



Hokianga Historical Society Inc
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Incorporating
Hokianga Museum

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY – MARCH 2012

As usual, our apologies that this is so late and we haven't kept you in touch with all the happenings much earlier. I just hope that by this time you have discovered our website (www.ourhokianga.com) looked after by Ken Baker in Brussels, which carries many of the views of the museum opening. More of that later, but first of all, our year's programme of events to put in your calendar.

Saturday, April 7th (Easter Saturday) Morning boat trip round the lower harbour and up to Motuti and back on the *Hokianga Express*. Leave from Opononi wharf at 9.30 a.m. sharp., back to the wharf by 10.30, then morning tea in the Opononi hall. As usual, there will be a handout telling you something of the places and points we're passing.

The boat has a limit on numbers – 40 – so tickets will be available and you will need to book ahead. If it's awful weather and Peter Clarke decides not to go, you'll be able to reclaim your money from us on your ticket. Oh, and it's \$20.00 all up, with tickets available through Grace Wilkinson who is handling all expressions of interest etc - her phone number is 09 4058 665, or through the HHS address above.

Saturday, 9th June: Visit to Taheke Hotel, which prides itself on being the second-oldest hotel building still extant and in business in – Hokianga? The North? David the manager is knowledgeable about its history and as it will be changing hands shortly, we have to catch him while he is still available. We'd hoped to make it the weekend before which is Queens Birthday and might have more visitors, but the hotel is hosting The Great Taheke Pig Hunt then and they might be a bit preoccupied. Please make your own way there to meet in the carpark at 11 a.m.; we will have a talk from David, lunch (there will be a charge for this) and a look around. In the afternoon you may like to walk up to Ye Olde Taheke Store at the top of the hill, which Suzanna O'Sullivan has turned into an experience not to be missed.

Sunday, 26th August will be our AGM, election of officers, financial assessment of our situation so far and of course some entertainment to lighten the day.

Friday, 16th November – the annual dinner.

That's all so far. As well as events, we'd like to have a programme of informal talks from members with interests to offer, over the winter months – but that is just a pipe-dream at the moment...

Back to the present: Of course the main interest is our new museum, which was at last opened on December 14th, 2011 – in the rain - with a large crowd of members, friends and well-wishers. Our patron, Mrs Ethel Pickering, was indisposed so at the last minute it was Betty Pennell, a very long-time supporter and worker for the museum, who ceremonially cut the ribbon after the building was blessed by the Rev. Daniel Ambler. The new Curator, Donna Washbrook, and her team been working very hard right up to the last minute to mount displays which would show the range of material we have been looking after. It was great to see things brought out into the open again after their eighteen-month storage in the container!

Looking back over a year of building, one can only feel a huge gratitude to all the people who helped it on its way. The tradesmen who kept their quotes to the minimum –

organisations like the Lions who fund-raised on our behalf and lent their muscle when it was needed – the RSA who dipped into their savings for us – the many people who donated, or bought trees for landscaping (sorry you don't see much result from that yet but when winter comes...) the grant-givers: Pub Charity, Sky City and ASB Trust.

Most of all, though, we pay tribute to one man who hates to be thanked or mentioned but who oversaw the lot – our Project Manager, John Metcalfe. Taking up the burden on Michael Lough's departure for Auckland, he was hands-on in getting things done, organising our biggest raffle, fighting goodness knows how many battles with the Council, doing whatever needed doing himself, writing screeds of letters and emails and phoning when that didn't work...

So what now? Donna as curator is moving heaven and earth to get its presentation up to the highest possible standard and her wish-list is gradually being worked through. We are very grateful that our end-of-building finances, which weren't looking very promising, were boosted in November by a big donation given by a Hokianga expatriate. This has meant that items which would likely have gone on the never-never list, now can become "probably". Our regular expenditure on power, phone, water etc. still has to show itself though, and our treasurer is (fortunately) not one to take risks.

While still on finances, last week that same treasurer mildly remarked that we don't seem to have as many membership subs coming in as usual. I took a look at our little card file that has been carefully maintained by Jean all these years - and sure enough, there are lots paid up to June 2011, but only a fraction updated to 2012. It's mostly because our computerised address-labels were unavailable (in the container) so we switched to e-mailing our newsletters wherever the address was given, so the little red sticker we usually attach as a warning couldn't be used. We did put the fee for a family up to \$25 at last AGM, but the single membership stayed at \$15 – not too frightening, we thought. And one of the changes we made to the Constitution was to Rule 3f– "Membership will be for twelve months from the AGM, and will be deemed to have ended when either a resignation is received in writing or upon failure to pay a membership fee for twelve months (unless exempted under Rule 3d.)" So it's not too bad, but I will remind you that the AGM is at the end of August, still six months away.

I'm not sure what to do about the emailed ones, short of attaching a list - "name and shame" as it were. But you may not want to continue your membership and I really don't want to go that far! However, the little red sticker is certainly going on the NZPost ones, as will the receipts for those paid up.

Talking money is not a good way to end up. Last Saturday Waimamaku held their tenth Wild West Fest and it was just as good, and noisy, as it always has been. As usual, the Historical Society was invited to mount an exhibition in the hall which we did, keeping company with DOC, the Northland Regional Council and Hauora Hokianga in its various forms. We sold things, we showed things, we held a competition. When it rained, as it did at times, the hall filled; when shots rang out on the road, it emptied. We had a lot of fun ! Hope to see you at ALL our events – and in the museum whenever you can.

Alexa Whaley - Secy