

ARTEFACTUAL

An Occasional Newsletter of the Warkworth & District Museum

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I usually put the editors contribution at the end of the newsletter but as there are a number of changes being made to the newsletter I thought I would sneak in a few comments at the start.

You will notice a complete change in format; this makes it a lot easier for us to add their contributions as they come to hand. It also means that Helen Langdon who is now responsible for the layout, publishing and distribution to present the news letter from were ever she is. During the construction of this newsletter she is in Australia!

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President – Derek Hoggart

Welcome to another Newsletter.

I am very pleased to be able to report that everybody's efforts over last financial year resulted in a welcome profit for the Museum.

As a result we were able to start several improvement projects, such as:-

1. Installing a new floor over the Wilson Room to create more admin and storage space above.
2. Lining and insulating walls and installing new Heatpump / Dehumidifer Units to improve conditions within the Museum.
3. Fitting a Door and Screens in the Veranda to make it more comfortable for group events in inclement weather.
4. A general spruce up and paint job throughout, with new carpet tiles on the stairs to the first floor.

Work on all the above is under way and it is good to see the progress being made on a daily basis, although every time I visit, it always seems to be Tea- Break!

With the advent of winter, Volunteers and Visitors alike will, I am sure, appreciate the improvements.

Update on what's happening in the Museum – Victoria Joule

As most of you will have heard there is a lot going on at the Museum at the moment. We are completely redoing the Wilson Room, which is not only getting a fresh lick of paint but also a new ceiling, new display cases and information panels. The upgrading work doesn't finish there however, we have installed new

outside blinds to make the veranda area more all weather, we have painted the stairwell, which will be having new carpets installed in June, and we will also be repainting our lunch room, which will also have new curtains donated by one of our wonderful Volunteers.

Following a grant from pub charities earlier in the year, we are currently having data cabling wired throughout the Museum which will allow us to network all of our PCs together. This will enable us to have



one location for all digital information relating to our Museum and its collection rather than individual databases spread around the Museum. The final piece of upgrade work we have just completed is the installation of 3 dehumidifying heat pumps which have installed downstairs in the Wilson Room, the Tudor Collins Room and the ASB Foyer. We are also in the process of applying to Foundation North for further funding to install similar pumps upstairs, allowing for us to monitor and manage the moisture and heat throughout the museum in a much more proactive way.

All of this work comes at a cost however. We are extremely fortunate in the support we have from our Volunteers, some of whom have been working at the Museum daily over the last few weeks. Without this wonderful work and support much of what we have achieved wouldn't be possible. We are also fortunate in other areas such as local businesses who discount the materials we use, or cap their hours to ensure we don't pay too much in labour. How lucky we are to live and work in a Community that continues to support us !

We do however have to look at other areas of fundraising. Many of you will now be aware that the Museum Op Shop is now in operation and is doing well. As with the Museum this is being organised and run by Volunteers, to whom we are very grateful. We continue to look for grant funding where we can, and of course we encourage everyone to join our "Friends of the Museum" which is an annual but affordable membership programme aimed at raising funds. Anyone can join our Friends of the Museum via the website or through the Museum, and it allows you to gain free entry to the Museum as well as a free family pass to use with friends or family.

We are aware that we also need to work hard to encourage more visitors into the Museum.

In order to do this we have a few events coming up which I hope you will support if you can.

18th June 10am - Tea & Talk: Stories of Tudor Collins. Ian Ferguson will be giving a talk on Tudor Collins, whilst we will have photos taken by Tudor on display for you to look at. This will be followed by a cup of tea or coffee - all for a gold coin donation.

2nd – 29th July - North Shore Minatures Exhibition. We are extremely fortunate that the North Shore Miniatures have agreed to run an exhibition in our ASB Foyer for the month of July. This will coincide with the July school holidays so spread the word ! The display will be all things miniature including Harry Potters Hogwarts !! Our standard pricing will apply (\$15 per family, \$7 adult or \$3 child).

Some examples of what will be on display are below



August onwards - we will be installing a new display in the ASB Foyer called Inspirational Women of our District. This will coincide with the celebrations of 125 years since New Zealand became the first self-governing country in the world in which all *women* had the right to vote in parliamentary elections. We also plan on holding a children's competition as part of this new exhibition so watch this space.

28th August 10am - Tea & Talk: Our Textiles Collection - this time showcasing our wonderful textiles collection and some of the special pieces we have stored away.

I hope you are able to find time to visit and see some of the work that has been taking place, and enjoy some of these events which are coming up. Please do consider joining or renewing your friends of the Museum membership, this can be done online or via the Museum.

Until next time.....

Display – Jean Gardner

To all those who have not been in the museum in the last month you are in for a big surprise in the Wilson Room. We have been reorganising displays and painting the walls as well. Peter Bartlett and his crew of willing volunteers have been installing a ceiling and also lined the north wall which faces the bush slope behind the building. These alterations are to improve the conditions in the museum by helping reduce dampness and heat loss. We are taking this opportunity to realign our displays into a chronological order of development of the district. This also has the advantage of providing more much needed storage space above the room. The first of the heat pump-dehumidifiers have also been installed.

At the moment there is some inconvenience with the building equipment but the end result will all be worth it. The cobblers shop has been relocated into the Tudor Collins Room and given a new coat of paint. The printing press has also moved into this area.

The month of July will see the North Shore Miniatures setting up a display in the ASB Foyer for the month. We have timed this to coincide with the school holidays and hope that it will bring in more visitors. The models the members make are so detailed and a joy to see. I believe Hogwarts Castle is also coming. The month of August will see a new display celebrating inspirational women who have contributed to the development of our district. We also acknowledge the anniversary of the vote for women and those who have signed the petition for its inception.

Strategic Planning – Jo Haswell

Thanks to all staff and volunteers for their input into the strategic planning process. It certainly produced plenty of information and ideas to be incorporated into a strategic plan for the museum. Some projects will be implemented over the next few years and others kept for future review. A summary of all feedback was done and has been circulated to the committee and made available to volunteers. A sub group of the president, vice-president, manager and myself met and the decision was made that I will use the feedback gathered to develop a draft plan for wider consideration before being finalised and action plans developed. However, my priority over the last few months has been preparing grant applications for the computer project and heat pump installation so the plan development has been on hold, but I should get back to it later in the month.

Textiles – Jenni McGlashan

In caring for 7000 plus items in the Warkworth & District Textile collection we have concluded that we have a good representative lot which tells the story of life as it was from the founding of this district through the passing decades. This was a very good management policy until we were served a left ball. Recently and anonymously, we were offered exquisite remnants of c. 1880 wedding gown with no



provenance. We can only guess that it came from a local family and that it had been in storage for many years and possibly tucked away in an attic or the like, undetected. What a great shame it was not stored in a more accommodating fashion for it poured out of an old leather suitcase in a crumpled state.

We can only imagine it was worn by a society bride for there are many hours of intricate needlework involved in the making and must have been very expensive. As was very often the case, the skirt and bodice have been made as two separate units which are fastened together

with hooks and eyes. This bride was very petite, having a 22 inch (55cm) waist.

Unfortunately, the silk brocade has disintegrated where it has not been lined above the deep hemline and many layers of silk lace have torn or



crumpled but the fine needle work and exquisite design can be appreciated as

can the built in calico petticoat which remains in almost as new condition. It is very similar to a gown we have in the collection with known ownership and dated 1889. In spite of suspect storage this gown is in remarkable condition considering it could be 140 years old and silk is a fragile material.



I am sure there will be an opportunity to display this garment or part there of for a short period of time when many of you can also admire the elegance of yesteryear.

Archives – Noelene Quedley

And Christine, Judy, Mavis, Gayleen, Wallace, Ken and Malcolm

It has been another busy year with many enquires, researched and answered by a small band of volunteers.

These cover a 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 streets in new subdivisions or developments.

Some of these enquires include photo identification, information to support the funding application for the Mahrangi River Restoration Project, information for family trees, WWII American Forces Camps, schools in Mahurangi East 1861 to 1866, an archaeological project, Warkworth Structural Plan and related old families, location of the workman Lindsay's grave on Kaipara Flats Road, policemen in Warkworth and information about a brewery in Matakana.

Enquiries come from visitors, other museums, letters, phone calls, emails – locally or internationally.

The scanning of old photos into a database is continuing and this collection is frequently called upon for reunions, celebrations, books etc.

With the recent purchase of a Recorder with microphones from a grant from the Sir John Logan Campbell Residency Estate, we will shortly begin recording the oral histories from long-time residents of the District

Another current project is the research of Warkworth Shops and Businesses. The timeframe covers establishment to current, but predominantly the first 100 years; the earliest so far is Bridge House Boarding House in 1835. If any readers can recall shops, businesses, positions, dates, people and characters please contact us.

We are also proceeding with the very time consuming task of writing procedures, currently around the Accessioning, Scope and Management of the Museum's Collections.

Please come and visit the Archive Department on a Wednesday if you are in at the Museum. We are always looking for volunteers so if you can spare time on Wednesdays please feel free to approach us.

Education and Community Focus – Brenda Yoxhall

Having a simple title that indicates what my role is at the museum is always difficult. It started with me organising school visits to the museum but expanded into me visiting schools and then into assisting with many groups who visit the museum.

As a schools liaison person I assist Victoria in establishing what the teachers want their students to gain from visiting the museum and then putting together worksheets and special displays to suit their needs. This can range from a very simple exercise to one requiring many hands on board, such as last year when we hosted students from Mahurangi College every day for a week, covering butter making, experiencing wash day, using old telephones and joining in with stories about the events and the people who shaped Warkworth. My aim is always to provide as many interactive experiences for the students as possible.

I also visit schools where I share items from the museum's collection, together with photos and stories that link all of these.

In addition I have been involved in creating 'Memory Boxes'. These were initially aimed at encouraging discussion among people with dementia but their use has expanded and I have visited hospice support groups with them. The trips down memory lane that the contents stimulate are a joy to be part of. We are hoping to expand these boxes so that we have a selection that can be brought out for children to explore items from times past.



I was pleased to be the first speaker in our new "Tea and Talk" initiative. The aim of these is to make available some of our many interesting resources and to relate the fascinating stories behind them. I was

able to put Southgate family items out on show and present some of the wonderful history and colourful stories that this important Warkworth family has bequeathed. An unexpected result of this presentation was being contacted by a descendant of a little known Southgate family branch which has resulted in us expanding our records of this family. That was a real pleasure.

As I said, providing a simple title that covers the fascinating role I enjoy is pretty hard. I will leave you with the latest in the evolution of my description.

Engineering – Alan Britton

There is always something happening in this department, lot of interesting work (at least to us) is always on hand, one of the more interesting is the construction of a Milking Parlour. Whilst the one we are building has no local provenance it is an example of the type that would not only have been in use in our district but also in other parts of the country. It was originally a three cow unit however because of limitations of space we have had to reduce it to just one bail. The unit was installed initially in the late 1930s' was supplied by one of the early New Zealand manufacturers. We hope to have it up and running in time for this years' Open Day which is held as the opening event of the Kowhai Festival. Another challenge is restoration of a Dennis Lawn Mower; these were very popular for mowing cricket and football pitches, bowling greens and many large colonial homes. They are still made and used in many prestigious sporting venues, the "Dennis" name is probably better known as the manufacturers of buses, trucks and of course fire engines. As you are aware from comments by other contributors to this news letter a number of constructional changes are being made. Whilst most of them are being done by contractors, they are being assisted by members of the team in this department, Dave our electrician has been helping with the instillation of the data cabling and his knowledge of the museums layout has been of great assistance, Pete has been doing most of the painting as well as helping Trevor with the construction of new display cases and assisting Peter and Ray were required. Brian has been de-rusting and painting the tractor on display in the grounds when weather permits, which is not often at the moment.

As followers of our Facebook page will already know we lost the services of one of our long serving staff members in Ken Brangwynne, he has been a stalwart of the team not only for the practical skills which are very diverse, but also his humour and his skill at checking out magnetos. We in our department will miss him.

His move to Taurunga took place faster than we would have liked but both Ken and Gillian wished to be closer to their grandchildren. A function was held at the museum prior to his departure and the morning tea was extended somewhat. We in our department will miss him.



Over the last few years we have had a number of thefts and attempted break-ins, the last was the theft of some parts of a vintage hay mower which fits on our 1952 Ferguson Tractor. Fortunately with the help of CCTV footage and some quick thinking by the staff at Alexanders Scrap Metal dealers in Silverdale, the culprit was identified and was arrested. So hopefully that will discourage others from doing the same.