



Hokianga Historical Society Inc.

PO Box 26 Opononi 0445

Ph. 09 405 8498

Incorporating  
Hokianga Museum

### **NEWSLETTER – July 2013**

**Our Annual General Meeting** is moving steadily towards us, bearing the usual secretarial anxieties over reports (will they be done in time?), election of officers (will there be enough nominations?) and attendance (will anyone come? Alternatively, Will we have enough food?) But hey, it's always been alright on the day, even if the weather is awful. So when is the day? It's going to be on Sunday, 18th August, at 2 p.m., in the Omapere Church Centre. All welcome (very welcome!) but only members can vote on things.

For good measure, we also have a speaker: we have asked Mita Harris, Property Manager for NZ Historic Places Trust (Northern) to give us a rundown on what the Historic Places Trust is currently up to. He is a very personable young man with a far-reaching job, and it is good of him to give up his time on a Sunday afternoon. He will come on directly after the AGM is over and then we will reward him with a large afternoon tea – and ourselves, of course.

Now for the nitty-gritty of the AGM. Our chairman will present his report, our treasurer will detail how we've been doing financially – and remember, we have just ended the first complete year in our own building, so this will be an early indication of whether we sink or swim. Then the executive committee has to be elected, an annual event. We don't do this off the floor: nomination forms accompany this newsletter and we need to have them filled in and returned a week before, that is, by 12th August.

This year your executive has been as follows:

*Chairman: Hiku Cherrington    Vice Chairman: Barbara Coulter.    Secretary: Alexa Whaley  
Treasurer: Doug McKenzie    Curator: Donna Washbrook    Members: John Metcalfe,  
Grace Wilkinson.*

In 2010 we changed our Constitution to give us a more distinct separation of Governance and Management, through a smaller Executive of seven members (Governance) and a Museum Management Committee, (Management) also elected by the membership. It should have worked, but it didn't, very well. It was divisive, and it made for an unfortunate "Them and Us" attitude which was uncomfortable and impeded activities rather too much. We've often argued, but have always been guided by a basic feeling of togetherness. Perhaps a firm separation of Governance and Management doesn't fit too well with a small and feisty population.

So this year we want to try to improve the situation before it becomes habitual and the focus is on one unofficial departure from what was set in 2010, that of the size and structure of the Executive. As a trial, for 2013-4, nominations are being called for an Executive of 10, comprising the five officers plus five members. Once these are elected, at their first meeting

they would then appoint individual committees for the year, out of the membership and the museum volunteers. The largest committee would naturally be the Museum Management group, but there would also be an Events Committee, a Property committee, and a Research committee (which would deal with curly questions, carry out research on Hokianga's past, plan for publishing etc). All of these would have members of the Executive taking part, and all would be required to make regular reports to Executive meetings. Mostly, their members would need to live locally, but particularly with the Research group, emailing and on-line work would allow remote members to take full part from anywhere they live. Expressions of interest welcomed! We hope you won't object to this. It's a trial, and if the situation is not improved we go back to the drawing-board. If it works, we'll then take steps to change the Constitution.

Having dealt with the immediate future, we turn to the immediate past.

The first of this winter's "**Afternoons in the Museum**" was on 30th June (a Sunday, as they all are) with Noel Hilliam officially 'Digging up Shipwrecks' with a well put-together DVD of his discoveries along the kauri coast and up here as well – but also passionately expounding his theories about New Zealand's early settlement, which led to great discussions. We had a big crowd, quite enough for the museum to cope with, and everyone had a stimulating time. As a finale he presented the museum with a small grey mud-brick he had found amongst other bricks and ceramic artefacts in a valley among the sand-dunes on our North side. – It should come back here, he said. An ordinary mud brick, maybe, but on one of the long ends was a logo comprising double circles as a figure-of-eight, surrounding what appeared to be raised but very worn Chinese characters. Not sure whether he said it had been carbon-dated, maybe he's leaving that to us. So a big thank you to Noel Hilliam for kicking off the series so well!

Our next **Afternoon**, on 28th July, will be in the hands of **Nick Williams**, son of Hughie and of a long line who have salt in their blood. He too has a DVD he's had put together about the boats and boaties of Hokianga's past, but he's also a great raconteur so we might have a contest on our hands - it will be interesting to see who wins. That's on **Sunday 28th July** [or 'Inst.', I've been transcribing some Victorian letters] **at 2 p.m. in the museum.** All welcome.

August is our AGM, as you know. Then September – please, does anybody know how to get Stephen King to check & answer his answer-phone? September is still up in the air, though we have trustfully advertised that it's Stephen.

No more news of **Opo** yet. Her plinth is still pink and naked; unfortunately the builder commissioned with the finishing stage is constantly busy building, which is nice for him but a bit embarrassing for us. The complication is that Opo being so heavy, the work has to be done in situ and therefore, during the time the museum is closed. It need not be a reason not to get on with it, but it is. Regarding the replica, that is finished and waiting in Auckland, its plinth is finished and waiting in Opononi, there is just the intermediate slab to arrive from China and then it will be all Go.

**WW1 Commemoration:** In our May Newsletter we mentioned that we are planning research on the effect of the First World War on Hokianga's people, land and development, with the production of a booklet in mind. At that stage we asked for any input there might be from the descendants of affected families. (Of course sometimes there might not be any descendants: that in itself would be the effect) But apart from Ken Baker in Brussels who has been busy compiling lists of the Hokianga men who enlisted, those who didn't come back and where their graves are, the many who were put on the various Reserve lists – apart from him, there has been no response at all – zilch. We'll go ahead anyhow, but it's a bit disheartening. Not too

late, by any means! And see our website, [www.ourhokianga.com](http://www.ourhokianga.com) which has more information – and a lot of other things too.

To the **Museum**: Currently we have two computer wizzes installing the LEGACY programme to simplify the genealogical hunt. Alan Dalton, a previous volunteer and Executive member who's been dogged by ill-health for too long, is now well enough to see his work for us finally come to fruition, aided by Denis Ryan who's been accompanying his wife Val as a volunteer over the last month or two. The Ryans come all the way from Horeke for this, and Denis has always been very generous in dealing to our computer problems as well. A big Thank you to both Denis and Alan.

Val has also joined our curator Donna in embarking on the Museum Certificate course, a Grade Four programme that's both demanding and time-consuming. Good luck to them!

### **Now for some questions:**

First, has anyone heard tell of a farmer in Hokianga, **Henry or Kato Williams** born 1896. His wife was Hera or Sarah Kaire also born 1896, died 1928, and in 1925 they had a daughter Rene who became Rene Reynolds. Her son, in Australia, is the one who is asking. He, and we as well, have been checking the usual official records but there's no mention of him, probably because he was Maori and until the 1950s those records weren't kept at all well. Even if someone had an idea where he farmed, that would help.

We still have **John Wright**, blacksmith of Otarahiko (near Mangamuka) in our WANTED file. In 1838 he was married with two children and by 1846 he was still married and there were four children. A descendant of his brother Charles is trying to find anything about John's wife (European) and those four children, plus any others there might have been later. Any offers? As usual, I'm reaching the end of the page trying to remember anything important still to be mentioned. Life has been very quiet visitor-wise, but now we're into school holidays and the weather could be looking up, so...! Please remember the AGM (18th August) and we'll keep in touch about its results, and the rest of the year's programme. Happy nominating!

*Alexa Whaley.*

HOKIANGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 18<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2013.

Positions to be filled:

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Treasurer

Curator

and five ordinary members.

**NOMINATION FORM FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POSITIONS,**  
**2013-2014**

Nomination for the position of .....

Nominee .....

Proposer .....

Secunder.....

I agree to accept this nomination .....

(Nominee)

Please complete this form and return to Secretary, HHS, Box 26 Opononi 0445,  
or scan, attach & send to [hhs@ourhokianga.com](mailto:hhs@ourhokianga.com) by 12 AUGUST 2013.

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