



Hokianga Historical Society Inc.

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Incorporating
Hokianga Museum

CC 32572

NEWSLETTER, FEBRUARY 2015

To open, a rather overdue greeting: A Happy New Year to all members! Through most of January it's been on my mind that a newsletter should go out, but what a hot, sweaty and busy month it's been, with family filling the house and visitors filling the museum (some of the time) – well, it got put off from day to day. Thinking about it is definitely not the same as doing it! Now as I write there are just over three hours until February clicks in: no family to distract, no excuse. Here we are:

First up will be Waitangi Day, with the sudden realisation all over the place that it's going to be the 175th anniversary of the Treaty signing. And by great good fortune it's on a Friday, giving everyone another long weekend. It will start at Waitangi, of course, but this year the Mangungu signing is also being given some well-deserved prominence. Begins with an official visit of the Governor General to Mangungu on Wednesday the 4th, the first, they say, since Hobson was there in 1840. (That could well be true, since although a Governor did go on an extensive northern tour in the 1860s and took to the water at Horeke, the Wesleyans had left for Auckland by then and taken their Mission House with them so Mangungu was a sad shadow, no good for a Governor's visit – a few derelict buildings and the urupa).

Second will be the Horeke regatta on the 7th: an annual event, but being treated with more significance than usual this year. And finally there will be a commemoration of the signing by seventy chiefs at Mangungu on Thursday the 12th February. I'll include a clipping of the programmes at the end of this newsletter – though not the Regatta, I haven't got that.

Our own part in all this is very minor: a short-term display in the museum, and at 6pm on Saturday the 7th Feb., weather permitting, an hour-long harbour cruise. This began with the wild idea of getting up to Horeke on the water, the way everyone used to travel – but financially, we just wouldn't manage it these days. As it is, we have to charge people \$25 for the single hour and that's embarrassing enough. There is a special buffet dinner at the Opononi Hotel that night too: nothing to do with us, but we thought we'd better dovetail with it rather than make ours any later and double-up.

Our earlier harbour cruise, just after Christmas, was rained out and had to be put off by the late afternoon. Big disappointment, but we tried again on the following weekend and that was a great success – a warm, calm evening and lots of interest from locals and visitors alike. So we are crossing our fingers for the same again, good weather and visitors turning up, next weekend.

Fast forward to Saturday February 21st (changed the calendar while I'm making sure it's the right date) and it's Waimamaku's day of madness – the annual WILD WEST FEST. This time we have been instructed that the display we put on has to feature Waiotemarama District High School; the powers-that-be have spoken. Fortunately we have a pretty good range of photographs already, but we've also been lent a collection of ex-slide photographs taken by Aubrey Bracey which includes a great many views we haven't got, so with luck they'll be on a continuous roll in the background. As well as that, quite fortuitously Barry Jones turned up with his arms full of mounted photographs from early families in Wekaweka, Waimamaku and Waiotemarama. Being the eldest son he

inherited them, he said: but no-one in his family wants them and he's Down-sizing, so the museum can do what they like with them. This just happened as we were closing yesterday so nobody has seen them yet – but on a brief glance it looks as if the dear man has identified everyone in them and dated them where he could, so they are going to be very useful. It would be so good if the same thing could happen for Kohukohu, or Broadwood, or other places where we have nameless, dateless faces.

Which reminds me of a request we've just had from Kaikohe's Pioneer Village. They are trying to find any information about Utakura's church hall, also used as a school at some stage, which is now coming to them for safe-keeping. Going through our church records, we haven't found any mention yet. Utakura School opened as a Native School in the March quarter of 1897, according to the Appendices to the JHR, but quite soon changed its name to Maraeroa. School inspectors often commented on the school buildings but in this case it was only that 'a site had been chosen and building would soon commence; in the meantime school was held in a 'Maori building' So – is there anyone out there with any inside knowledge about this? It would help both the Pioneer Village and us.

In the midst of all this, our World War 1 investigations still go on. We are approaching themonths of Gallipoli, and the first of Hokianga's young men to be lost – Kenneth Humphrey Begg and Alfred Clifford Boreham, who enlisted together and were both killed on April 25th, then Bernard Eyre Baxter four days later, on the 29th. From the diary of Rev. Theo Robson of Kohukohu, we learn that it took until mid-June for the news to reach their families. That Gallipoli campaign, over a little less than eight months, took thirteen Hokianga lives altogether.

Our exhibition continues to benefit from Ken Baker's supply of European commemoration material – posters, newspaper replicas, and especially his own account in book form of the visits he made to the graves of Hokianga's fallen in Belgium, France and England – "***Hokianga Remembers***" On his January visit here he brought extra copies for us to have on sale for those interested. It is a beautifully presented record which those with family connections would treasure. As well, there is a later volume promised which will cover the Gallipoli campaign – altogether it's an enormous, and admirable, project he has undertaken., I would guess unique in NZ and possibly the world.

Our exhibition space is already overloaded, but we still need to make room for the story of the ***Ventnor***. Many of you will be aware of the tragedy surrounding this vessel, commissioned to return the bones of the many Chinese who had died in 19th century NZ to their home villages in China – holed off Taranaki, sank off Hokianga into very deep water, and though some of the bones washing up on shore were buried by local iwi, all else went down with the ship. On April 11-12 the woman who has thoroughly researched the whole episode, Wong Liu Shueng, is bringing a group of Ventnor descendants to celebrate their Ching Ming – the annual ceremony honouring the bones of the ancestors - here in Hokianga. They will follow the Ventnor Heritage trail and will be visiting the museum, where a suitable welcome is expected. It should be quite an occasion, and a worthwhile exhibition will be expected.

New Books: Over the summer we have either received news, or received actual copies, of several new Hokianga- based publications. The first was delivered by hand as a donation to our collection following its launch in Rawene: ***Voyage around a river – the Hokianga, by Bruce Shadbolt***. Most people connected with Hokianga will know something of the Shadbolt family and their connections here since Matron Shadbolt held sway at Rawene Hospital. Bruce is one of the lesser known, a brother to Maurice with no aspirations to write until retiring from teaching. He taught in Hokianga though (his first wife Barbara was also a matron here) and the experiences of living here stayed with him when he attended a writing course in Wellington. This book Voyages was put together after his death. It's a very pleasant miscellany of observed life, historical episodes and passing comment, mostly in wry poetic form, and all set in Hokianga. It's also well edited with a range of illustrations. We have some copies for sale now - \$25.00 – just too late for Christmas presents but still very much worth having.

The second book came just after Christmas. We had a visit from the **Rev. Gary Clover**, a Methodist minister on his way back from the Marsden bi-centenary; he is the author of a number of booklets on the early Wesleyan mission and missionaries, and has just completed a biography of William Woon the Mangungu missionary-printer. It's just called **William Woon**; being published by the Wesleyan Historical Society it's a no-frills booklet with an illustration of his printing press on the cover. (William Woon was a large man, no oil-painting really) Well, Mr Clover travelled on, but a day or two later in the post came a copy of the biography for the museum, plus a ring-bound extra file of further notes and illustrations which for cost reasons could not be included in the book. We have added both to our book collection with gratitude.

The third book is the one we haven't seen yet: it's being launched on February 20th. We are being sent a review copy though, so I'm torn between waiting for it to arrive before this goes out, or including it in the next newsletter (whenever that is) Believe it or not, it's a new book about **John Webster**, to be published by the Auckland University Press: **At the margin of Empire: John Webster and Hokianga, 1841 – 1900.** The author, **Jennifer Ashton**, is (I think) a descendant of his and I remember her spending considerable time with us following up all sorts of leads and reading everything we had about him. The flier tells us that she "takes the fascinating life of John Webster, a timber trader and adventurer in Hokianga during the nineteenth century, and uses it as a lens through which to study the shifting relationships between Maori and Pakeha." It then adds "It is the story of a part of the country that people have often heard of or been to but about which comparatively little has been written." It will retail at \$49.99 (ie \$50)

I really think I should get this newsletter off the stocks and out.

But first, a welcome to recent new members – Mrs Jacqueline Turner of Whangaparaoa, who's interested in the Boreham family of Kohukohu; and Mr Simon Curnow of Otahuhu who is following up Judge Monro. Both have challenging searches!

This is the point where I'll fill in details for the up-coming events. First, at **Horeke**.

February 4th (Governor General's visit): 11am Powhiri; 11.30am waka salute; 2pm Governor General arrives; powhiri. 2.20 karakia; 2.50 pm mihi; 4.30pm whakamoemiti & karakia.

February 12th (Treaty Day) 1pm Powhiri, 1.15pm Karakia; 1.40pm mihimihi; 2 – 2.30pm kai; 3.45pm waka salute; 4.30pm whakamoemiti & karakia.

Then, on the lower harbour:



Hokianga Harbour trip
Aboard the Hokianga Express
Organised by the Hokianga Historical Society
Saturday February 7th, departing Opononi Wharf 6pm sharp, returning 7pm
Cost will be \$25, children half price depending on size (i.e. very small free).
If you like to lie back and drink wine on board, feel free.
For bookings Phone 09 4058498 or 4058641
Or call into the museum at 14 Waianga Place Omapere
Open 10.00am until 2.00pm Numbers strictly limited
Departure will of course be weather dependant.

And that's all for now! - Alexa Whaley.

