



Albertland Heritage Museum Inc

Patron - Mr Alan Gibbs

STOP PRESS Gibbs Farm Visit

Newsletter October 2023

*Open
Hours*

Monday, Tuesday - Closed
Wednesday - Saturday - 11am to 3pm
Sunday - 1pm to 3pm
The Museum is open for visitors

AN ALBERTLAND HERITAGE MUSEUM

GIBBS FARM FUNDRAISER 2023

THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER

10AM-2PM

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

Tickets Sales are Fast Selling

Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to visit the astounding Gibbs Farm and sculpture collection.

In partnership with The Gibbs Farm and with immense thanks to Museum patron, Alan Gibbs.

For bookings, email: info@albertlandmuseum.co.nz

call: 09 423 8181

or pop into the Museum

Gibbs Farm Fundraiser For the Albertland Heritage Museum

Thursday 26th October 2023, 10 am-2 pm

The Museum is thrilled to offer this exciting opportunity to visit the remarkable Gibbs Farm and its immense sculpture collection as a fundraising event, with immense thanks to our Patron,
Mr. Alan Gibbs.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Get in quick to avoid disappointment. Very limited tickets are available this year!

Total of 150

Adults \$90

Children \$40

For bookings, email: info@albertlandmuseum.co.nz
Or call: 09 423 8181

This is a self-guided experience, with well-managed pathways to wander in your own time. You can bring your own picnic lunch to enjoy on the grounds. It's a walking-heavy day, so bring comfortable clothes and jackets for the weather.

Tickets will be payable via bank transfer. Tickets and instructions will be sent after payment confirmation. Gibbs Farm is a private property, open monthly by prior appointment only to artists, educational institutions, charities and the public.

Bank Details

Particulars (Gibbs Farm) Code (Number of Tickets) Reference (Your Name)
Direct Payment ASB Bank Details - 12-3094-0077415-01

***Please email <info@albertlandmuseum.co.nz>
with your information for reply and ticket(s)***

ALBERTLAND HERITAGE MUSEUM AGM – 24th September 2023

Recently the museum held a very successful AGM at the Wellsford RSA with 40 guests and a key note speaker, Mr. Ivan Pivac from Auckland who gave a very informative talk about the history of Gum Digging in the surrounding areas of Wellsford. The talk was followed by afternoon tea provided by Shirley and Terry Blakemore from the Wellsford RSA which is available for hire for any function or meeting that you may be planning. Contact Shirley on 09 423 8172 for details.

LIST OF OFFICERS 2023 – 2024

PRESIDENT – Paul Allen (returning)

VICE PRESIDENT – Clare Joensen (newly filled)

TREASURER – Rob Lennon (returning)

SECRETARY – Rose Reid (returning)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – Pat Bennett, Peter Berg, Peter Buckton, Jenny Driskel, Kevin Gallagher (newly appointed), Grace Harris, Sean Harris, Grahame Henderson, Mikayla Journée, Allan Peake, Terry Reid.

Changes to the committee this year see Clare Joensen filling an un-elected position of Vice President and after the resignation of long serving committee member Mark Enticott we now have Kevin Gallagher joining our team.

Thank you everyone who attended our AGM and made this a very special day.



Speaker - Mr Ivan Pivac
Kauri Gum Digging History

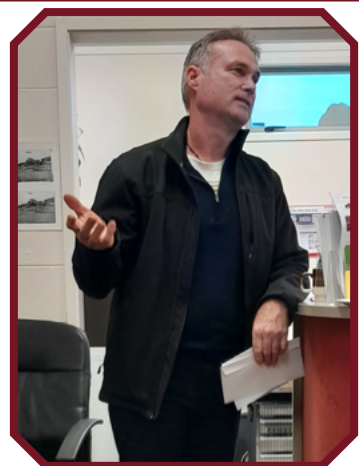
We say Goodbye to Mark and Alison Enticott

In August we organised a farewell Afternoon Tea to say thank you to our long serving committee member, Mark Enticott.

As a member of our committee, Mark worked hard on the initial planning stages of our Building Extension project drawing on his skills as a Real Estate professional to liaise with Auckland Council and others.

Afternoon Tea was provided by members of the committee and Mark was thanked by Paul Allen (President).

We wish both Mark and his wife Alison the best of luck with their move to Geraldine in the South Island.



Historical Albertland Birthdays

27th August 1864	William Thomas Marcroft at Te Wheau
02nd September 1873	Albert Henry Pook
21st August 1885	Ethel May Grice at Port Albert
13th September 1890	George Tinsley Thompson
22nd September 1893	Francis Wharfe Phillips
09th August 1924	Zoe Grice

Friends and supporters of Albertland Museum birthdays

11th August	Nella Allen
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‘WELLSFORD’S OWN’ RHONA OLESEN TURNS 100 YEARS OLD

Rhona Olesen, a long-time resident of Wellsford is known to many around town, young and old. In her younger years Rhona and her husband came to Wellsford to their own dairy farm in Silverhill Road where they lived for a number of years with their family of four children. More recently Rhona has lived in town and has spent many hours as a volunteer in the Anglican op shop, being involved with her local church and knitting, often for charity.

Her family began planning for her 100th birthday many months beforehand. Rhona and her family wanted it to be a day where all her friends and family could come together to enjoy this very special day. This occasion would need a large venue to accommodate all those wanting to come along and join in, so the Wellsford Community Centre was booked.

Arriving at the hall in a beautiful vintage car, Rhona was accompanied by her grandson, Christopher who was wearing his New Zealand Air force uniform.



Once inside the hall, Rhona, the centre of attention, sharing her day with the many invited guests, her warm and welcoming family, and friends and acquaintances that she had welcomed in during her long and very interesting life. She had requested a ‘country’ theme for her party, so guests were suitably dressed in their country attire and enjoyed good music, singing, line dancing and food. ‘Elvis’ even made an appearance to get the party started.

The following day, Rhona also attended the monthly church service at Port Albert Hall (taken by Lynette Gubb) which she does every month and the congregation again celebrated this momentous occasion with cake and a chance to share special memories at the end of the service. A few days later on her actual birthday, Rhona and her family shared a special day together singing old favourites accompanied by family members playing on the piano.

Rhona and her family are hugely supportive of the Albertland Heritage Museum and our volunteers felt very honoured to be part of this very special occasion.

Happy 100th Birthday Rhona – you are a very special young lady!

WILLIAM THOMAS MARCROFT

27th August 1864 – 1940

William Thomas Marcroft was the first white child born in the Albertland settlement at Te Wheau (Wharehine). For the settlers this birth was a momentous occasion in the history of their settlement but unfortunately it cannot be remembered without thinking of young James Thomas Cocks who died on June 6, 1865, aged only 18 years.



2004-2-03-13
William Marcroft



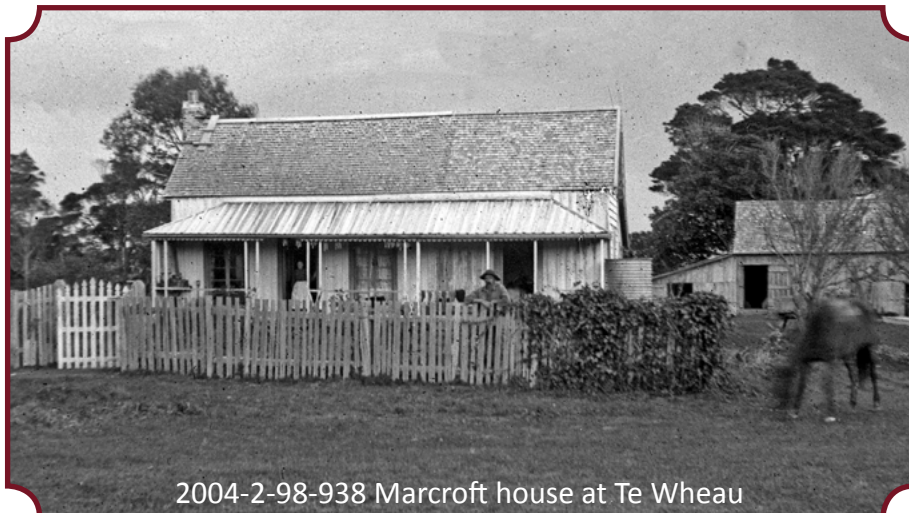
2004-2-98-22
Mrs Edwin Marcroft

When Mrs. E. Marcroft recalled the birth of her first child William in 1925 she told the story of how young James or 'Jimmy' as he was known who lived next door to her with his parents offered to go to fetch the doctor on the night that her labour began. Doctor Bell lived some distance away and Jimmy had to walk three miles over a rough track to the Oruawharo River before rowing for five miles upstream to the Doctors' house. He arrived just before midnight, and the doctor accompanied him back to the Marcroft's home in the early hours arriving just before dawn.

But in August, the night had been very cold and despite his mother's best advice, young 'Jimmy' had not worn a coat as he thought that his journey would be much faster without the additional weight of carrying his coat. Unfortunately, though in the days following his amazing journey, he caught a chill which settled on his chest and after suffering ill health for 15 months he eventually died of consumption. Marking his grave on his parent's farm at Te Wheau was a lonely weather-worn tombstone which for a long time could be found amongst overgrown bush.

The baby, William Marcroft, was born early on Sunday morning and later the same day the settlers were attending a church service at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cocks. After the service when the congregation were returning to their homes, they stopped along with Reverend Gittos at the Marcroft house and were told of the arrival of the baby, the first white child to be born in the district. William Armitage led the congregation in song, singing "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," to welcome the new baby.

In her interviewed many years later, Mrs Marcroft also remembered her baby being a source of interest and wonder to the Māori people of the district and they never tired of coming to see him, especially at bath time. This was because of the whiteness of his skin which they believed was caused by the regular bathing that must have blanched his skin. A wife of one of the chiefs requested that her baby of a similar age receive the same treatment, however, Mrs Marcroft knowing that the colour of her baby was not caused by bathing, instead bathed the child, and dressed it in some of her own baby's clothing. The mother was delighted and a relationship of respect and affection continued between Mrs Marcroft and her Māori neighbours.



2004-2-98-938 Marcroft house at Te Wheau

MARRIAGES

18/09/1954

Avis Hette Vipond and Gordon John Ashton

19/09/1931

Alan Grant and Mildred Marsh

22/09/1909

Helen Elizabeth Woodcock and William Moffatt

Marriage William Moffatt and Helen Elizabeth Woodcock

22nd September 1909

On the 22nd September 1909, in the early days of spring, William Moffatt who was 24 years old, married the eldest daughter of Mr and the late Mrs F. Woodcock. The service conducted by the Rev. Bottomley was held at the Woodcock family home at Mangakura, on the shores of the Kaipara. William was the eldest son of Mr John Seaton Moffatt and Mrs Isabella Moffatt (nee Halfpenny) who were living in Avondale, Auckland. Helen (known as Nell) Elizabeth Woodcock was born in Bathurst, New South Wales and her father was Frederick Woodcock and her mother was Sarah Ann Woodcock (nee Sharp).

William worked locally at Hargreaves farm and picking fruit at the Becroft's orchards. It was while working at Wests Mill at Mangakura that he boarded with Mr Frederick (Fred) Woodcock and his family and he met and courted Fred's eldest daughter, Helen. Later he and his brother-in-law Guy Witheford worked together running Guy's boat the "Capel" between Helensville and the Opou on the Tauhoa side of Wharehine.

In their early years of marriage, they lived in Western's house at Tauhoa and then moved to Helensville where William ran the twin-engine cargo boat the "Te Tui" which operated on the Kaipara for many years. They also lived at Whakapirau, near Pahi, before returning to Helensville once again with William working for the West family at their mill. Nearing retirement they moved to Whangarei and bought a section at Otaika Road where William built a house while working at Beehre's Mill. William died 26th August 1958 and Helen (Nell) died on 02nd June 1957.

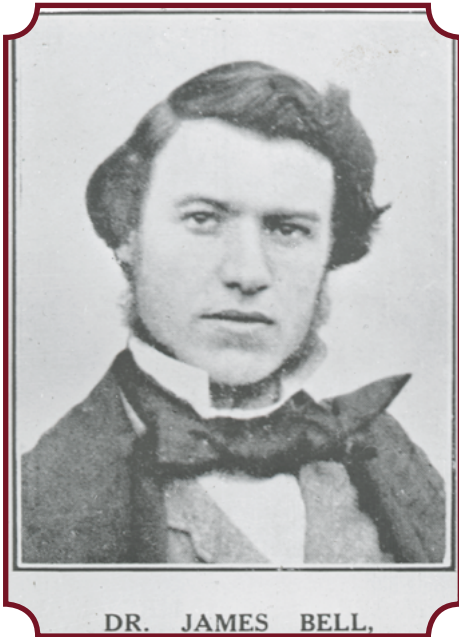
William and Nell had four children Stanley William, Gladys Elizabeth, Phyllis Eileen, and Wilfred (Bill) John Moffatt.



Deaths

DR. JAMES BELL

16th April 1836 – 9th August 1870



The Albertland District was covered by a huge cloud of gloom and disbelief when their beloved Dr. James Bell suddenly took ill and died on August 9th, 1870.

Dr. Bell was born on 16th April 1836 in Biggar, Lanarkshire, Scotland and was appointed to take medical charge of the settlers and their families by William Brame under the Albertland Settlement Scheme. Dr. Bell and his family sailed on the Matilda Wattenbach with his fellow passengers to New Zealand on 29th May 1862.

This very kind man had the respect of everyone who made his acquaintance both as the district's physician and a much-respected magistrate. As a magistrate he would often try to encourage both parties to settle their differences without making an appearance before him in an official capacity and as a doctor he would render his services whenever required in many cases without fee or reward.

From the commencement of the Albertland district, James led the way in all public business and would often be found occupying the chair at public meetings.

In the days leading up to his death, James Bell was seemingly in good health and had even visited Port Albert on business, before rowing his boat to Mr Harden's at Paraheke, which was about half an-hour's pull away. Later that night around midnight James took ill, and grew steadily worse during Sunday, but there were no grave concerns about the outcome of his illness. However, on Monday it was apparent that he had inflammation of the bowels and was suffering with intense pains. He steadily declined from midnight onwards until he passed away at 3 am on Tuesday morning.

He died in the prime of his life, at 34 years of age leaving behind his wife, Henrietta Mary (nee Turton) and his eight children, Florence, Mary Elizabeth, Horace Roland, Laura, Mildred Louise, Lucy, Henry Norman, and Harold. The other settlers had indeed lost a friend and many who attended his funeral on Wednesday 10th August were overcome by the loss of such a great Christian man who had taken part in all matters essential to benefit his fellow-settlers and facilitate the progress of the country. The service at the old Port Albert Cemetery for Dr. Bell was performed by the Reverend C. Worker.

Source of information – The Albertlanders – Brave Pioneers of the 1860s and Papers Past, New Zealand Herald, 20th August 1870.

For Sale

Do you collect fridge magnets?

We have for sale at the Museum for \$3.00ea

If you require them to be sent to you P&H will cost you a little extra \$2.50.

email: albertlandmuseum@gmail.com

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WE FAREWELL LONG TIME PORT ALBERT AND WELLSFORD RESIDENT - JUNE SHEPHERD

5th June 1928 to 12th August 2023



We farewell long time Port Albert and Wellsford resident and friend to many, June Shepherd passed away in August after a short illness.

June (nee Walker) was born in Matamata and grew up in Te Puke, Galatea and then finally in Henderson where she met William (Buster) Booth who was from Port Albert. When she left school, she completed an apprenticeship as a tailoress and retained her love of sewing throughout her life. She would make a lot of her families clothing including bridal and bridesmaids' dresses for her daughters.

Buster and June married in March 1950 in Henderson where June had been a Sunday School teacher. They soon moved to Port Albert where June joined the local branch of the country Women's Institute, often holding office on the committee. June was an active member of this organisation for most of her lifetime. For many years she was also involved with the Women's Fellowship at the Port Albert Church and still attended regular services there up until shortly before she died.

Buster as he was known could turn his hand to anything and after his parents retired from their farm, he bought the back half and built his own home on it. As well as farming (sheep and dairy) he was a hay contractor, engineer, boat and cowshed builder and a home butcher. When Buster and June sold their farm in 1971, he did home butchering for a time before becoming a commercial fisherman.

He was a foundation member of the Albertland Cruising Club which had been formed to raise money to repair the Port Albert Wharf and a member of the ROAB (Buffalo) Lodge. He was in demand at functions as he had taught himself to play the piano accordion and harmonica which would provide the accompaniment to a bit of dancing and singing. He was also involved in a local water-ski club and school teenage dances during the 1960s.

Together Buster and June enjoyed the lifestyle of living near the Kaipara harbour with all that it had to offer, boating, fishing, and gathering of shellfish included. Every year they would take their family to Hargreaves Bay on a camping holiday for two weeks.

Sadly, for June and her family, Buster passed away in 1977 however five years later she found happiness again with Jim Shepherd with whom she shared a love of gardening and bowls which kept them both busy. After Jim's death, June moved to the Masonic Village and then in more recent years to the Wellsford Rest Home.

Our condolences to June's family, her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

ON SALE NOW

2024 Calendar

This calendar is titled "Children Of Albertland"

Can be purchased at the museum for \$25.00ea or from the website for \$35.00ea

<https://albertlandmuseum.co.nz/product/2024-calendar/>

Embers of Resilience:

When Settlers Homes and Buildings burnt.

In early settlements like Albertland, the communities were tight-knit, and neighbours would rally around to support those affected by disaster, such as house fires. This sense of solidarity and mutual aid could help alleviate some of the emotional burden caused by a fire.

The sudden loss of one's home and possessions due to a fire would likely elicit an initial sense of shock and disbelief as was the case with Samuel Edgar and his family when their home burnt down leaving them with absolutely nothing but the clothes his family were wearing at the time.

It was reported in the New Zealand Herald on the 8th August 1866 that this destructive fire had added to the melancholy list of conflagrations which had already taken place in the district that same week. The house belonging to the Rev. Edgar had been burned to the ground while the family were attending a public church service and it was not until the family of 14 returned home that they knew of their loss, arriving to find the remains of what had once been their commodious and comfortable family home. The family had lost everything and had to be placed amongst the residents of Port Albert until a new home could be built. Their property valued at £1000 had been destroyed but sadly Mr. Edgar was only insured for £400. There was a very general feeling of sympathy towards the family for their loss.

In a letter to the New Zealand Herald the Rev. Edgar described how at the service he had been preaching from "Man in his best state is vanity" and had quoted the proverb "fire is a bad master" unaware that at the same time fire was consuming his home to nothing more than a heap of ashes. Furniture, books, deeds, a life's work were consumed, leaving nothing more than the clothes his family were wearing. In a letter to Mr Bright, he ended by saying that he was 'almost crushed and heartbroken and could write no more.' Early settlers in various parts of the world, particularly in the colonial and pioneer eras, would have experienced a wide range of emotions when their houses burnt down. Losing one's home and belongings, which often represented years of hard work and personal investment, would lead to feelings of grief and sadness. The emotional attachment to their homes would be significant.

A few years later in September 1884 there was another report in the New Zealand Herald describing how the new barn of Mr. David Becroft burnt down between ten and eleven o'clock at night. The barn stored lots of inflammable items and was soon a mass of flames with nothing able to be saved apart from a few bags of bone dust and some sheets of iron. Tools, implements, a new farm gate, and about half of the previous season's wheat crop, valued at £50 were all lost in the fire. It was not clear how this fire started but one theory was that rats may have chewed at a box of matches that had been left in the barn.

The community once again rallied together to help re-erect Mr. Becroft's building.

Fires in early settlements could spread rapidly due to limited firefighting resources and primitive building materials. A fire would prompt settlers to reflect on their building methods, fire prevention measures, and the need for better firefighting resources. They would adapt to reduce the risk of future fires.

It was not just homes and sheds that were lost to fire though. On Friday, 28th March 1913 the Temperance Hall at Port Albert suffered the same fate as Mr Edgar's home and Mr Becroft's shed, being destroyed by fire. For several days beforehand there had been scrub fires in the vicinity of the hall and residents did not realise that the source of the smoke was coming from the hall until the roof caught on fire. Nearby local resident Mrs Thompson then discovered the danger and gave the alarm. Help was soon at hand but soon it was obvious that by this time the chances of saving anything was hopeless, so instead the attention was turned to saving Mrs Thompson's outbuildings and residence.

The roof of the hall was made from shingle, and was burning very fiercely fanned by a strong nor-wester wind and before long the building was nothing more than a mass of glowing ashes. The lighted shingles blew for some distance to the nearby Butcher's shop and Public Pound. After an hour of strenuous work, the community managed to halt the progress of the fire and quell any further outbreaks. The building was insured for £250 but with the recent installation of an acetylene gas plant, and alterations to the stage it was worth much, much more.

New iron had been purchased to re-roof part of the existing roof and this was lying close to the hall. Its value was £15 and it was also ruined. Later, the fierceness of the fire could be seen when one considered that the hall stood twelve feet back from the road and the flames had leapt this gap crossing the newly formed road which was twenty-two feet wide and catching the scrub on the opposite side of the road alight before crossing over into the showgrounds. The Druids who had their rooms in the hall lost all their books, regalia and Charter and the show committee lost timber, trestles and tables which impacted greatly on the community.

While such an event was very distressing the settlers often exhibited remarkable strength and resilience in the face of adversity, contributing to the growth and development of the communities they were building. In a few short years a new hall was built in a different location which can still be found standing today and the Druid's built their own hall a short distance away.



2004-2-96-398 Remains of Port Albert Hall after fire 29th March 1913

Obituary

TOMAS, Susan Anne (nee RAE)
16/07/2023



Susan and Ivan Tomas

The committee and volunteers of the Albertland Heritage Museum were sorry to hear about the passing of Susan Anne Tomas in July. She was clearly a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and her contributions to volunteer organisations in Wellsford, particularly the Citizens' Advice Bureau reflect her very generous and caring nature.

It is also evident that both Susan and husband Ivan were actively involved in their community, with Ivan's efforts to raise funds for the Albertland Heritage Museum being a testament to their dedication to preserving the local heritage.

I am sure everyone who has connections with the Albertland Heritage Museum will join me in offering Ivan and his family their condolences for their loss. Losing a loved one is never easy, and our thoughts are with Ivan and his family during this difficult time.

From the Editors

This year the museum has had a great year with strong community support, like the Wellsford RSA who have hosted several events on our behalf, indicating a strong partnership between our two organisations.

The generosity of sponsors, including the RSA, in providing insulation for the museum is also a significant contribution to maintaining the museum's infrastructure and ensuring its preservation for future generations.

Recently we have lost several members of our community and heard of many others who have been sick and battling illness. This is undoubtedly a poignant reminder to us all of importance of looking out for one another and supporting our family, friends, and neighbours.

Hope you enjoy the newsletter, and may the museum continue to thrive and be a valuable asset to the community for many years to come!