



Incorporating  
Hokianga Museum and  
Archives Centre

Hokianga Historical Society Inc.

PO Box 26 Opononi 0445

Ph. 09 405 8498

hokianga@h@gmail.com

CC 32572

## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2019

Kia ora koutou

We chose the wrong day, weatherwise, for our AGM! After days of “occasional showers, mainly in the west” which we’d rather got used to, and after a briefly sunny morning, the heavens opened and sent a deluge down (I exaggerate, but only slightly) all afternoon. Still, fourteen brave people came, including our intrepid patron Heather Ayrton over from Kerikeri, and it was a warm and friendly occasion with lots of food to finish with.

Some changes in our Executive committee. We still have our president, Dawn Metcalfe; but **Barbara Coulter**, who as Vice-President has been her reliable substitute for several terms, has been battling illness for much of the past year and decided in fairness she should step down this time. She will be very much missed and we hope to get her back to the Executive in the future, all going well. Then **Doug McKenzie**, our Treasurer, had given notice that he would only give it one more year, and after five years who can blame him. But THEN he got wind of a recent arrival with accounting experience - Rita Hume – so decided this was too good a chance to miss and stood down with alacrity, while Rita went through the nomination process in a last-minute-rush. The final change, though, is the saddest. **Grace Wilkinson**, who’s been at the forefront of displays in the museum and has been on the executive since at least 1999, lost her private fight with cancer on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Right to the last she was demanding to know what we were up to and how was it going, and it had to be told in every detail. So her death when it came was slightly unexpected. It was also most unfortunate that her tangi had to take second place to the opening of the Rawene Hospital extensions on August 1<sup>st</sup>, as that tied up many of the kaumatua and workers all day. It was hard to find out exactly what the arrangements were until it was too late and many members were unaware of what had happened. But go well, Grace, with the love and regret of all of us.

Our “new look” and all-women executive for 2019-20 is this:

President:	Dawn Metcalfe	Members:	Kathryn Darby
Vice President:	Sandy Clark		Vivienne Davies
Secretary:	Claire Kaahu White		Heather Martin
Treasurer:	Rita Hume		Donna Washbrook
Museum Curator:	Raeone Dellaca		Alexa Whaley

An enthusiastic welcome to newcomers Rita Hume, Kathryn Darby and Vivienne Davies; a thank you to Sandy Clark for taking up the Vice Presidency; and a congratulation to Rae Dellaca, confirmed in her position as Curator (in case we’ve forgotten, she’s been ‘Acting’ since Donna handed it over at the end of last year) And to Doug and Barbara – what can we say? We haven’t finished with you yet!

Well, those are the elections wrapped up for another year. But you never know! Donna Washbrook, after nearly a year of advocacy for the disabled, has decided to put her name forward for the Northland D.H.B. Good luck to her - she’s been multi-tasking all her life, after all.

What other items from the AGM? We remembered those of our membership who have died during the year, with a minute’s silence – Paul Dougherty, Sister Isabelle (Barbara Jean) Harding, Grace Wilkinson, Raima Dove. Our aroha goes to their families.

We congratulated Rae and Sandy on the completion of their NCEA Museum Studies Certificate (two more to put on the wall!)

We were glad to confirm Heather Ayrton as our Patron again this year.

We decided to keep the cost of membership the same - \$15.00 individual, \$25.00 couple.

We installed Doug as our Property Convenor, on the understanding that he has a list of names he can call on when needed, but they are not a committee.

Copies of the President's and Curator's reports, and the financial statement and next year's budget, are available to be sent to anyone requesting any or all, as they've been duly read and accepted at the meeting. So that's the AGM out of the way and the next step for the Executive is the setting up of the year's sub-committees – Museum Management (the biggy); Events, which hasn't been functioning too well lately; and Research Projects, which usually gets crowded out by the research requests coming in. Always at this stage we really, really wish you all lived a lot closer. Still, any offers?

**Now an apology regarding the Annual Lunch:** We discovered that an information-gathering hui, to do with the publication planned to cover all members of A Company 28 Maori Battalion, is to be held in Motukaraka on the very day (**Nov.16**) of our lunch. In that case it is very likely that our speaker, Dr Aroha Harris, will want to be involved herself as her whole whanau will be. We couldn't change the date, but the hotel is happy that the evening of the 16th is free so far. Therefore it will become an **evening affair**, BUT having in mind all those who aren't keen on night-driving, we will make it **5.30 pm for mix and mingle, 6.00 pm dinner**, and hopefully it won't be a late night. Also, the hotel has a pick-up / drop home service if there's notification 2 or 3 days earlier. (Didn't ask how far away they'd go!) But we'll be into daylight saving, and the moon is full just three days before. So please don't decide not to come!

Aroha has told us that her subject will be **"Aroha-nui for all": the politics of Whanau Ora**, based on her new research project, still in its infancy, which is [in my interpretation] a study of how our two cultures rub along with each other against the odds. But for this talk, she will focus on her own family, specifically the younger lives of her parents, shown through a collection of whanau letters.

**Event pending:** **Waimamaku Garage** is an Aladdin's Cave of historical gadgets of all sizes and shapes. As many of you know, the building itself has quite a history as well. We've been talking to Bruce and Toia about the chance of having a Society visit there and they are willing and cooperative, but finding a date that suits their busy lives is proving difficult; Bruce always seems to be working flat out. So just now it's a matter of Watch This Space – I'm hoping it might be in the school holidays sometime, but it's over to them. Be assured, we'll let you know.

**Opononi's Sea Wall:** Is progressing every day, rain /shine / thunder/ hail / etc. – not that it's a noticeable wall as only in Opononi does it rise above the road at all. Work has reached a point about opposite Kokohuia Road at present, although they've given most attention to the parts where the road is really threatened. Dawn and John Metcalfe, who live in the midst of it all, have been talking to the engineer in charge from the outset, telling him the story of the original wall which they are burying, more or less – how it was built using the ballast rocks that were jettisoned off the early timber ships before they loaded their timber. Well, the long & short of their talks was that they persuaded him to extract what slabs he could and bring them to the museum when he had time. And the day before our AGM he did just that, and lined them up at the back of our carpark (a temporary arrangement) They are huge! Sydney sandstone seems to predominate, but we'll need our resident geologist to cast his eye over them all for a proper identification.

The images are a little small to identify who's who, but thanks go to Garth Coulter and his tractor, to John Metcalfe, John Browne, and especially to Dave Page. Next step will be to get each slab into its permanent position, flanking the mine and against the bank to the left.



Work on the site of the Manea Project has been going ahead too, following the blessing of the site last month. It seems a salutary coincidence that at the same time as the arrival of James Cook 250 years ago is being celebrated, this community is finally bringing Kupe's c1300 arrival and exploration into the forefront of our history. It does seem about time to do so!

**Visit of Fiona Mohr:** Currently in charge of Waipu's museum, Fiona had previously worked in Australia as a visiting museum development advisor. Rae discovered this when she met her during her Museum Studies course, and asked if she could come over to advise us on the best use of our limited space. Which she did, quite recently, and in her exploration of current displays she noticed our story of Colin Quincey and his marathon row across the Tasman. (We've had this display up ever since Colin and son Shane came to talk at our Annual Lunch two years ago – rather too long of course but (a) we're fond of it and it's a good talking-point, and (b) dismantling it will be quite an athletic business.) *Well, Fiona was delighted to tell us of her part in the Colin Quincey Story. At that time (1967) she happened to be living at Marcus Beach, fairly remote, with only a few houses. It was the middle of the night and everyone knew the police were searching for two escaped miscreants. Her neighbour rang her to ask if she'd call the police for them, as they had a strange man knocking on their window, asking for a cigarette and saying he'd just rowed over from New Zealand....* She did so, and the police arrived very quickly. They kindly supplied the cigarette, once they'd discovered it was all true.

While on **displays** - among the items which Sister Isabelle Harding deposited with the museum when she left the north was a copy of Dr Smith's Medical Advice from a back block hospital (1943) We read it, of course, while processing it, and found (among other things) his detailed instructions for putting together a household medicine chest, right down to the measurements of its box and where it should be kept. This inspired a couple of us to recreate one for display, as best we could, to compare with the First Aid kit of today – and also to introduce Dr Smith to our ignorant visitors. But oh dear, the very first item on his list was "A bottle of Brilliant Green" – what is that?! Volunteer Lindsay Gray, who's nursed all her life, remembered an Australian surgeon using it to paint it over the operating area on his patients and how difficult it was to wash off afterwards; she says it was one of a group of disinfectants which included gentian violet and mercurochrome and are no longer used. I think we're going to have to fudge this one and use food colour: a pity, but 80 years ago... things disappear. Fortunately Dettol is on his list too; the bottle may have changed but at least the name hasn't.

Other displays in the museum are still going strong – the Dog Tax War, the Influenza epidemic, Women's Suffrage 125 years on. The long-term aim with this one is to produce a complete biographical coverage of those 155 women who enrolled, but as I remarked before, research keeps getting pushed aside by other immediate matters. It will take a while.

Whenever John and Lorraine Askew are on museum duty, John works away at his current project of describing what Waiotemarama Gorge Road was like when they came to live there in 1970. The quarry and the cheese factory were still operating; at the southern end the store and post office too; it was just as the hippie era began, but it was no longer the main route north. Farms, yes; but very few houses.



*Pakanae Quarry, c. 1980*

Finally, welcome to new members Polli Marriner, Rita Hume and Ben Curnow. We hope you find us useful, although our correspondence is sporadic (my apologies) We do try to be in touch as soon as there's information to pass on, but it always takes longer in creation than expected.

Ka kite ano - Alexa Whaley