



Hokianga Historical Society Inc.

PO Box 26 Opononi 0445

Ph. 09 405 8498

CC 32572

Incorporating
Hokianga Museum

NEWSLETTER April 2014

First, my apologies for being so late sending this out; it should have gone in February at least. The year seems to be racing away from both it and me. (I know it's not good p.r. to start with an apology but there's no denying that it's been a long time since the last one.)

What is driving me to it now is the approach of Easter: on Easter Sunday, **20th April**, we have another **Sunset Cruise** organised. This is mainly of course for visitors as well as members, but here are the details: the *Hokianga Express* will leave from **Opononi wharf sharp at 5.00 pm**, returning at 6.00 pm, trip is limited to 35 and will **cost \$25.00** (kids \$10-15.00 depending on size) You are welcome to take food and wine and there will be a commentary, but the destination will depend on the tide, the weather and the whim of the Captain. For booking, queries etc. phone either the number above (the Museum) between 10 am and 2 pm, or 09 405.8641 any time within reason. As usual, if there are not enough bookings to at least break even, we can't go, so please gather up your friends!

Following this, we have a range of events planned for the rest of the year involving walks, meetings and food, but unfortunately most are still at the definite-details-not-worked-out stage, so there will just have to be another newsletter quite soon. We do have pencilled-in dates which are: May 31, June 27, July 27, August 17 or 24 (AGM), November 21, December 28 (boat trip) Plus another group of three Sunday Afternoons in the Museum as before, on the last Sunday of the winter months, when various locals talk about their passions, preoccupations or productions.

Our year started off well with a wonderful trip to the top of the Ambler farm overlooking the Waimamaku River snaking through its valley, out to the western coastline as far as the eye could see. Those who felt like climbing did so, but Paul Ambler provided transport for those who didn't or couldn't, and everyone made it in one piece. Paul talked history, Lloyd talked geology, all just enjoyed the day. Thank you to all who took part, and especial thanks to Paul and Susanna, for making it such a good day, and Barbara who did the organisation.

That was a high point, but almost immediately we reached a real low on hearing that one of our most reliable and gentlest of volunteers, Maureen Mills who had only just left to be closer to family, had died on 10th January. Worse was to come. Our dear friend and long-time colleague, Jean Garriock, was taken ill while in Kaikohe to renew her driving licence on the eve of her 86th birthday, and she died that night in Rawene Hospital. Long-time members will be very familiar with her name as treasurer on subscription receipts – she'd been treasurer from 1992 until quite recently. After increasing heart-trouble she had been given a pace-maker and after a year or so of quiet life, had made a real comeback – back on the executive and the museum, taking full part in all our doings, planning for the future and giving good advice when necessary. Our team of volunteers becomes like a family over the years and to lose any of them hurts as much as a family member would.

Being practical, that has left the museum with two less volunteers, and for Diane the roster-manager it's been more complicated by others wanting to go on holiday – after catering for the needs of all the holiday-makers over summer, they feel it's their turn now! To be truthful it's not always a holiday: some are looking after grandchildren to let the parents go off. But whatever, it's a headache just now to keep the place open every day and there have been a couple of times when it's had to stay closed. However, we've had a few former stalwarts offer to come back and two recent new members, John and Lorraine Askew, are fitting into the day that Maureen and Jean looked after together. And we're working on one or two more that we think would be just ideal.....even if they have doubts.

The visitor count is holding its own quite well: over the holidays it was families with a range of children boosting the numbers. Now though it tends to be older couples, with time to talk and time to

remember about some ancient relative who once lived “somewhere around here”. To be truthful, that’s what I really enjoy, sleuthing around on their behalf! Some might call it nosiness, of course. And there have also been a few visits from school classes, usually before 10 a.m. when we are officially open to the public ; but that’s better because if they’re noisy (which they are) it doesn’t worry anyone else. We really hope to expand on these, but it will take time. Opo is still a great draw-card.

Two very effective developments have been (1) the addition of “MUSEUM – OPEN” flags for the roadside, and (2) a publicity brochure to spread around public places. The first follows a visit from Arthur Anae, an Auckland City Councillor, on holiday here. “You need flags, I’ll get them made for you if you tell me what you want,” he said. Well, not looking a gift-horse in the mouth we told him, and he did get them made and delivered, and it’s true: they are very effective. Some of us find the 100m. walk to the corner of SH12 quite a feat in a high wind (they tend to take off) but hey, it’s worth it. Our grateful thanks, Mr Anae!

The second development, a publicity brochure ([find it here](#)), is the work of our Brussels-based member/benefactor, Ken Baker. Again, it was a brief holiday visit here that sparked it off. We do have a small committee working on a potential triple-fold photographic handout, but it’s taking a while to get everything looking right (e.g. our old contact-mine in front is not photogenic, but it’s history) In the meantime Ken has gone home, designed a colorful slim card with details on one side and map on the other, emailed a sample for vetting , had it printed, and couriered it over. They arrived last week – boxes and boxes of them, all carefully packed. So we’re certainly not losing sight of our committee’s triple-fold handout, but they now have more time to reach perfection and this card just fits the bill for casually leaving in places we visit. Thank you so much, Ken, for this and all you do for us!

Now, if members feel like spreading publicity for HHS round the bits of NZ that you know well or visit, just let us know and we’ll post you a little pile. They’re no use sitting at base here, they have to be out doing their duty everywhere else, and who better to spread them around than people with our well-being at heart? We look forward to hearing from you.

Those visiting Opononi these days will find quite a difference around the I-Site building. Not only is the 4-Square store still in residence there with the I-Site squashed into a corner, but the long concrete-block wall below the Webster/Baker house has become a long colourful **mural** showing the decades of Opononi – Pakanae history, master-minded by artist Bev Cox with assistance from other painters. Much of it is based on photographs from our collection, so we have a slightly proprietary feeling about it – a sample below.

For the time being, that’s all from me. After all, you’ll be getting another missive within a month or so giving all the information about future events that should have been in this one!

Best wishes

Alexa Whaley.

