

ARTEFACTUAL

An Occasional Newsletter of the Warkworth & District Museum

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My first thoughts are to wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to our staff (i.e. both of them !), and to all our Members, Supporters and Volunteers.

Turning now to news of the Museum, it has been a year of progress on various fronts. One of the main efforts has been to address our obligations to Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Our Shop and Plant Sales continue to increase and are a major part of our income. In addition we are attracting more group visits of both adults and children, so Entrance takings are up as well.

We have attracted some new volunteers and can now boast a great team of people with a range of specialist skills. We still have a requirement for more Reception Volunteers.

We continue to take the Museum to external interests with our new Community Liaison Department working on our Memory Box and Oral History projects. We also work with the local libraries and have created a display at Paper Plus.

The Wednesday Workers have virtually outgrown our Meeting Room for morning tea and lunch breaks so we were asked to consider ways to provide alternative accommodation for them. The difficulty facing us was finding a cost effective way for a relatively short period each week, but we are working on a compromise solution.

We have attacked the problem of storage and working space in the machinery shed by building a wall to hive off part of the open lean-to shed exclusively for storage. For security purposes this area is only accessible from the machinery shed.

The wall contains two pairs of Church doors which for several years have not been seen. Our Display Team is working on verifying their provenance so that we can tell their history.

The front part of the open shed will continue to be part of the outdoor machinery display. Inside the Museum buildings we plan to re-arrange and upgrade our displays, following an advisory visit from a Te Papa representative.



This entails building a floor over the Wilson Room to create some more storage and working space, after which, following a paint job, displays will be relocated in appropriate groupings.

This project is in planning stage and work will start in the New Year.

Another problem we are addressing is the control of humidity within the Museum to minimise risk of deterioration of our artefacts.

We have a major requirement to upgrade the specialised Museum computer software we use which is currently 12 years old. Later it will be networked within the Museum.

You can see that work at the Museum is pretty well full on, so we all need a break over Christmas to come back re-invigorated in the New Year.

MANAGER/CURATOR: Victoria Joule

2017 has been another great year for the Museum, and I have summarised here some of the activities which happened during each month:

- January, we participated in the A&P show 150 years celebrations
- February, we participated in oral history training with Auckland Libraries as well as putting a “pop up” photographic display into the Warkworth Town Hall, to celebrate its reopening.
- March, we participated in an oral history collection day with Auckland libraries covering peoples wartime memories as well as hosted a thank you afternoon tea for our Volunteers.
- April, saw us put a display in the Mahurangi East Library to coincide with Anzac day, as well as hosting the monthly Summerleles Ukulele jamming session.
- May, saw a visit and assessment from Jamie Bell, curator of the Cricket Museum in Wellington. Jamie came to give us some advice on how to upgrade our displays. In addition to this we put a “pop” up display on at the Mahurangi Rugby Club, as part of the “Big Turn On” of the new lights at the show grounds.
- In June, Brenda and Trish went and made butter with the children at Warkworth Kindergarten.
- July was a relatively quiet month ;-)
- August, saw us hosting the Rodney Museums Association Meeting, putting a pop up display into Mahurangi East Library on the Moore family as part of Family History Month, and Noelene and I attending a workshop in Papakura on Managing Archives.
- September saw us returning the War Memorial to its original home in the Town Hall
- In October we participated in the Mahurangi East Library school holiday programme, taking with us butter making, a pioneer wash day and Whare building, as well as holding our successful open day.
- November, saw us hosting a thankyou drinks and nibbles night for all of the local businesses that support us.
- In December, we hosted a Workshop on behalf of Te Papa, run by Auckland Museum staff on Managing Collections. This was attended by Museums from around the Northland/North Auckland area.
- In January next year we will again be having a presence at the Warkworth A&P Show



In addition to this we had 980 children visit as part of 11 different schools and kindergartens visiting us over the year. The subjects and activities covered included, butter making, a pioneer wash day, communications (telephones), textiles in the past, telling tales of old Warkworth, sustainability, old school days, Warkworth landmarks (cement works, lime kilns, kauri trees, Mahurangi river) and the list goes on. We also visited Warkworth Primary School to talk to 200 students about pioneer gardening!!

I would like to just acknowledge the awesome contribution that the Bushmen give us to our school visits. They play an important role in talking to the children about the bush, kauri die back and guide them on their bush walks.

Our visitor numbers have also increased this year. As of 11th December we have had 3175 adults and 1595 children (including school visits) through the door. This is 337 more adults and 137 more children!!

All of our teams continue to work in their individual roles and projects, whether its manning reception, reviewing our collection and deaccessioning items, improving displays, photographing and cataloguing artefacts and textiles, fundraising (bingo, markets, plant shop, grant applications), catering, improving our education offering, upgrading our computer software, upgrading our plant shop, working on oral histories, restoring our machinery, raising our health and safety standards....far too many to list individually !!

I just would like to thank you all for your time and efforts over the last 12 months, without you we would not be achieving a fraction of the amount of work that we are. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and look forward to another fantastic year next year 😊

Reception Volunteers: Helen Langdon

It has been another busy year for the front desk receptionists and the Museum is very pleased to have got some new people of board. Filling in 60-62 sessions per month is sometimes a daunting task, but we manage. It is great to listen to complimentary comments after people come out of the museum. Often we are asked about other places to visit and routes to take. The school visits are growing as are the number of children visiting during the holidays the majority of whom take delight in completing the Scavenger Hunt sheets.

I've now been on front desk for 11 years and I have noticed lots of changes over that time but the enthusiasm of all the volunteers never diminishes. We wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and all the best for 2018.

Community Contact Department: Brenda Yoxhall

This year has been a very busy year for the community involvement team. We have had over 900 students through the museum, ranging from kindergarten age to year 7. As well as being a very good source of revenue it is fantastic to see these young people actively involved and being really interested in local stories of the past. The activities range from scavenger hunts through the museum, to investigating items and stories that fit their particular area of study, and, perhaps most exciting of all, hands on butter making and washday. One memorable week we had Ahuroa School on Monday and then over 200 students from Mahurangi College from Tuesday through to Friday.

Working together with the Kauri Bushmen we have been able to complement school programmes that were looking at sustainability and these have been very well received. Altogether it has been a busy year but very satisfying.

ENGINEERING: Alan Britton

The team in the engineering and maintenance department seem to be growing almost by the week and it getting difficult at times to keep tabs on them but fortunately they are all dedicated and self motivated so can be left to their own devices. Jowan Nute our young blacksmith has been getting plenty of justified publicity lately having had been featured in the latest edition of the "Junction" magazine and was also interviewed on Brian Crumps Friday night show on National radio. He also gets a selection of visitors when he is doing his occasional forging demonstrations on Sunday s at the museum.

The extension to our storage space mentioned in the presidents report has freed up a bit more space in the display area in the shed, you can now see what is in there and over the summer we hope to be able to get it into some semblance of order.

DISPLAY: Jean Gardner

You will have noticed a few changes in some of the display cases. This is in preparation for more changes in the Wilson Room.

The sewing machine display is now in the Tudor Collins room with some notes pertaining to the development of the useful machines. We have a rare Moldacot portable machine that was only produced for about three years in the mid 1800s and an example of on of the most popular machines around the turn of the 20h century. There is also a new display in the hall outside the Artefacts storage room containing some of the trophies and awards collected throughout the years by Warkworth and District residents.

We are participating in the community window again this year showing some of the toys that were popular in years gone past, this can be seen at Paper Plus.

Work continues in the background preparing for the A&P show in January.

Jean

TEXTILES: Jenni McGlashan

We are happy to report that the team continue with the project of photographing all items in the collection and have started on the attic storage area which means the storage/workroom is complete.

All shoes from the attic are now in their new home, some uniforms have descended to workroom storage and the new year project is to discover what is hiding in the rolled items still in storage in the attic. It is extremely hot up there in the summer and freezing in the winter but we will box on.

This work has had major interruptions with winter holidays when foot loose and fancy free volunteers disappear for extended periods in the winter and this year Jim & I will be discovering the high country in the South Island February to May while Nicola takes the summer off to enjoy sailing.

With this in mind the HOD would dearly like an understudy who is prepared to become familiar with the running of the textile department while we are there so the work can continue in our absence. We do have an operating manual for guidance but working with us would also be invaluable.

We were very grateful to have Barbara, Maurine and Vanessa attend to repair work and computer work in our absence during the winter and happy to have Barbara and Vanessa continue to come in for a few hours each day. This allows us to get on with our project while they attend to the many small jobs. A valuable contribution for textiles.

We have been fortunate have Gloria join us to do some sewing tasks while we focus on the end of the tunnel with our photographs. One of the projects she has undertaken is to make "cover alls" for visiting school children who visit the museum to discover how domestic chores were done many years ago. We are aiming for 20 or so.

One of the biggest assistance for all departments is our wonderful tea lady Patsy, who has taken over the morning and lunch tea making and kitchen cleaning duties. Very often there is extra work with a birthday shout and there are now a number of these with the big Wednesday Workers team, but we have never seen anything other cheerful broad smiles from Patsy.

All for now. The textile team of Nicola, Jim, Jenni Barbara & Vanessa, Gloria and the occasional help from Eibs would like to wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and 2018.

ARCHIVES: Noeline Quedley

It has been another busy year with many enquires researched and answered by a small band of volunteers. These cover a wide variety of topics including families who have lived in the district, historical location of properties, prominent names on the land or in the district to help towards naming of street in new subdivisions or developments Enquiries come from visitors, other museums, letters, phone calls and emails from New Zealand and overseas.

The scanning of old photos into a database is continuing and this collection is frequently called upon for celebrations, books, calendars etc, did you notice the photos on the outer walls of the new toilet block in Kowhai Park?

In July we received a grant from the Local Rodney Community Board fro \$4633.00 to purchase the balance of the archival boxes fro the transfer of archival material into acid resistant document boxes. This will enable the preservation of important archival material for future generations to be completed. A grant has also been approved from the Sir John Logan Campbell Residency Estate of \$1500.00 to enable us to purchase recording equipment for interviewing and capturing oral histories of the district. This will allow us to restart and extend our collection of oral histories started by the late Stan Gittos in the 1980s.

Another current project is the research of Warkworth shops and Businesses, the time frame covers from establishment to current but predominantly the first one hundred years, the oldest to date is the Bridge House in 1835. Apart from shops, the businesses include sawmills, grain merchants, the jam factory, the cement works and lime kilns as well the pubs and boarding houses. With the horse being the main mode of transport it also includes stables, blacksmiths and carriage makers. If you have any information on shops, businesses, people and characters or any thing else we would like information on them to add to our archives. You can contact us via our email address above.

We recently attended the launch of David Grants book 'We Gathered Here' a history of Matakana, it was pleasing to see the 480 page book completed after a 6 year effort and many Wednesdays in the museums archive department. This will be a valuable reference tool for future researchers and we thank you David for the copy you presented to the Museum. We were also pleased to obtain approval from the Bioletti family to reprint two of Harrys series of booklets on Warkworth and his Mahurangi tales all three reprints are no available for purchase through the museum shop. These booklets as well as helping to generate funs for the museum they also help to resolve some of the queries from visitors who inquire about the history of the area.

If you wish to visit or do research at the archives then please call in on a Wednesday or contact us

STRAGIC PLANNING: Jo Haswell

At its July meeting the Museum Committee agreed that it would be beneficial for the museum to develop a strategic plan to help it move forward in a focused way. It was agreed that all museum staff and volunteers should have an opportunity to have input into the strategic plan so that everyone is on board with our goals and priorities. To this end a questionnaire was developed and circulated to gather feedback from individuals or groups either electronically or at meetings. I was tasked with facilitating this process and to date have received feedback from six groups and six individuals. If any volunteer have not yet sent in their feedback, or Friends of the Museum are interested in participating in the process, please contact me on jo.haswell@xtra.co.nz or 09 422 9306 by 20 December. Gathering the feedback is the first part of the process. Once this has been collated and analysed, a planning sub group will develop a first draft of the plan for circulation and final feedback from everyone, before finalising an initial plan for approval by the committee. Once the plan is approved, then action plans will be developed for implementation of the strategic goals.

To date it has been a very positive process with lots of ideas, thoughts and issues being discussed.

EDITOR: Alan Britton

They say that Christmas comes but once a year and when it comes it brings good cheer. I am not sure about that but we all hope you have an enjoyable break and manage to make time to enjoy your family and friends. As many of the contributors to this last news letter for 2017 have commented, it has been a busy year and there have been many changes.

We have two new contributors in this edition, Brenda who has filled a role looking at ways and means of allowing more people in the community to access and learn from the vast collection of local historical items in our collection. Strategic Planning is important in any business and whilst some may think that we do not come under this heading we are in fact in the business of collecting recording and sharing the history of our colonial past and beyond. Jo has taken on this role and as you will have seen from the above report she is well underway and has already highlighted a number of areas were we can make improvements.

Regular readers of the Muhurangi Matters will no doubt have read about a large collection of photographs that have been passed on to the museum, they had been collected from a variety of items of furniture that had been donated over the previous years in the hope that they would be claimed. We have tracked the bulk of them down to a house in Tavistock Devon which has been identified and we are now working with the local paper there and a Genealogy researcher in finding the name/s of the family that would have been living there in the early 1900s which we estimate is the dates of the photos.



