



Keeping in Touch

Newsletter for NZ Federation of Historical Societies

Volume 5 Issue 2 May 2011

www.nzhistoricalsocieties.org.nz

2011 NZ Federation Annual Conference and AGM 8-10 April



For report and photo credits:
see inside

Calendar 2011

29 March – 18 November Moa “*Evolution, Life & Extinction*” What happen to New Zealand’s unique wonder? Come to the Waimate Museum to find out. Tue – Fri 1pm – 4pm, Sunday 1-3pm. 28 Shearman Street, Waimate

June Wellington Region Heritage Month. Theme: sport & recreation

28 August Auckland Regional Gathering at Avondale

September-October Auckland Heritage Festival

Next issue due out July 2011

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Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the NZ Federation of Historical Societies Inc.



**New Zealand Federation
of Historical Societies Inc**

**Report on Conference
and
Annual General Meeting
Held in Tauranga
8 to 10 April 2011**

The venue for the weekend was in the Tauranga Historic Village complex which was both central and comfortable.

The conference was opened on Friday evening by the Federation's President Dr Neil Algar (Matamata), after which Mr John Koning spoke on "Peter Grant and the Tauranga Bush Campaign". An interesting address as Peter Grant was a deserter from the British military who became a "pakeha" Maori and the only known person of European descent that adapted the Paimarie Maori religion – or in other words a Hau Hau! Supper was served following the speaker.

Saturday morning dawned fine and sunny with Conference attendees greeted in the Village Hall. The first speaker was Dean Flavell who is the Heritage Officer for the Tauranga City Council. He spoke on the Maori settlement of the Tauranga immediate vicinity and the three canoes that made landfall in the Tauranga harbour area.

After morning tea the second speaker was Brian Davies who spoke on the "Church Mission Society, the mission at the Elms". The Elms being the most historic building in Tauranga, it was appropriate that Conference be told the story of this early mission venture in Tauranga.

Lunch was had and we were given time to walk round and view the historic village buildings – I am sure the stall holders there for the market day appreciated the time allowed for this activity!

Our final speaker of the day was Tommy Kapai whose subject was "Le Whanau, the journey of Emile Borel from France to Tauranga Moana". A

professional story teller and writer of children's books kept the audience enthralled as he related the history of the French Maori from Te Puna.

After afternoon tea attendees had a choice of guided visits to the Elms or Gate Pa site to complete a rewarding day of learning of some of the history of the Tauranga area.

Dinner on Saturday evening was a social event with no arranged speaker/entertainment. However President Neil spoke briefly on Federation matters followed by Jack Ingram (Tauranga) who talked briefly on his trials and tribulation in endeavouring to obtain and his failure in arranging a speaker of note for after dinner. The evening was rounded off with an impromptu joke telling session!

In a radical departure from past Conferences the Federation Annual General Meeting was held at 9.00 am on Sunday morning. The Executive were unsure as to the response but they could have relaxed as the meeting was well attended. The appointment of officers saw all current positions filled by existing sitting members with the addition of Jim Black (West Auckland) to the Executive. As there were no remits or contentious items to discuss the balance of the morning saw members tell of their outstanding events or successes enjoyed throughout the past year.

The Conference was closed with a hearty vote of thanks to the Tauranga Historical Society for their excellent work in preparing for and running the 2011 Conference and AGM.

Robin Astridge QSM
April 2011
Cambridge Delegate.

Images on front cover:

*Top left: Old Tauranga Post Office (L. Truttman);
centre: part of the Historic Village on 17th
(L. Truttman); bottom left: Takitimu pou whenua,
Tauranga (L. Truttman); bottom right: Robin Astridge
in the cockpit, Classic Flyers Museum (K. Stringer)*

Coolangatta Book Draw

Congratulations to Birkenhead Historical Society, whose name was pulled out of the hat on Saturday April 23. The book has been posted to you.



New Zealand Federation of Historical Societies Inc

Annual Report for 2010

The Federation at the end of the year had 81 member societies, 51 associate members and 38 institutions/museums.

The main focus of activity has been to provide a link between historical societies:

- through its **website** nzhistoricalsocieties.org.nz. Members are urged to use the website to provide a link with their own websites
- by several times in the year sending to all members the Federation's newsletter *Keeping in Touch (KIT)*. This is to keep them up to date not only with the Federation's activities but also on what is happening within individual societies. Information for KIT from members has always been encouraged as that is where the important action takes place
- through publishing its bi-annual magazine *NZ Legacy* to give members the opportunity to have interesting general historical articles and photographs printed without their having to satisfy the standards required by a formal historical journal
- the Federation has been available to make **representations**, when it is seen to be appropriate, to Government or to any other organisation
- as its effectiveness has been heavily dependent on the number of members, and to increase interest in what is being done and to understand the needs of historical societies, the Executive continued to have **personal contact** with historical organisations throughout the country
- and the Federation provides **advice and temporary finance** to members who are intending to publish historical material

Activities which are carried out by the Federation at the Executive level will be reported on at the Annual General Meeting by those members who have a specific 'portfolio' interest and knowledge. As has been stated many times before this report, largely because of New Zealand's geography it has been generally impossible to bring all the Federation together for the sort of interactive days that members find so useful. We were grateful to the West Auckland Historical Society for organising the conference in April 2010, but even the attraction of a national conference still did not produce a wildly enthusiastic crowd. In other parts of the country the regional days during the year are what have provided the best attraction for and gain to members. These days were put on by individual societies, and this report does not have the details, but the numbers attending varied. Our thanks to those who hosted these meetings, and we suggest that members were most likely to have attended when there was an interesting programme with society reports and plenty of interaction.

During 2010 there has been some publicity about proposed changes in the constitution of the NZ Historic Places Trust. Because of the concern by member societies working in the areas where NZHPT is active, and where changes might mean that local Historical Societies would by default have an increased workload, the Executive has had a watching brief. A communication with the Historic Places Trust brought the response that changes are in the hands of the government. If members were and are confused by what has been happening, an opinion communicated to the Executive as to what the Federation in the coming year should do about this would be useful.

Representations had been made to the Minister for Land Information about easy free access by researchers to old cadastral maps, and the final reply in 2010 was that this is still readily available. This has had to be accepted at face value.

The listed activities have been of value to all members, but in the long run they also have strengthened the Federation. Knowledge of where we have come from and what has happened in the past is valuable in its own right, but it is also crucial in local and national planning to avoid repeating the same old mistakes. A strong membership is important and helps to give the Federation a significant voice in the preservation of New Zealand's heritage. Perhaps this is a forlorn hope

when so many historical societies are not members, but we have enjoyed being involved in the process.

The Executive has met several times during the year, including a most interesting day meeting as guests of Assid Corban in the Corban Family 'Private' Heritage Museum in the old Corban home at Henderson. However a great deal of the day to day interaction between Executive members has been via emails. Certainly using electronic communication is not only quick but is a great saving in costs, but has the unfortunate downside of delays in communication with those not on line.

On behalf of member societies I express thanks to the Executive members who have continued their time consuming valuable work during 2010. As is true of the activities of member societies, it is only because of active contributions by so many volunteers the Federation is able to function. The Executive would be strengthened by new blood for the next year. Most important in all of this has been feed-back from the members with both criticisms and suggestions all of which the Executive has welcomed as it will continue to do in the future.

**Dr Neil Algar QSO
President**



New Zealand Federation of Historical Societies Inc

Liaison officer's report: South Island, March 2011

Late in 2010 there was a directive from the Executive to prepare an itinerary and budget (\$2035 for travel by rental car, accommodation and food) for a proposed visit to affiliated societies in the South Island. The main objective was to renew contact with such members, bring them up to date with Federation's activities, how we could assist each other and offer mutual support. The documentation was done, presented and approved at an Executive meeting late 2010.

Planning took place during late January 2011 at which time 17 societies were contacted regarding date, timing and place of a proposed visit. Only one society declined the invitation.

On a very tight schedule travel commenced on 21 March 2011 for ten days and was to cover mainly the east of the South Island from Picton to Bluff – an estimated distance of 2000 kilometres. Societies visited were Picton, Marlborough, Kaikoura, Ashburton, Waimate, Taieri, Balclutha, Gore, Matura, Owaka, Balfour, Temuka, and Murchison. Due to earthquake damage the arranged visit to St Albans History Group in Christchurch was cancelled and appointments at Pleasant Point and Queenstown failed to materialise. Information booklets on Federation were left at Waikawa (Catlins area), Bluff Maritime Museum, Fairlie Museum and Milton Museum as I passed through these areas – all of whom are not affiliated to Federation. The distance travelled was 2916 km – a major miscalculation on my part when preparing the budget!

President Neil Algar also visited the Otago Settlers Museum and contacted Tokomarino Historical Society during a recent rip to the South Island which completed Federation's contacts with affiliated societies.

At all meetings I was made most welcome and meaningful discussions were had with mutual benefit to both parties. I was encouraged by the enthusiasm by all societies in what they are doing and the dedication of all those involved as well as the willingness from some to host future meetings on behalf of Federation – be they Regional Days or Conferences. I have been charged at a recent Executive meeting to prepare a follow-up to this venture. Federation will actively seek funding for the costs involved.

The costs of this March trip were met from Federation's reserves and despite the understating of kilometres in the budget and the rapid increase in fuel costs the total expenditure was \$2088.71 - \$53.17 more than the budget.

**Robin Astridge QSM
Liaison Officer
Te Awamutu, April 2011**

Federation website report from Wynne HaySmith to come in next issue.

Society News & Views

Avondale-Waterview

We've held our first two meetings for the year, February and April, in the renovated and reopened 151-year-old St Ninians church. Our members appreciate not only the spacious, light atmosphere of the old building, but also its historic associations with our suburb. AWHs members approached Auckland Council for a much-needed clean-up of the adjacent cemetery, which has begun, and a digital version of the 44-plot cemetery is underway (slowly being enhanced, with inscriptions, people's stories plus photos of the graves, on a free Google Sites website).

The new Super City sees AWHs' areas of interest split between two Local Boards — that of the Whau and Albert-Eden. Contact has been made with both Boards, and also with neighbouring Puketapapa, who are organising Local Heritage Forum meetings (the first was attended by representatives from Avondale-Waterview, Mt Albert and Onehunga historical societies.)

In the initial draft annual plans drawn up this year by Auckland's new Local Boards, 21 in number: 8 made no reference to local heritage, while at the other end of the scale Albert-Eden, Devonport-Takapuna, Howick, Kaipatiki, and Otara-Papatoetoe Boards made significant references to heritage. Our Society's local Whau Board members do appear willing and able to consult with our Society on heritage matters, however, which is heartening.

Cambridge

Diminishing school rolls led to the closure in late 2010 of Maungatautari School, established in 1903. Fortunately the Cambridge Historical Society were able to retrieve items for the museum. As they report in their April newsletter: "The items we retrieved were not wanted by the Education Department's Archives so these photos, books and teaching aids are now of National Importance. Five year olds are now doing lessons on computers so a lot of 'paper' and film aids will never be seen again. Remember sitting in a darkened corner watching Film Strips on health, geography and Other Lands?"

Eastbourne

The Society's committee is to focus on oral history this year, following on from their 2001 book on Eastbourne history. Existing oral histories are to be

converted to digital format, but new interviews will also be undertaken. "Not just with older members of the community," the Society reported in their March newsletter, "but also with the next generation down — the 'baby boomers' who, as they retire, may enjoy reflecting on their experiences of growing up in the bays, or of raising their own families here."

Epsom & Eden District

When visiting the Society in February, your Editor was most impressed to hear the report by Vice-President Christine Black to the Society's meeting about her research and efforts to alert NZ Historic Places Trust as to the potential archaeological site at 6 Stokes Road in Mt Eden. This was the site of a two-storey elegant house, c.1880, which became a school run by the Misses Bew in 1896, eventually called Mt Eden Collegiate.. It was purchased by St Cuthbert's College in 1914, and was used by them until the school shifted in 1925.

Badly damaged by fire in the early 1950s, it was salvaged, converted to a single-storey house, and remained as such until January this year when demolition began. Thanks to Christine and the Society alerting NZHPT as to the potential of a pre-1900 archaeological site, some artefacts have so far been rescued from the bulldozer's blade. Well done!

Mangere

From an email received from Val Payne:

April 13 was the date chosen for the official opening of the new Manukau Public and Research Library - Te Paerangi - set on the Square at the Manukau Centre.

A large crowd of dignitaries, librarians, local board and council members, plus invited guests enjoyed the sunny skies as they listened to the Mayor of Auckland and ex-Mayor of Manukau, Len Brown speak, sing and officially declare the building open. He had called for any young people to come and help him do the honours and a young teenage girl came forward to cut the ribbon as the Mayor held it firm. Kaumatua Eru Thompson gave the blessings and its Maori name. The guests were invited in, to be given the grand tour of all the facilities and they were able to admire the historic photos that had been incorporated into the coloured glass windows surrounding this building. Many of them had come from archival material provided by local Historical Societies that were used to form the "time line" that the librarians had worked on earlier. They also have locked display cases available to Historical Societies to display any material they wish on occasions.

The Public Library had been moved from the Manukau Shopping Centre to the ground floor of this building and the Research occupies the first floor, with wonderful facilities to store the extensive books, maps, photos and official data available to those needing to search for data. Computers, rooms with tables, comfortable chairs and efficient librarians are all on hand to assist people in the search for information. This was the first Library opened under the new greater Auckland City.

Otaki

Daphne Meyer, life member of the Society, committee member for more than 30 years and secretary of 22 years, died on 15 March 2011. According to the Society's newsletter: "She organised talks and trips and prepared information leaflets to accompany them. Daphne wrote articles for the journal and was the first person people turned to for historical information. With her passing an important part of Otaki's history has also gone."

Rotorua

It was reported at the Federation's AGM that Rotorua Historical Society had invited seven high schools to submit applications for a scholarship, intended for those students planning to major in history at tertiary level.

Silverdale

From their March newsletter.

"We have had a surprisingly busy summer. In spite of it being so early in the school year we have had a visit from Years 1 and 2 at Stella Maris as well as one from a Senior Citizens' group, two weddings and of course the Garage Sale and Children's Day. In spite of the weather not looking good we had an exceptional turnout, well over 100 children plus assorted parents and grandparents.

"One of the popular events this year was the old sport of gumboot throwing, inspired by an adult version we played at the February picnic at Vera's. Don McErlich and Judith Pitcaithly were the champions there. We also played croquet and petanque, visited the sheds to see the treasures Vera has hidden away (mummified rat anyone?) or just lay back and enjoyed the peace of an old country garden. Comparatively peaceful anyway. One can't totally ignore the activity on Millwater just over the fence ...

"[F]our volunteers from the BNZ came and spent the day doing some of the heavier tidying up in the gardens. They were a very cheerful and hardwork-

ing bunch and we thank them sincerely for their work. It was complicated by the discovery of several large wasps' nests around the garden. Fortunately Judith P has great rapport with Citycare, and a Pest Eradication Officer (!!!) arrived complete with beekeeping suit to deal with the problem."

Torbay

From the Torbay Newsletter, produced by the local business association, April 2011:

"Torbay resident Bill Ellis has been capturing the moments in Torbays' transition from paddock to suburbia for many years. Whenever there has been a change to the landscape by man or mother nature, Bill has been there to record it for future generations. For the past 17 years almost every *Torbay Newsletter* has had one of his photos, some showing the landscape how it was and how it is now. Others just showing locals going about their business ...

"Like all photographers, Bill sees a good shot when many of us pass it by ...

"Bill and his wife Barbara are members of the Torbay Historical Society and have volumes of photographs as well as many digital files of shots taken over the years, each one telling a story about Torbay for the generations to come."

Well done, Bill and Barbara!

Waikato Coalfields Museum

The museum celebrated 30 years in Huntly on 17 April. When the Huntly Historical Society formed in 1974, this gave real impetus to the establishment of a museum which, after years of fundraising and behind-the-scenes efforts, opened 2 November 1980. By the late 1990s, the collection of coalmining memorabilia became recognised as being of national importance. Waikato District Council took on a more active role, and the museum director, Linda Wrigley, was appointed in 2001.

Congratulations to all at Waikato Coalfields Museum on your milestone!

West Auckland

Your Editor attended the 20 March launch of the new book published by the Society, *Titirangi: Fringe of Heaven*, written by Marc Bonny. This has been the result of several years research and interviewing of past and present members of that community. Copies of the book are available from a number of locations, and from the Society, for \$45.



West Auckland Historical Society's "Living History Day", 16 March 2011

In association with the local Twin Streams group, West Auckland Historical Society hosted a "Living History Day" for pupils of Henderson Primary School. This involved re-enactments of the arrival in Henderson of Thomas Henderson and John Macfarlane beside the Opanuku Stream, a scene at Don Buck's infamous camp at Swanson, and guided tours of Mill Cottage's research room, and the newly



completed display room extensions. There the children were about to watch the tripping of the kauri driving dam, amongst other exhibits.

It was by all accounts a wonderful day, thoroughly enjoyed by children and adults alike.



All photos: L Truttman

Glass plate negatives in your society collections

Whilst visiting one of the societies the question was raised as to whether there is a device available or a quick way to photograph old glass plate negatives. Not being museum orientated was unable to answer. I would like to know how others have got over this problem.

Could an appeal be made in KIT for an answer and me to be the contact at my e-mail address?

Robin Astridge

An answer from Keith Giles, of the Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Central Library.

We ...house each individual glass plate negative in an acid free envelope and store them upright separately from the manuscript archive in negative cabinets at a constant temperature and humidity. If that's not possible, it's best to store them separately anyway, in a place where they cannot be broken...

I am not aware of any "device" to quickly photograph glass plates. That's probably because they can vary wildly in size. The firm we use take a digital photograph of the negative while on a light box and then manipulate the file to create a usable image. It's not a speedy process, and speed is something to be wary of when dealing with glass plates! Better to take things very slowly, do the job correctly, and only once (at a high resolution) so that each negative only has to be handled the minimum amount necessary.

Any further tips from the readers would be greatly appreciated.



*Memorial to Rawiri Puhiraki,
Tauranga Mission Cemetery.
Photos: L Truttman*



SHARE THE MESSAGE

If this issue of *Keeping in Touch* came to your society by **email**, why not forward it to others in your society so they can read it too?

Society webpages on the Federation website

Interested in having a web page on the Federation's site? Contact **Wynne HaySmith** (cwhaysmith@clear.net.nz) or the Editor for more details.

NZ Federation of Historical Societies Publication Loans Scheme

Don't forget: if your Society needs that extra bit of help in ensuring your research book makes it out there before the public, the Federation does have a loans scheme to assist. Contact our Secretary **Neil Curgenvin**, PO Box 1625, Paraparaumu Beach 5252, or email:

ncurgenvin@gmail.com

Want to swap, give away, buy or sell something?

Feel free to contact the Editor. I'm happy to put up notices for members for anything you would like the rest of the Federation to know about.

Do YOU have an important event coming up in the next 12 months (or longer)???

Let us know, so we can include YOUR EVENT on the newsletter calendar.