

# THE CHRONICLE

## Coach House Museum

Newsletter of The Coach House Museum

September 2025

In association with Feilding & Districts Community Archive

### Manchester Rifles and Their Drill Hall

Manchester Rifles was a group of men who were volunteers from the community. Much like territorials in the NZ Army of today they met and trained in armed combat as a reserve force that would be utilized in time of war. It was a well organized Feilding group which had its own drill hall in Church Street. As well as being the Drill Hall where the volunteers met it was used as a community hall. (This was demolished in the 1950s and the Civic Centre now stands on the same site.)

E H Fisher from Fisher Print was the secretary of the Manchester Rifles Committee. In the years that Mr Fisher acted as secretary he was responsible for collating all the invoices and receipts of payment. Perhaps he was a hoarder as he never threw them out. All these papers were discovered in the attic space between the ceiling and roof in the old Fisher Print building in Macarthur Street. John Darragh, who removed these papers before the demolition, has since donated them to the FDCA. It is taking time, patience and the removal of over one hundred years of dust to conserve these records. They were tied up in separate bundles with the year written on the outside covering paper – 1907 through to 1911. As well as being a record of what was needed to maintain a hall over 100 years ago the invoices belong to Feilding businesses and show their address and often who was the business owner.

Many of the invoices are works of art with the advertising and drawings displayed. One bundle now conserved is labelled 'camp 1910'. The dates of this camp are known as R H Worsfold delivered between 1 and 3 gallons of milk daily from 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> December and J. Gould and Son, Baker and Confectioner, Manchester Street, sent between six to ten loaves of bread from Dec 12<sup>th</sup> to December 17<sup>th</sup>. They must have eaten very well as B. Spiro, Fish & Game Merchant supplied ten schnappers on December 16<sup>th</sup> for 17/-; John Paterson, Feilding Refreshment Rooms – 18lbs of fruit cake at 18/- and Wong You, greengrocer sent – 6 bundles carrots, 2 dozen lettuces, 24lbs gooseberries, 6 pecks peas, 36lbs plums, 40 lbs apples and 12 dozen bananas. John Collingwood and Son, Dominion Butchery of Fergusson Street supplied the meat.



**Why is the batsman who makes no runs at cricket 'out for a duck': Well, this is short for 'out for a duck's egg', the duck's egg being the large nought (0) recorded on the scoreboard. The expression is recorded from the 1860s.**



Further excerpts from **THE DIARY OF CHARLOTTE COUCHMAN—Voyage on the 'Arethusa' 1879**  
**Oct 13<sup>th</sup>.** Not much wind but very fine. Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>. We have been standing on deck till 9 o'clock to see the dancing; the sailors and some of the emigrants have a good dance every night (wind permitting) and end with singing songs long after we lie in our bunks – they make a fine noise. This evening I was speaking to some sailors on deck and amongst them was one who had come from Rochester – his name is Williams. His mother lives in the same street as Eliza at Troy Town. I asked him if he knew Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. and Mrs. Lynch, and he does quite well – and we had quite a chat. He had been there later in the evening than us and yet they had wet weather. He could not get a berth on board so he stowed himself away until the ship was right out at sea then showed himself, helping the sailors, and the Captain is very good. He told him that he must work the same as the rest and he should have 1s. a month and a 1lb of tobacco so the poor fellow is very well satisfied. He is working very cheerfully so that he can leave the ship when they arrive in Wellington.

**Friday Oct 18<sup>th</sup>.** We are becalmed again and sitting on the deck having our tea. We heard something splash in the water and looking over the side saw a fine great shark going all round and round the ship and on the surface of the water. Our Captain threw a rope and bait and caught him and the sailors drew him on deck and there was the small pilot fish. They did not catch them. The butcher chopped his head off and the carpenter sawed the tail off then they cut him open and threw some parts of it over the side again. He measures 10 feet 6 inches in length. The Captain has the backbone and the jaw-bone for the sake of the pearls. There are two rows of pearls round the jaw – everybody seems to have a bit but I could not touch it – they have nailed the tail on the bow of the ship and the fun is over. The poor thing was hungry. We always think it is a token of death, but I hope not this time.



**Saturday.** Still becalmed. Four more ships in the distance standing still like ourselves. We saw the new moon tonight for the first time in this new world, for now we have crossed the line and we are out of the tropics. I hope it will be cooler. Another concert this evening. It all helps to pass the time away. We have been out to sea seven weeks. I hope in another seven weeks we shall be on land once more. They are making every preparation for rough weather. We are rounding the Cape for the Captain does not intend stopping anywhere if wind permits him to sail. Another blessed Sabbath. You would hardly think we could tell one day from another, but so it is, every day brings its work. I am sorry to say my old man is ill – under the Doctor's hands. Medicine and pills and powders. I hope he will get better soon for this is awful. It has come on to rain and blow tremendously. We are all ordered down below and battened down.

**Monday.** The wind still raging and the ship tossing about. The sea looks awfully grand, but so wild for the waves are mountainous high. We passed the Trinidad Island today. It is inhabited by Portuguese convicts – this is a fearful night. It rains and thunders and lightens dreadfully.

**T**HE Little Man in the crowd was inclined to be unpleasant to a certain politician who was seeking the people's suffrages. "Yah," the former shouted, "if you are really the people's candidate what d'ye want to wear a ring for? We don't want men who ornament themselves!" "My dear Sir" replied the politician, "Why do you part your hair? Why do you wear a gold watch chain? Why a collar? You could do without either. Like the ring, these things are a matter of taste, my friend." And so it is. A neat ring can be worn by any man without show or ostentation, and the place to get a tasteful ring for your male friend is from

**GEORGE OXLEY,  
HIGH-CLASS JEWELLER,  
PAHIATUA.**

**Wednesday 17 September —1.30pm**

**Jojo from the Manawatu Cancer Society will be coming to the Coach House to tell us all about what the Cancer Society does and how we could help out.**

Jojo O'Neil is the Volunteer Coordinator for the Manawatu Cancer Society, supporting the Horowhenua, Manawatu, and Tararua communities. She recruits, trains, and cares for a dedicated team of volunteers, ensuring they feel valued and equipped to make a difference. We have Volunteers in all parts of our community, driving clients to hospital appointments, hosting at the Oncology ward and assisting with a number of fundraisers. Working closely with community groups and agencies, Jojo brings warmth, energy, and a deep commitment to helping people affected by cancer.

**Come along, bring some friends and find out ways we can support people in the community.**



**Cancer  
Society**



**Major Sponsor**





The team who came along to give the Gallery a dust and clean last month enjoying morning tea. We get asked a lot by visitors how we keep the displays clean. This is how, good people coming together to lend a hand. Thank you!!

**Mawhiti Tino Rawe—Clever Crustaceans Exhibition Opening—29 August 2025**  
We had a fabulous turnout at the opening. The exhibition is on until 4 November and hopefully the community and schools will take advantage of it being here.

