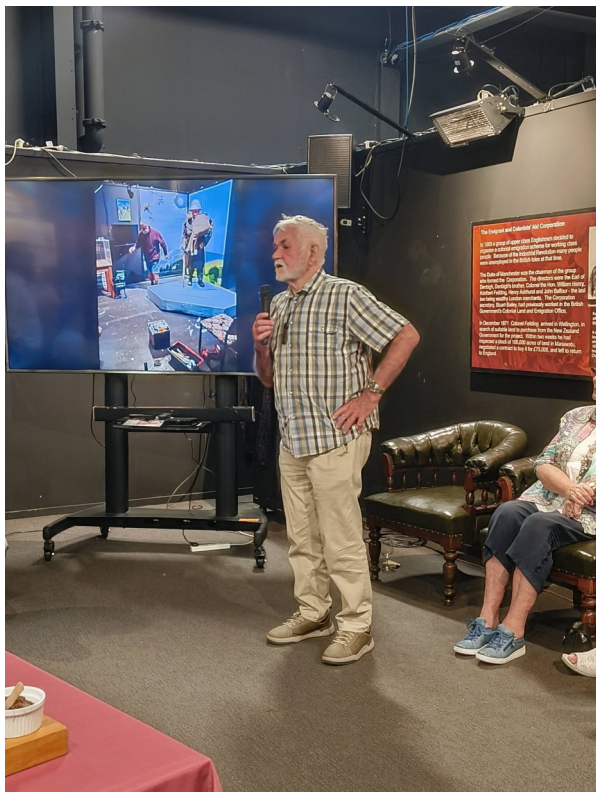


Ghost riders

The name of Mystery Creek, the site of the National Fieldays, is itself a mystery. One theory is that there was a murder there in the 19th century, but both the culprit and the policeman sent to track him disappeared. Others believe that a fully saddled and bridled horse was once found near the creek, but no rider ever appeared. A third view is that a captain in the New Zealand wars travelled along the creek on a horse named Mystery.

All-purpose animal

One feature of the Fieldays is the farmer invention competition, with a piece of No. 8 fencing wire as the prize. One competitor entered a goat as the 'Caprine post peeler', which was claimed to be 'self motivated, produces mohair, meat, milk and reproduces'.



The opening of our Russian Jack display was well attended on Wednesday 18 March with around 90 people gathering in the theatre sharing their RJ stories with each other. Len gave a great talk on how the display evolved and made mention of all the people who contributed. It was a wonderful evening and a big thank you to Matt at Murrays Irish Bar for donating the Russian Jack Wine. Also thank you



to Adele for the nibbles, they went down like a treat.

Beside the display is a book where people can write in their own memories or those told to them. If you haven't been in to see this display, I hope you visit soon.

Edith Stanway Halcombe: New Zealand Grown

by Polly Catlin-Mayburycontinued from March

As an immigration agent Arthur was involved in large-scale settlement schemes in the 1870s, involved with establishing settlements in the Manawatū and Hawke's Bay including Eketahuna, Dannevirke and Norsewood.

In 1874 the Halcombe family had moved to Feilding where Arthur was in charge of settling the Manchester Block, a bush and scrub clad area of 40,000 hectares between the Rangītikei and Manawatū Rivers that had been selected by Lieutenant Colonel William Henry Adelbert Feilding.

Edith played a vital part in the pioneering days in Feilding, jumping into the new life with enthusiasm and vigour. With the nearest hospital 80 kilometres away in

Town of Halcombe, 1878, by Mrs Edith Stanway Halcombe.

Gift of Mrs W Turton, 1916. Te Papa (1916-0001-45)



Whanganui, and over extremely rough and rugged tracks, sickness and accidents posed a serious problem for the young community. Edith nursed those in need, as well as helping many newly-arrived women overcome their home-

sickness and the difficulties of a new life in a strange land.

The Halcombe's home, The Pines, became a centre of activity as the family hosted social and sporting events. Edith helped set up community institutions, and, along with Arthur, was active in the establishment of the St John's Anglican Church in the little town. Edith's sketches and paintings of the time are a pictorial record of the first smatterings of European life in the Manchester Block - a record of the transformation of the area from bush to paddocks and towns.

In 1876 the town of Halcombe was established, along with Stanway (after Edith). To promote the area Arthur published *The Feilding Settlement, Manchester Block, Manawatu. N.Z.* illustrated with lithographs by Edith. The drawings show a more realistic New Zealand than the romantic images often portrayed by European artists of the time.

While perhaps unintentionally revealing some of the isolation and struggle of pioneer life, Edith's work was still an advertising tool, writes Anne Kirker in *New Zealand Women Artists*. "In retrospect it is clear the works of Edith Halcombe (and other artists) were used as propaganda, reaching the public as illustrations to text which stressed the beneficial aspects of settlement.... One has the feeling that these women drew and painted less for themselves than for the expectations of a colonisation programme and an audience far removed from New Zealand." It's thanks to both Arthur and Edith's efforts that Feilding and the Manchester Block were such a great success.

ANZAC DAY Service

25th April

9.30am

Coachhouse Museum

121- 127 South Street, Feilding

followed by
pot luck morning tea

Lest We Forget



The Anzac Day service, the Square, Feilding 1942

feildingheritage.nz

We will be hosting an ANZAC service at the Coach House Museum again this year. It starts at 9.30am followed by a 'pot luck' morning tea.



The landing at Anzac, April 25, 1915, by Charles Dixon

Charles Dixon (1872–1934) was an English artist who specialised in marine scenes, working in both oils and watercolours. Best known for his depictions of activity on the Thames in London, he is also known for his paintings of major events in maritime history.

[Archives New Zealand Reference: NCWA Q388](https://www.archives.govt.nz/reference/ncwa/q388)