



Hokianga Historical Society Inc.

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Incorporating
Hokianga Museum

CC 32572

OCTOBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

Labour weekend is rushing towards us and it has become quite urgent to confirm that yes! we will have an **excursion to the Koutu Boulders** led by Dr Seabourne Rust plus, if he's around, Lloyd Walker. Emphasis therefore to be on both geology and geography. This will happen on the Sunday of Labour Weekend, 26th Oct. and because of a midday tide, start at 3 p.m.

So: make your own way to and along Koutu Loop Road, looking for Waione Road on your left. Turn off there, and head for the cattleyards which are on the flat ground to the left where Waione Rd. turns to go up the hill. We meet there just before 3 p.m. ready to head off along the sand. It's quite an easy walk, not more than a couple of kilometres, so you don't need to be weighed down with supplies for days – just take what you might need over 2-3 hours. (Seabourne recommends gumboots for those keen to carry on beyond the first crop of boulders as it gets pretty muddy, but most people will be happy to stay with the sandy parts.)

It always rains on Labour weekend but if it's just rain, we'll go anyway. Commonsense will prevail however and if it's a real storm with a crashing sea, howling wind and poor visibility, who would want to? So ring Seabourne (09 4058 432) if there's any doubt.

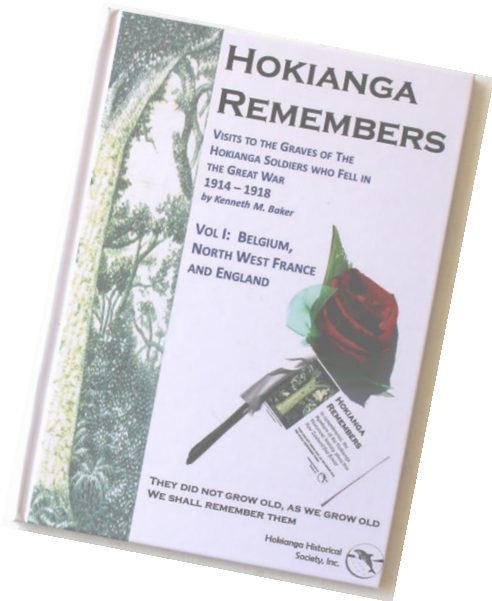
After that there is just a short jump to **Saturday, 15th November**, when we have our **Annual Lunch**. This year we have chosen to be at **Wildspur Lodge**, the accommodation/restaurant on the wooded hillside between Taheke and Kaikohe - it has memorable food and they look after you so well. The cost will be \$30.00. As usual with us, entrance will be by ticket, which we always hope will be bought well in advance. Our booking is for 40 so it's as well to be in early. Carpooling is recommended and it's BYO (but water on the tables) Time: 12 noon for 12.30 lunch.

Our speaker will be Heather Ayrton, our Patron, and the topic she is thinking of is the life of her friend since childhood, Dr Janet Irwin - the only daughter of Dr G.M. Smith, and a strong person in her own right.

This coming Saturday morning, Oct. 18th, is dedicated to the blessing of the completed setting of the Russell Clark statue of Opo the dolphin in the museum. All local people have been invited, and a group is coming from Matamata / Hinuera, the source of the stone Opo was carved from, to attend this. Rev. Daniel Ambler has been asked to bless both the statue and the interpretation panels that are to be placed around the plinth, there will be short speeches, and everyone will go for a cup of tea, which will have to be at the Omapere Church Centre since there won't be room in the museum. Time: 10 a.m.

Looking back in time, which museums are good at, our most recent event was the talk by Ken Baker last Sunday afternoon, when he reported on his visits to the war cemeteries of Europe and the graves of the Hokianga men who lie there. Being Ken, it wasn't just a talk: he put Hokianga into the context of the war itself, and the present as joined to the past, and of course there were many photographs to illustrate. Did you know that Belgian farmers are still being killed when their

plough strikes a buried shell which after 100 years is still live? And that there is a weekly “rubbish collection” along the roads of past battlefields to collect shells and metal debris that continue to fetch up? Those were just two little facts which brought gasps from his audience, but his whole talk had everyone hanging - well, ‘spellbound’ is the best word – from start to finish, not a cough nor a fidget to be heard. He could have gone on much longer. Fortunately he has promised to email the whole presentation to the museum, and also fortunately, he has reproduced all his photographs of Hokianga graves with a summary of each man - who, how, where and when – as a single volume, very attractively bound, which he has given us. (I haven’t seen that properly yet, Grace has taken charge of it for the moment) No doubt once he’s back home, there will be at least some put on our website – I hope so anyway.



Just two weeks before that, as scheduled, it was the final of ‘Sunday Afternoons in the Museum’ with Gwen Freese looking both back and forward over Dr Smith’s legacy. Her talk was masterly, each segment backed by a range of photographs which she’d mounted poster-style especially for that part. Although it was a great relief to have a sizable crowd in spite of the Country and Western Festival going on, she really deserved a much wider audience. I haven’t been brave enough yet to ask for a copy, but I’m hoping that our next newsletter should be made up of the last three talks we’ve heard at the museum, in full, so that they are available more widely and permanently. Good idea?

In the interest of getting this out in time, it’s short. All going well there will be a harbour trip or two over New Year, but it’s still too early to have anything planned in detail, so that’s something else for Next Time.

To summarise:

Walk to Koutu Boulders

When: Sunday, 25 October:

Time: 3 p.m

Where: Meet at cattleyards, Waione Rd.

Leader: Dr Seabourne Rust

Cost: Nil (but koha desirable)

Annual Lunch

When: Saturday, 15 November:

Time: 12 noon for 12.30p.m.

Where: Wildspur Lodge, SH 12.

Speaker: Mrs Heather Ayrton

Cost: \$30.00 (Tickets available Museum or me (secretary))

That’s all folks! Hope to see you at one or both of the above.

Alexa Whaley.