



Incorporating  
Hokianga Museum

Hokianga Historical Society Inc.  
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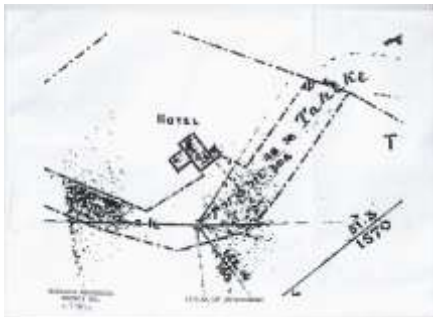
## NEWSLETTER JUNE / JULY 2012

This newsletter has been “about to go” ever since our very successful event on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June when we visited **Taheke Hotel**. So perhaps we should really get going and start with that.

It rained – of course – but that didn’t stop the forty-odd people who filled the private bar until we had to shift into the larger public bar instead. In spite of requesting numbers ahead of time so we could arrange for lunch, people just came anyway - but the hotel really rose to the occasion and (Hokianga-style) turned it into a real party. We can’t thank those people enough.

A number of local families turned up, with kaumatua from Taheke and Waima there to keep us in line regarding their history, and rightly so. But it was the hotel’s story we were looking for, and that threw up some interesting complications regarding records.

There are a couple of architecture-students’ theses which state that the building dates from the 1840s, but so far we haven’t found any data to verify such an early start. Stuart Park (NZHPT) had been following up land transaction records and came armed with what is likely to be the earliest drawing (below) of the building as it was in 1875, when Thomas Hudson registered the land with Judge Maning through the Native Land Court in Hokianga.\* Hudson was not the earliest publican, though: the Auckland Provincial Council records from at least 1871 a Bush License granted to a resident of Te Taheke named Eruhiri (or, as Stuart Park interpreted it on the drawing below, Eruhuri) Eruhiri / Eruhuri continued as a Bush License holder until 1874, then in 1875 it passed to Thomas Hudson.



By this time the Government land-buyers and surveyors were sniffing around and Taheke, at the head of a navigable river, was a very useful place to stay, either in transit or as a base to work from. ‘Roving reporters’ writing for Auckland newspapers during the 1870s, each described their time there.

Tracing ownership in the early years was relatively straightforward, but we found discrepancies cropped up as time went on between the names Stuart had on his list of land ownership, and what could be picked up from Post Office Directories and newspaper advertisements. It seems a hotel

can be owned by one person or group and managed by another, with the publican’s license possibly held by yet another. And at times Taheke was in this confusing state. We were lucky to have Graham and Elsie Harbrow returning for a visit in their retirement. Stuart had them down as owning the hotel for ten years, but in reality they’d been in charge there for 17 – managing it for the first seven years for the owner, Dominion Breweries. DB then subdivided the property and they bought the hotel outright, passing ownership on in 1997 to Rehu and Margaret Pikari.

Heather Ayrton brought along two gems from slightly earlier times which she read to us – the first, some very lively boyhood memories from photographer Peter Peryer whose parents managed the hotel in the 1940s. He spoke of lying at night in his bedroom up in one of the gables, with the wallpaper rustling scarily whenever the wind blew.... Heather’s second came from a book she owned by Group-Captain Peter Townsend (remember Princess Margaret’s first love?) who had embarked on a world trip in the 1960s after the break-up, included NZ in his itinerary and described his stay in – you guessed it – Taheke Hotel!

It may not be as historic as some would like to claim and as Stuart observed (quietly) it doesn’t have anything left of its original fittings to speak of – but after 140 + years it’s still going strong and its welcome is just as warm as it ever has been. 1840s or not, it’s definitely historic!

Thanks to all who attended, members or not; especially to all those who contributed. – and a very grateful thanks to the hotel’s staff for all their care.

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\* Stuart’s findings are now on file in the Museum.

## News from the Museum Management Committee: (Donna Washbrook)

As winter has hit us with a blast and a few of our volunteers are becoming unwell, we have just been able to manage our rosters. Volunteers are being contacted to see if there is an interest from some of them to work a one-day-a-week duty instead of fortnightly. Plenty of notice is needed so the August roster can be completed in good time.

Volunteer Awareness Week started on the 19<sup>th</sup> June and continued till the end of the month. The Committee gratefully acknowledges the time and effort of all volunteers.

Jackie and Lloyd Walker have once again offered to hold a potluck evening at their home for all Volunteers as a get-together for us all to meet each other, instead of just seeing other names on the roster. **July 19<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.** Thank you, Jackie & Lloyd.

A visit from the Opononi Area School staff to the Museum finally took place after school on Monday 25 June. They were interested in everything and stayed quite late, so we hope they will make use of us regularly as time goes on – after all, we're not too far away!

After almost twenty years looking after the museum's roster, and latterly as our Volunteer Coordinator, Lindsay Gray has resigned from the position which will be filled by Donna for the time being. Lindsay has done a wonderful job through many ups and downs, health crises and emergencies and has kept on going throughout it all, often manning the place herself when no-one else was available. It can be a nightmare at times and we can only thank you, Lindsay, for doing it so long.

So now when Volunteers are unable to do a duty, please ph. Donna at ph 09 405 8190.

New Volunteers **Diane Hunia** from Koutu and **Hillary Edwards** from Whirinaki will be joining the team of volunteers soon.

Aroha mai Grace on your sad loss. Our love goes out to you and your whanau from us all.

**Landscape Planting** round the museum should be starting by this time but test holes are filling with water as quickly as they're dug. However, thanks to Hiku and friends, we have a good supply of topsoil to start off with - when we can do so.

**Events:** Our next major event will of course be our **Annual General Meeting**, scheduled for the last weekend in August (Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> to be exact) There will be more detail about this closer to the time, but even now it's important for everyone to be giving it some thought. The reason? Changes to the Constitution, which came into force the year before last, now require nominations to be received in writing a fortnight before the meeting. And not only that, but position-holders can't just comfortably nominate each other on and on. (Bylaw 1b: *Nominations or seconding of a sitting member will not be accepted from another sitting member.*)

This is a good safeguard against 'cosiness' or even "dead wood" but it also means that members can't just sit back and let things roll on without some activity on their part – there won't be any committee at all if that happens. However if everyone rises to the occasion and does their public duty, we will have an anxiety-free AGM which we can all enjoy – no need to stay away in case of being grabbed for a committee unawares.

Next newsletter will carry a list of current committee members and the positions to be filled, and also nomination forms for you to copy and USE. If you'd like a copy of the constitution to check details, just let the secretary know and we can email or post. But please don't leave it to everyone else. Otherwise we grind to a halt.

### More events:

Our page three is a publicity poster for an experimental "**talk and discussion**" series we're trying on occasional Sunday afternoons when the museum is closed anyway. It's partly a carrot to bring in locals who wouldn't normally bother with museums, but support from others too would be appreciated. The first one is due this coming Sunday, and may be too late for those who receive their newsletter by post (sorry!) But please bear the other two Sundays in mind and see if you are able to be there.

That's all for now! The school holidays have begun and we're hoping for lots of visitors.

Alexa Whaley.

## SUNDAY AFTERNOONS IN THE MUSEUM

What you may not know – but could enjoy finding out!

The Hokianga Historical Society invites you to attend its series of Sunday Afternoons at the Museum – informal, occasional gatherings when local knowledgeable people talk about what they do, what happened in the past, and what you may be interested in finding out.

Sundays 2.30 – 3.30

at

the Hokianga Museum and Archive Centre  
14 Waianga Place, Omapere.

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July.....Louis Toorenburg  
(Hippie settlers in the Hokianga of the 70s.)

Sunday 29 July.....Barbara Ward  
(Hokianga's Coastguard)

Sunday 12 August.....Seabourne Rust  
(Rocks and fossils around Hokianga)