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NEWSLETTER JUNE 2016

There is a big difference between intention and action. I know this, but when a newsletter should go out (in May) and when it does get started (at the end of June) the truth is brought home ever more strongly. Now, push has turned to shove with the thought of our winter programme – and NZ Post's 20c increase - coming only too soon.

Trouble is, stuff of all sorts keeps taking priority. I mentioned last time the demand of the Charities Commission for a 'Statement of Performance' – well, that is really hard to produce when everyone is a volunteer, usually retired, and nobody is very keen on still keeping statistics regularly – paperwork!! Trouble is, we're more a 'Not for Profit' organisation than a real genuine charity, although I suppose you could say we give freely of the information we've collected. However, measuring in hours all the assembling and giving when we never thought to document it all in the first place – it takes an awful lot of time. And how much do you include? Just the results, or all that leads up to them? Mulling a problem over in the watches of the night? That's when ideas of where to find an answer often comes. The times when you spend ages looking through but can't provide anything useful? The time you spend tidying up after an enthusiastic client? We will get there, and without too much creative accounting I hope, but - !

The "**Sunday Afternoons in the Museum**" are approaching fast and they are so far quite unpublicised. So here goes - Look for the third Sunday in the month over the main winter period.

- On **July 17th**, we have **Doreen Beer**, retired lawyer, describing her progress into law and life as a rural practitioner.
- On **August 21st**, the local film **Tumanako – Hope** will be shown by **Judy Reiken**, its master-mind. This is a 90-minute film, made using a very recognisable cast. Although it's been in the Auckland film festival in the past, the makers really want to get it shown publicly and that costs, so a serious koha would be appreciated as every little helps.
- Finally on **September 18th**, we have **Robin Hoare** presenting (Powerpoint) his research into the origin of The Thing By the Side of the Road in Kohukohu. You've never noticed it? You'll never be able to miss it again, it's quite a story. Robin is likely to have some DVDs available for buying so have some spare cash at the ready.

These three sessions are all at **2 pm**, in the Museum (14 Waianga Place) followed by light **refreshment** (if you're lucky, some HHS baking) with a saucer out to encourage **koha**. (Note: On August 21st, it will be more like an icecream-container).

The end of our financial year is nigh, i.e. 30th June, so our **AGM** will have to be somewhere in August. Most years we have cut it rather fine and held it about 29th or 30th, as late as we could, though last year it was a respectable 15th. For this year's we haven't thought as far as setting a date yet, but no doubt you'll be hearing from me with notices and voting papers and the rest all too soon.

Later, there will be the Event of the year: **our Christmas luncheon**. (Somehow 'luncheon' looks much more impressive than just 'lunch' and the dictionary bears that out: a lunch is a light meal in the middle of the day, but a luncheon is a formal lunch).

Anyway, this year our **luncheon is on Saturday, November 19th**; and unless you're informed otherwise it will be at the **Opononi Hotel, 12 noon for 12.30**, and the speaker will be – you will all recognise the name – **Colin Quincey**, the marathon rower from here to Australia and father of the son who did the same but opposite. Not sure what he will talk about, it's probably enough that he's back amongst us for a while. There will be more about this later on, including price etc (which we are still arguing over)

End-of-year events: we're a bit hesitant about planning too far ahead, given the sad story of all our plans last year. But for Labour Weekend I'd like to see us trying out the beach walk round the base of Whiria which foundered in January because of the heat. I haven't suggested this to the committee yet though of course it's being done now.. It's not a demanding walk – would there be any takers?

December-January is still an untouched canvas. If you have any preferences for activities based on local history now is the time to suggest them, or better still, offer to organise them! Membership rules, ok?

Now for what we're up to:

Currently we're trying to improve our findability, with increased road signage. Transit NZ have impossibly stringent rules about what they'll accept on a state highway but now that we're up a sideroad a bit, travellers do need some warning that there's a museum coming up. Our visitor numbers have dropped noticeably since we left the old building. So we have to thank members Maureen Lander and Len Field for allowing "MUSEUM – 300m." notices on their fence-line (or just within.) Genuine thanks to both, as it's not everyone's cup of tea to have that outside your house. We also have to thank John and Lorraine Askew for finding the timber and the builders mix and the nails and bolts and actually putting them up, angled nicely so they can be easily seen. In spite of the rain and lots of mud two are already up: the third (outside Len's) is causing stress and anxiety because of an unknown number of power cables buried under the best site. But it's worth taking the time to find a better permanent place, and this is our dead time for visitors, so we needn't do anything in a hurry. And we do have to thank Pub Charity for funding the signs as already they are making a difference.

Our car-park is, we hope, getting a new look as well. What was originally a sheer bank cut to accommodate most reasonably-sized cars has over four years drifted down into a gentle slope, pure clay of course, leaving larger cars exposed or impaled. So a re-cut is planned, with a three-sided retaining-wall to hold it in place, and drainage. This is going to cost somewhat more than we can afford - but it needs to be done, preferably before any visiting car gets damaged.

And finally, out of the blue, a Council representative came and inspected our landscaping and approved it. We had been required, as part of the Resource Consent, to plant natives to shield both the school and the neighbours (there is only one) from the sight of our building. When it's a resource consent, you try not to ask questions. The first year there was dreadful weather at planting time and every hole filled with water as you dug it, so we ran a little behind and they kindly gave us another year. After that they seemed to forget about us, but we planted on and most things have grown quite nicely; often I felt like inviting them back just to come and admire. But now, four years later, suddenly we have been looked at and ticked, and our Resource Consent is finally and officially complete.

And there are buds on our red kakabeak again!

All that has been outside stuff. What's been going on within? Our WW1 exhibition still attracts visitors: and with the Somme battles about to be commemorated, so many Hokianga men are remembered. Reading some of the diary entries, and looking at photographs from there, it's hard to see how anyone came out of it alive. Our member-benefactor Ken Baker continues to keep us supplied with information and photos from the sites themselves, so it's an extremely worthwhile exhibition.

The Ventnor project is nearing completion with the planned trail "Wandering with the Ancestors" to be launched in April of next year, during the Ching Ming Festival. Our museum has been accepted as part of this trail so we have a good deal of learning about it all to do. We've had Chinese groups passing through and that keeps us on our toes.

I had a little list of queries, mostly family ones, to pass on which will have to wait till next time – I know I have wasted space rabbiting on.. There were no replies about the photo titled Whangarei homeguard, 1940-41, which looked more like the Northland Mounted Rifles, c1915: it would have helped if I'd included the photo. Next time! In the meantime, best regards from all here –

Alexa Whaley