



The Godley Beacon

The Godley Head Heritage Trust newsletter, July 2003

Good News

No doubt many of you will have read in the paper of the Government hand out for historic conservation. A photo in the Press of the Hon. Chris Carter, the Conservation Minister, out at Godley Head accompanied the good news.

All up the Government will set aside \$15.2 million for historic conservation. Godley Head will benefit from \$120 000 which will go towards electric lighting for the underground magazines, some restoration of the gun pits, and interpretation panels in the structures.

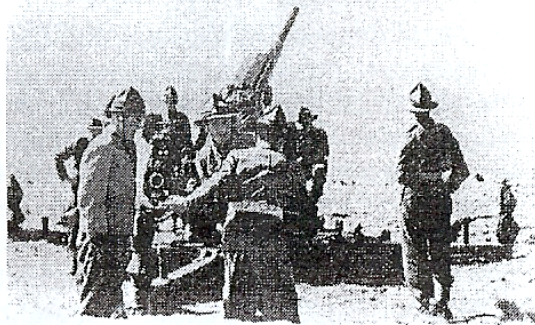
The old quartermasters store will be modified so an anti aircraft gun, on loan from Ferrymead, can be housed under cover. This will enable Trust members to work on it in all weathers, and be a secure place to house it.

3.7 Heavy AA gun

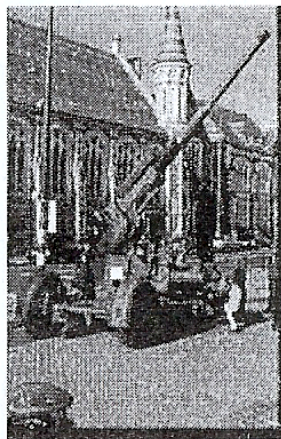
The 3.7 heavy AA gun, on loan for 10 years from Ferrymead, was used in a display outside the Canterbury Museum 2 years ago. This type of gun was used at Godley Head during WW II and Compulsory Military Training days.

Electric lights

The Department of Conservation has contracted out the lighting of Number 2 and Number 3 underground magazines. This will allow people to have a good view in these subterranean areas. When you venture down No 2, a sensor will softly light up the magazine.



3.7 heavy AA gun at Godley Head in the 1950's.
photo M Lombard.



No 3 is open only for special events. A torch will still be needed for the adventurous day visitor who wants to explore underground down in No 1 magazine.

Take care on the steps going down to any of them - they are steep and narrow.

The Trust will give a guided walk at Godley Head as part of the Conservation Week celebrations in August. Watch the newspapers for

advertisements with more details.

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Saving the Past

Historic Range gets Facelift.

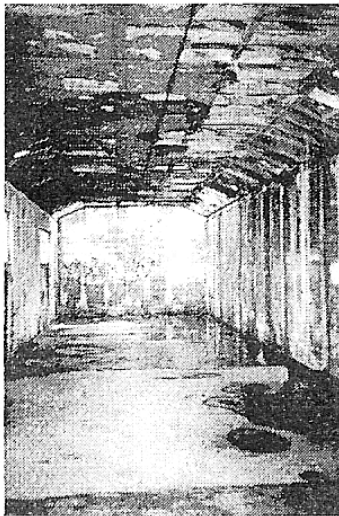
The Department of Conservation has recently re-roofed the Miniature Range at Godley Head.

This concrete building has been a target for vandals over the years. What remained of the old cement fibre roof was removed and a new 'Onduline' roof installed. This product is a modern durable substitute for the old roof.

"It's great to have remedial work completed on this important building," said the Department of Conservation's historic officer, Ian Hill. "The weather will no longer be eroding it away and it is a major step in the progressive preservation of the Godley Head Fortress area."

The miniature range was used during the war, not to practise rifle shooting, but as a practice for ranging the big guns at the Head. Similar to war games, the long building contained a huge table. Coordinates and range were set and locked in, and a peg manually popped up to indicate where the 'shot' fell.

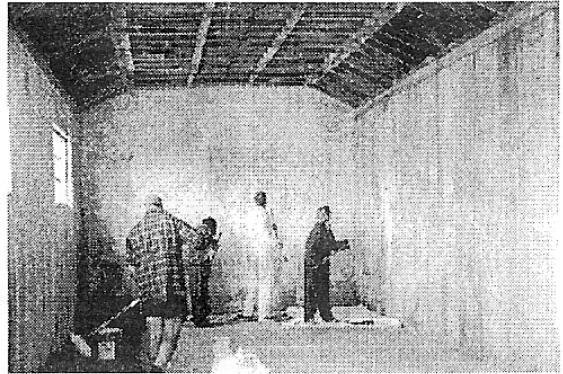
On a sunny Sunday earlier this year, volunteers from the Godley Head Heritage Trust and DOC took time to give the building a good clean out after its re-roof, and coat the interior with limewash.



Ian Hill led the 17 member troop into battle against grime and decay. Armed with brooms, long-

handled paint rollers and other tools, they took to the task with plenty of banter.

Graeme Hines mixed up brews of hydrated lime and water and Bill Rowse, Mike Grey, Lyn Lothead and others got stuck into rolling the mix onto the walls. Initially the result was a bit disappointing as the coat seemed too thin. It left a translucent milky film on the walls and we envisaged several returns to add more coats.



While the paint team rolled away, Bruce Stanton cleared weeds and rubble from around the steps, and David Stock and others cleared out the drains. In the nearby Engine Room, Bill and Kevin Moorar, Peter Wilkins, Patrick Lyons and DOC ranger Tony Woods, were armpit deep in muck, cleaning out the cable channels. This was a particularly dirty job with grease and water mixed in with the debris of years – including old sheep bones. Within a couple of hours the area was looking very tidy and a well-earned lunch-break was taken.

A couple of days later when Trust members and DOC staff revisited the site they were delighted to find the lime/water brew had dried to a hard, dense white finish, that well covered the graffiti.

Recently the Southern Regional Office DOC staff had a workday in the same area. They applied a second limewash coat to the walls and cleared away the weeds and rubble from the old toilet block.

The Trust will organise regular work-days at the Godley Head Coastal Defence Battery, doing general spruce-up work, to supplement the work DOC is doing out there. We'll keep you posted on further opportunities to help.

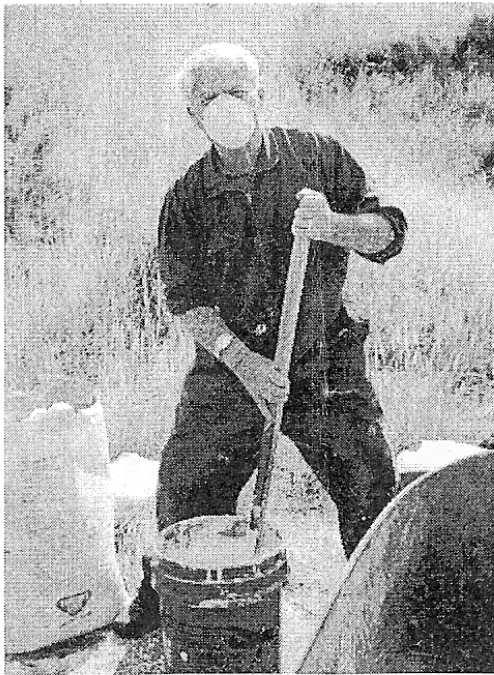
Limewash

What is limewash you may ask?

Limewash, also called distemper, has been used on historic buildings for centuries. As well as helping retain the character of a building, it also provides practical protection from the elements and gives an attractive finish.

It is a mixture of hydrated lime and water. After some research, Ian Hill has found a good recipe that will be used in future limewashing out at the head. The wash can be coloured with pigments.

Our updated recipe includes a 1kg of salt, and requires mixing up at least a day before using. We are learning as we go along the restoration trail at the Head!



Graeme Hines mixing limewash

Left - Miniature Range before re-roofing
Left centre - After re-roofing, limewash gang in action

True tales from the Head The love light

A woman relates how her father served at Godley Head during WWII.

A soldier on one the searchlights, he had a girlfriend down in Sumner. Apparently every second night when he was on duty, he hid his bike in bushes around the point.

When it became dark, he left his co-operative mate on sole duty, and sneaked off. Braving a swim around the headland he reached the point where he had stashed his bike, and then blithely cycled down to Sumner to visit his girl. Just before sun up he returned to Godley Head, rehid his bike in the bush again, and swam back around the point to rejoin his watch. Now thats a good keen man!

Obituary



Ian Douglas Bell Lt. Col.

14th Lt. AA. Regt. 2nd
NZE
11th Coast Regt. ED. RNZA

Ian had a long association with Godley Head. He was posted there in the early part of WW II and returned at the end of CMT days as the last Regimental Commander. He has been a mine of advice and information on Godley Head and other military matters to staff of the former Dept of Lands and Survey and latterly DOC.

Ian was at the forefront to preserve what had been a part of his life for future generations and along with Warwick Peers, assisted greatly in the development of the Godley Head Historic Concept Plan. It is thanks to his and Warwicks effort in lobbying DOC, that the Godley Head Heritage Trust was formed.

His stature and knowledge is greatly missed.

Godley Head Heritage Trust

Notice of Annual General Meeting

**24 July, at the Christchurch RSA
74 Armagh Street, 6pm.**

**In the Museum room upstairs - entry off Billiard Room.
Ample Parking at the rear, off Gloucester Street.**

Agenda will include:

- **Chairman's Report**
- **Financial Report**
- **Election of board members**
- **General business**

Memorandum of Understanding

Annual work plan committee - nominations

Update on website

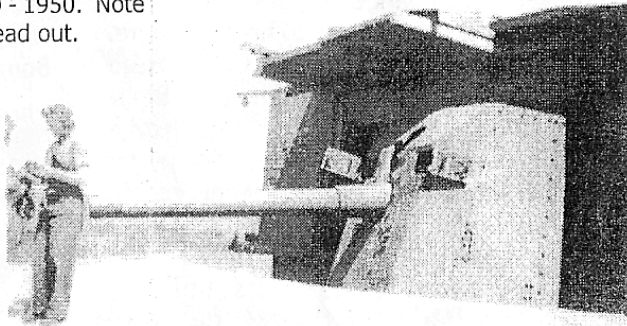
At the end of the formal meeting, we will show of some of the historic material we have collected so far and a viewing of footage of the last firing at Godley Head, in CMT days.



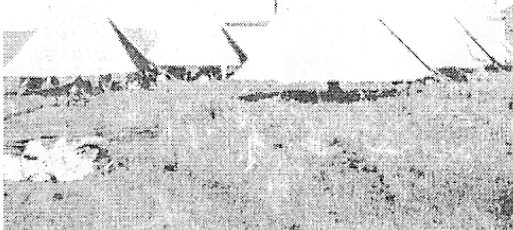
Picture Gallery



40mm Bofors gun at Godley Head circa 1940 - 1950. Note concrete gun apron with camouflage net spread out.
Photo courtesy M Lombard



WAAC's at Godley Head at No. 1 gun emplacement.
Photo courtesy M Manning.



Bell tents at Godley Head. The earliest accommodation.
Photo courtesy



ROGUES GALLERY



Annette Hamblett

My interest in Godley Head goes back as far as I can remember. My father Roy Sprosen (Lt Colonel J F R Sprosen, DSO, ED) was the Regimental Commander of the 11th Coast

Regiment around 1950. I was told I spent time there as a baby.

Godley Head was very much a presence in our family long after my father ceased to be Regimental Commander. He talked of it often as he had good memories of his time there. My first vivid memory of being at Godley Head was when I was a small child. Our family was invited to watch US Rear Admiral George Dufek go out past the Heads when he left Lyttelton with a fleet. He was on his way to McMurdo Sound to establish an airstrip for Operation Deep Freeze. I was very excited when his ship sounded its horn to acknowledge the 11th Coast Regiment people watching as he went past the heads.

In my early twenties I moved to the West Coast and didn't visit Godley Head for many years. When I returned to Canterbury in 1989, working for the Canterbury Conservancy of the Department of Conservation (DOC), I discovered that it managed Godley Head. I got talking to Ian Hill, DOC's Historic Officer, and he took me out for a tour.

Unfortunately my father died a few years too soon (Jan 1982) so I did not have the pleasure of re-visiting the site with him and recording his recollections of his time there. As a link to him Godley Head is a very special place for me so I was delighted to see the Godley Head Heritage Trust get established and enjoy being involved with its work on the Trust Board.



Warwick Peers

It is thanks to the efforts of Warwick and the late Ian Bell, that the Godley Head Heritage Trust even exists. They lobbied the Department of Conservation to support the formation of a Trust, several years before it happened.

Warwick's interest in Godley Head dates back to his CMT (Compulsory Military Training) days, when he was conscripted into the army in 1952. After completing basic training at Burnham, he was posted to Godley Head as a Lance Bombardier.

He was one of the two New Zealand Soldiers chosen to represent their country at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. He was selected to be the guard corporal at Buckingham Palace for a twelve-hour duty.

In 1954 Warwick was commissioned as a Territorial Force Officer. His first duties were in BOP3 and he did most junior officer's tasks eventually becoming Deputy Adjutant

Warwick's health is fading and he has reluctantly resigned from the Board of the Trust.



Sergeant Warwick Peers in the lead in London 1953.

Listening to the Past

Godley Head's Oral History

Behind the scenes we were quietly plodding away researching Godley Heads' history. To ensure the accuracy of the work we had to have the facts. Not myth and legend, but reality. Those who were there knew the story, so there was no need to record it. This left us in a state of unwelcome ignorance.

Looking for help, we put an article in the RSA Review asking for anyone who had served at Godley Head to contact us. To date 77 people have replied. We now have interviewed or have yet to interview 92 individuals. Our resources overloaded and nearly seized up. Just recording and acknowledging those who contacted us and what they sent in was as much as we could handle.

One of our members had the bright idea to contact the History Department of the University of Canterbury. To our relief the department was delighted to help. Over a dozen students volunteered to help with our preliminary interviews. They also turned up at Godley Head for an orientation tour. The Head put on one of its famously bleak and windswept days. To add to their trials the Trust guide, keen to see them fully orientated, ran them over hill and hollow.

Once collected and verified, the data from all these interviews will be collated and form part of our rapidly growing information store on the Head. This store will help ensure the planning behind your next working bee, will be as close to right as we can make it.

Not only are people feeding us their memories but their mementoes as well. One old gunnery sergeant sent us three one inch calibre cartridge cases, but without explanation. We were stonkered till another sergeant instructor recalled EME fitting tubes into the six inch guns for practice firing.

"What calibre?" we asked. Reply "One inch". Problem solved.

Second war individuals' note books, manuals, pennants, Coastal Artillery Christmas cards, photos, badges, buttons and a pill box have come in. Yes, one full sized, reinforced concrete, Ministry of Works, genuine World War Two pill box – to be removed to Godley Head. So oil your picks and shovels this one will require fit volunteers.

Remember if you or some one you know served on Godley - WW2, RF or CMT, we need to hear from you. History is like a jig-saw. No matter how small the piece – if we don't have it – the puzzle isn't finished.

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Godley Head on the Web

With unbelievable slowness a web site is being constructed to represent and promote the Godley Head Trust. Like Topsy it just grew – and grew! Every time we think we've covered everything, someone says "what about so and so?" and off we go again. We suspect it'll never be finished but will go on line 'as is' within the next fortnight.

Our intention is to provide site visitors with an illustrated history of Godley, Trust activities and what can be seen and done at the Head. In addition there will be sections on people who served there and a link page for other coastal defence sites within New Zealand and throughout the world. At the coming annual meeting of the Trust we intend to release the web sites' address so you can visit the Trust ON LINE.