



Incorporating  
Hokianga Museum

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### December 2018

This month Alexa is having a well-deserved break, so I have taken up the challenge of putting together our last newsletter for 2018. It's a hard task taking over from Alexa whose newsletters are so friendly yet so jammed-packed with interesting information. My effort will focus on the year that was from a Hokianga Historical Society perspective, and on bygone Christmases.

However, it is with sadness that I note the passing last week of volunteer Paul Dougherty after a brief illness. Paul's friendly, cheerful, friendly personality along with his insatiable appetite for, knowledge of, and conversations about Hokianga history will leave a big gap. Our heartfelt condolences go to Bev and family.

#### **The year that was ...**

With **February** came the Treaty celebrations at Māngungu, a very special occasion in the Hokianga. While the museum can claim no part in organising it, our Facebook post on the event was viewed more than 550 people.

**April** brought with visits from students of Opononi Area School using the museum's resources to research topics of interest. Volunteers Sandy and Rae learned a great deal as a result of helping Room 4 children with their research into the early history of the Webster homestead. A display celebrating the life and Hokianga work of artist Eric Lee-Johnson helped attract visitors.

One fine day in **June** saw 60 students from Kaikohe East School visit us at the same time as a rock group from Switzerland. The museum literally vibrated with waiata, impromptu rock performances and a rousing haka. All the children left with a signed CD and some amazing memories.

In **July** the museum enjoyed a visit from Rev. Gary Glover who had afternoon tea with us and presented us with a copy of his book ***Collision, Compromise and Conversion*** in which he details the Wesleyan Hokianga Mission from 1827-1855. Some museum volunteers had provided a great deal of assistance in the research stages of this publication.

On **5<sup>th</sup> August** HHS members and the Hokianga community were saddened to learn of the passing of Betty Pennell, a well-loved member of the community and a great supporter of the museum. On a much happier note, Room 4 Opononi Area School visited the museum to present us with the outcome of their second research project – a large dolphin-shape artwork with their research findings hidden behind cut-out flaps – a very special taonga that now has pride of place in the research area.

**September** brought with it the HHS Annual General Meeting with a few changes to executive personnel, appreciation for hard efforts made by many over the previous year, and an abundance of good food and great conversation. During September, with the arrival of our new computer, the long, hard task of digitising our records began. Well done Claire, Heather, Alan and others.

This year's Annual Lunch was held on a sunny Saturday in **November**. The combination of tasty food, excellent company, lashings of festive fun, and a very informative address by Dr Hazel Petrie on the topic of 19<sup>th</sup> century Māori entrepreneurship in the Hokianga, made for a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. Other November highlights include the launch of our display celebrating 125 years of women's suffrage in New Zealand, and the gifting of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Bonehill gunstock found two years ago on the western shoreline of the Rawene peninsula; I am sure it would have many interesting tales to tell, including some of the events of the Dog Tax war perhaps?

It's December already, the year is fast disappearing and Christmas is just around the corner. What will 2019 bring with it?

I hope you enjoy these images of Christmases past.



*Christmas Day Camping Opononi 1935*



*Betty Pennell cutting the ribbon at the opening of the new Hokianga Museum & Archive Centre. December 14, 2012.*

And finally a glimpse of things to come ...

On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January at 2.00pm, long-time HHS member Dr Kenneth Baker, now resident in Belgium, is paying us a visit to talk to us about his recently launched book *The Obscure Heroes of Liberty*. It covers findings about the aftermath of the Edith Cavell event – the many Belgian citizens under German occupation who helped the Allied soldiers, what they did and how they did it – built up from interviews with many of their descendants. Dr Baker will have some copies of the book with him; the soft-cover edition costs \$25.00, and in hard cover approximately \$45.00. He will sign copies on request.

The event will be held at the Hokianga Museum and Archives Centre. It promises to be a very interesting afternoon so please write it into your 2019 diary if you will be in town. Afternoon tea will follow.

My best wishes to all for a happy Christmas and New Year, and a special thanks to all the volunteers who keep the Hokianga Museum and Archives Centre open 6 days a week, 52 weeks a year.

Nga mihi  
Rae Dellaca