



Albertland Heritage Museum Inc



Newsletter December 2023

Xmas Open Hours

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

Outgoing Patron – Mr Alan Gibbs

Mr. Alan Gibbs has served as the Patron of the Albertland Heritage Museum since October 2019. Throughout his tenure, his support has been pivotal in furthering our mission, to add an extension to our existing building, and we express our deepest gratitude for the generosity and encouragement he has offered in allowing us to utilise his Gibbs Farm Sculpture Park at Makarau as a venue for fundraising events on two separate occasions. His willingness to extend such a remarkable opportunity for the benefit of our museum has been invaluable, and we sincerely appreciate his support throughout the past four years



Mr Alan Gibbs

The Unforgettable Day (70 years ago) Wellsford Welcomed Queen Elizabeth II – December 1953

This month we celebrate 70 years since the residents of Wellsford were overjoyed by the Queen's inaugural visit as she graced the town in her graceful Daimler car. For the newly-crowned Queen Elizabeth II, this marked her maiden journey encompassing 46 towns and cities over a span of six weeks. Kiwis thronged the streets in eager anticipation of catching a glimpse of the youthful royal, a scene that unfolded in Wellsford as Her Majesty, accompanied by Prince Phillip, traversed the countryside and our quaint town.

A scheduled stop was planned in Warkworth, where they would extend greetings to the local Member of Parliament (Hon. T Clifton Webb) along with members of the Rodney County Council and Warkworth Town council before proceeding to Wenderholm for a brief respite and lunch. Instead of transporting over a thousand pupils from Wellsford and neighbouring districts by bus to Warkworth, trains were arranged to instead ferry school children from the Hobson area and Dargaville Borough, enabling them to witness the Queen's passage through Rodney Street.

Remarkably, two special trains, comprising 12 carriages each – the largest ever seen departing from Dargaville – were mobilised to transport 2,300 children from Northern Wairoa to Wellsford. These youngsters, joining their Wellsford counterparts, were allocated designated vantage points along an elevated stretch of the route, approximately between the Church of Christ and the Rodney Hotel. In total, an outstanding four thousand children were present!

As the children were assembled and given their designated spots, excitement soared well before the Queen's procession was expected. As the clock struck eleven-thirty, the anticipation peaked. Suddenly, a sleek black "Daimler" materialised, igniting cheers and a sea of waving flags. Her Majesty was wearing a greenish frock and a white hat, and had not been made aware that there would be four thousand school children awaiting her arrival, so the look of surprise on her face was keenly observed by onlookers.

The children were treated to pies, buns, and soft drinks before they boarded their awaiting trains and buses. Don Worsnop, a gifted and aspiring town photographer, was also waiting patiently amongst the crowd for the opportune moment to immortalize the enchanting presence of the youthful Queen, capturing an iconic image that would in the future stand out among his extensive collection of photographs. His journey began three years prior when he acquired his inaugural camera, embarking on a path towards professionalism in photography and ultimately cementing himself as a celebrated icon within the district.

Donald Walbourne Worsnop

03/12/1926 – 23/11/2023

In late November, our community mourned the loss of a remarkable individual, Don Worsnop, a man of diverse talents known not only as a farmer and hay contractor, but also revered as our beloved local photographer. Born on December 3rd, 1926, in Auckland, Don Worsnop soon moved with his parents, Fred and Muriel Worsnop, to a farm in Wayby. His educational journey began at Wayby School and continued at Wellsford District High School. Leaving formal education in 1941, he started working on a farm along Rustybrook Road, establishing it as his primary source of livelihood while also engaging in contract haymaking. In 1956, he married Ellen McCurdie, affectionately called 'Nellie' and together they raised four sons: Frank, Murray, Edward, and Stanley.

Don's passion for photography led him to join the Wellsford Photographic Club in 1950, marking the beginning of his journey as a photographer. His first camera, a cherished possession, became a symbol of his legacy, later donated to the Albertland Heritage Museum, ensuring that his impact as a photographer endures through time. He meticulously honed his craft in his personal workroom, skilfully developing and enlarging black and white photographs using techniques acquired over the years to bring out the best in his images.

Through his lens, Don immortalised numerous moments – from the vibrant spirit of A & P Shows to the profound elegance of weddings. His presence became a perennial feature in local schools, capturing annual snapshots of generations of schoolchildren. Today, these nostalgic moments find a cherished place in the museum's collection, serving as precious remnants of our shared history.

Among the treasures within the collection stand two remarkable photographs: one featuring New

Zealand ballerina Rowena Jackson (sister of local storekeeper Rex Jackson), commissioned for the Weekly News, and another capturing the Queen passing through Wellsford in her majestic Daimler during her Royal Tour in December 1953. Wedding photography constituted the cornerstone of Don's professional career, commencing with his first wedding on March 22nd, 1952, when Frank Coop married Corrine Shepherd.

Earlier this year, our hearts were touched as Don, accompanied by his granddaughter Jessie, graced our museum with a visit. His presence illuminated the galleries as he spent hours recounting cherished memories, reminiscing

about people, places, and the compelling stories behind his cherished cameras and photographs. Don dedicated countless hours to producing prints from the Harold Marsh collection of negatives, an immense task at the time, for which we remain eternally grateful.



Photo of Don Worsnop courtesy of the Worsnop Family and Jason Morrison Funeral Directors



"Royal Remembrance Recipe: Honouring Queen Elizabeth II's Visit to Wellsford"

Honouring Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Wellsford in December 1953, captured by the talented young photographer Don Worsnop in his iconic photograph, I wanted to share with you this cherished recipe. It's an old but delicious treat that might benefit from a modern twist and a transformation into a Christmas favourite. I invite you to try it out and add your unique touch to it. I'm eager to hear how your rendition turns out!

Queen Pudding

Edmonds Cookbook 19th Edition (1983)

| INGREDIENTS: | DIRECTIONS: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 1 or 2 eggs » 600mls (1 pint) milk » 2 tablespoons sugar » 1 cup breadcrumbs » Raspberry or Apricot Jam | <p>Separate yolks from whites. Slightly beat yolks and add to milk and sugar. Add breadcrumbs and pour into pie-dish. Bake until set - 150 - 160 degrees Celcius (300 - 325 degrees Farenheit). When set remove from oven and cool.</p> <p>Spread with about 2 tablespoons jam and pile meringue on top. Bake 20 minutes until meringue is set and a pale brown at 120 degrees Celcius (250 degrees Farenheit).</p> <p>MERINGUE: To each egg white allow 2 tablespoons sugar. Beat egg whites until quite stiff and fold in sugar.</p> |

Historical Albertland Birthdays

02/11/1878
30/11/1875
10/12/1912

Charles Percy Grice (born at Wharehine)
Emily Pook
Belle Marsh

Friends and Supporters of 'Albertland Heritage Museum' birthdays.

It appears that this time of the year was a truly joyous occasion for many families with many of our volunteers and supporters celebrating birthdays this month. For some of you important milestones have also been reached, with a 70th, 80th and 90th in our midst. A big 'Congratulations' if you are celebrating one of these!



Belle Marsh with midwife
Mrs Ruth Witheford



We also cannot forget the lovely Anne Shepherd who will also be 99 years old on Christmas Day. Anne lives in the Heritage Rest Home here in Wellsford and is a descendant of the Witheford family and an Albertlander.

A big 'Happy Birthday' to everyone celebrating their birthday this month and anyone that we may have missed.

Don't forget if you would like to be included in our monthly birthday list please email us at albertlandmuseum@gmail.com

30th November
12th December
16th December
17th December
24th December
25th December

Terry Reid
Pauline Stables
Paul Allen
Jill Earley
Ivan Tomas
Ann Shepherd

Join us in Welcoming Our Newest Committee Member!

Kevin Gallagher joined the Museum Committee at the AGM held on the 24th September. He has been a volunteer since 17th August 2022.

Kevin has lived on the family farm in Tauhoa for most of his life. He attended Tauhoa School and Rodney College, and he graduated with a B.A. in History at the University of Auckland in 1976.

He is descended from a family which joined the Albertland Association, and which came to New Zealand on the "Caduceus" in 1865. However, they joined the Chalmerston Association and started farming in Tauhoa in 1870.

Kevin is married to Ros who has been nursing with Coast-to-Coast Healthcare for 28 years. Their children are Erin (Mrs Reilly) and Paul.

We welcome Kevin to his new role as a member of our committee



Christmas Service at Port Albert Church 10th December 2023

As the year comes to a close, the final service was held at the 'Little Church on the Hill' in Port Albert. Welcoming both familiar faces and new attendees, the congregation settled into their seats. The diligent committee, though small in number, ensured the church was adorned for this special occasion. A beautifully decorated Christmas tree stood in the foyer, and a vibrant wall hanging featuring a 'special' story, proudly displayed at the church's forefront.



Congregation gathering before Service by Lynette Gubb

The heartwarming service unfolded with engaging tales recounted by members of the congregation, delving into the significance behind traditions such as candy canes and the story of St. Nick. Carefully curated hymns and Christmas carols, thoughtfully selected beforehand by members of the congregation, filled the air with festive melodies accompanied by musicians Margaret Neal and Brian Becroft. Colin Smith, a respected local board member, graced the service with his presence, extending his support to the dedicated organisers.



Iris and Ann Shepherd waiting for service to begin

Times, Papers Past, dated 3rd January 1935, detailing special services held at the very same church nearly 90 years ago. The fact that similar special services were conducted almost a century ago underscores the timeless nature of the 'Little Church on the Hill,' carrying forward its legacy through generations and honouring its integral role within the community across the years.

It is heartening to witness the continuity of cherished traditions over time, a testament to the unwavering commitment and hard work of individuals like Lynette Gubb, Jenny Lambert, Shirley Busbridge, Vicky Sheriff, and Pat Bennett. Their dedication shines through in preserving the essence of the 'Little Church on the Hill' and ensuring its enduring significance within the community.

It's truly heartening to come across this report from the Rodney and Otamatea

"Special services were held at the Port Albert Methodist Church during the Christmas period with special singing. On the Sunday afternoon the service was taken by the Rev. I.M. Raynor, and a trio was sung by Mrs Raynor, Miss Trafford and Mr. W. Trafford. A number of Christmas hymns were sung by the congregation. There was a very large attendance at the service on Sunday evening, 23rd December., there being a large number of members of the local Druid's lodge present, and special reference was made to the work of friendly societies. A feature of the music was a number of items from Handel's "Messiah," the soloists being Mrs Raynor, Miss E. Busbridge and Mr. W. Trafford. A number of the choruses were rendered by a gramophone. As the musical items occupied a good deal of time, a brief address was given by the Rev. I.M. Raynor. On Christmas Day a service was held in the evening, the service being conducted by the Rev. Le Binet, of Glen Eden, who was for many years a Methodist missionary in the Solomon Islands."

All are cordially invited to attend as services resume on the 2nd Sunday of each month (1.30 pm), starting from February 2024. Save the dates and join us for a delightful afternoon filled with fellowship, uplifting moments, and a chance to reconnect. It's an opportunity to gather, share in the warmth of community, and create cherished memories together. The committee look forward to welcoming you for these special gatherings



Enjoying Afternoon Tea

“Powering Progress: Electrifying Port Albert’s Future”

Once in a while, life hands you an opportunity that simply sizzles with excitement. Imagine recently when our committee stumbled upon an absolute gem – a chance to immerse ourselves in an ‘Oral History Workshop’ led by Lynnette Shum from the prestigious Alexander Turnbull Library.

Oral history is an enthralling method that breathes life into the past through the recounting of personal experiences, acts as a beacon for those whose voices have often been lost in the annals of history. It serves as a vessel through which history flows for the everyday heroes, the unsung heroes who witnessed monumental events like the Great Depression or even more recent events such as the Covid 19 Pandemic. Their reflections are unfiltered and raw and hold the power to illuminate untold facets of our shared past.

Eager to seize this golden opportunity, two of our volunteers dove headfirst into this workshop. Across two days of exhilarating exploration, they didn’t just learn the art of capturing an interview – they unravelled the intricate tapestry of legalities, discovering the crucial documentation and preservation techniques required to safeguard these invaluable accounts. This knowledge is a treasure trove, a priceless gift for Wellsford and its neighbouring districts, brimming with individuals eager to unearth and share the rich tapestry of our local history.

As the workshop concluded on Day One, and homework beckoned – a captivating interview unfolded with a 92-year-old local, retelling tales of her childhood days at Port Albert. The narrative took an unexpected turn when an old photograph emerged which established that the hot chocolate served to the children in chipped mugs was not boiled on a fire as first thought but instead was heated by more modern methods from power lines snaking toward the school, sparking a riveting inquiry into when electricity truly graced the district of Port Albert and surround districts.

Port Albert underwent a profound transformation alongside numerous other districts when electricity was introduced. Before the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the district relied heavily on gas lamps, traditional cooking methods using coal ranges, and manual labour such as hand milking cows. The advent of electricity marked a significant turning point in the town’s progress. The introduction of power lines and related infrastructure revolutionised daily life, facilitating the adoption of electrical appliances and the emergence of new industries. This brought about heightened productivity, efficiency, and improved comfort for the residents.

On June 21, 1929, a pivotal meeting between the Rodney County Council and Warkworth Town Board took place to explore the possibility of accessing power from the Government Line if it were to extend through Rodney County. A committee of six was formed to gather information on installation costs, power requirements for a viable line, and the potential number of consumers. It was envisioned that both a line from Kaipara Flats to Leigh and another from Wellsford to Port Albert would attract enough consumers to justify installation. The progress in road development also indicated the likelihood of more milking plants requiring power. By August 1936, despite challenging weather conditions, significant headway was made by the North Auckland Electric Power Board in electrifying the Paparoa, Matakohē, and western districts. Power poles had reached as far as Dargaville, a distance of 37 miles from the Mareretu sub-station, progressing as planned.

Concurrently, work was advancing on the line near Wellsford, and a new workmen's camp had been established at Te Hana. Subsequently, workmen from Kaipara Flats shifted to Brynderwyn Valley, near Maungaturoto. Almost a year later, steady progress was reported by the Waitemata Electric Power Board in bringing power to Wellsford. By November 5, 1937, gangs of workers were erecting power poles in the township, connecting wires to existing lines at Wayby, with expectations of power being available in Wellsford by month's end. Once Wellsford was connected, plans began to extend poles and transmission lines to Port Albert and Te Hana. In January 1938, after consistent progress, residents eagerly anticipated the activation of power, with workers steadily advancing on Wellsford Valley Road and Port Albert Road. By March, power had been switched on as far as Mr. E.R. Becroft's farm, and poles were erected up to the hall and school.

Completion of the reticulation work at Te Hana would prompt the work gangs in the district to transfer to Port Albert to install additional branch lines. Numerous houses were wired in anticipation of receiving power. As of April 1938, more consumers were steadily connecting to the Waitemata Electric Power Board's system. The increasing number of farms awaiting connection signalled the need for an additional power line.



PA School Photo, showing Power Transformer : c 1939



1941 : Buying a fridge

However, a temporary power outage on Sunday, July 31, 1938, brought back the use of candles and milking the cows by hand, albeit briefly.

Kaiwaka was officially powered on in late August 1939, commemorated by a grand dance. Initially, the hall was illuminated solely by a benzine lantern until the formal introduction of guests at 9 pm. During the event, Cr. W. Littin, secretary of the Hall society, introduced esteemed guests who addressed the gathering, culminating in Mrs. Rodney Coates pressing the switch that transitioned the district away from

candlelight and oil lamps. The evening evolved into a jubilant celebration.

Unfortunately, neighbouring districts to the east of Wellsford, including Leigh, Pakiri, Pakiri Block, Whangaripo, Mangawhai and Tomarata, did not experience the luxury of electricity until after 1944.

Raffle

Capturing oral history also demands top-notch equipment – sophisticated digital recorders, each carrying a price tag of approximately \$1500.

It is a substantial investment, especially for the Albertland Heritage Museum, relying heavily on income from visitors and research fees. But fear not! To turn this dream into reality, we are stirring up the holiday spirit with a Christmas Raffle! Tickets will be available for a 'Christmas Grocery hamper' at the museum from December 12th to December 21st, when the draw will take place. We are asking for your support to be a part of this captivating endeavour to preserve our towns vibrant history

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/>



Minniesdale Chapel

Shegadeen Road, Wharehine

ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

Mr Phil van der Mespel will be taking this service in our historic Chapel on Sunday 7th January 2024 at 1.30 pm.

The service will be followed by afternoon tea at the Wharehine Hall. Please 'bring a plate'.

All welcome.



Christmas Day 1903 at Halfpenny's in Wharehine.
Marsh, Halfpenny and Moffatt families

A touching excerpt from a poem written by Edward (Ted Witheford) who arrived in New Zealand on the Gertrude in 1863. This is a touching explanation of the differences between living in New Zealand and their homeland of England.

And our hearts go out with the earnest wish
That nature were always as gracious as this
With each generous measure of good from her stores
That blesses our Christmas day out of doors
Some think it far better the beaches to roam
Than sit down to beef and plum pudding at home
While others still their bliss will seek
In private picnics down the creek

Some others keep the day in solemn state
And scarcely pass outside the garden gate
These home reunions how they do adore them
As their forefathers mostly did before them
To gather in far and wide
Their kith and kin for Christmastide
The old folks sit 'neath the shade of the trees
And smile as young voices are borne on the breeze

Last but not least of the Christmas joys
Is the Christmas tree laden with candles and toys
Where the eye rests on beauty wherever it turns
In room all resplendent with nikaus and ferns
Then in order to help their enjoyment along
Some finish the evening with music and song
Scarcely heeding clocks whose timely warning
Give out it must be nearly morning
And folks must take their several ways
To meet perhaps some other day
Wishing each other as I do here
A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Message from the Editor

As we wrap up this year, let's take a moment to embrace the journey filled with triumphs and challenges that shaped the Albertland Heritage Museum during the year.

The year commenced on a promising note with the election of our new committee in late 2022. Their boundless creativity and passion guided us through Anzac Day and the celebrations of May 29th, a real testament to resilience amidst the trials of what some deemed the most challenging summer in memory. Storms and cyclones left our district and roads in disarray, yet they gifted us a pause, echoing the simpler times of yesteryears when five days without power was a normality.

A night of immense generosity unfolded as 'Support Your Local' (Melissa Wallace and Tania Hamilton) hosted a special fundraising dinner in our honour. Their unwavering support resulted in a substantial contribution toward our future aspirations, including the dream of expanding our museum. Our association with the Northland Museums Association also blossomed when a grant allowed for the employment of two invaluable professionals – an educator and a conservator. Their guidance empowered our volunteers with insights and skills previously beyond our reach, nurturing a newfound readiness to embrace the challenges posed by the evolving new Schools Education curriculum.

Our volunteers, the heart and soul of this museum, remain our most treasured asset. Their unwavering dedication and selflessness illuminate our path, allowing us to share the rich tapestry of the 'Albertland' settlement and its profound significance.

The warmth of friendship and support from our cherished friends and patrons, like you, has been an immeasurable blessing. Your visits, feedback, and invaluable financial backing through yearly membership fees have been a lifeline for us, especially in times of limited funding. Your support fuels our mission to safeguard the history we hold dear.

Amidst all of the highs, we also faced some poignant lows of bidding farewell to cherished some cherished members of our community. Our hearts embrace and extend thoughts to the families and loved ones of those who departed this year. The Albertland Heritage Museum is not just a custodian of history but a keeper of family connections, honouring not only the descendants of the early pioneers but everyone who contributed to the fabric of our district.

As we enter the festive season, let's surround ourselves with warmth and joy, extending heartfelt wishes for a safe and Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with hope and happiness. We eagerly anticipate reuniting with you all in the coming year. If it's been a while since your last visit, mark your calendars for 2024.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. Your support and presence make every chapter of our story more vibrant and meaningful.

Warmest regards and blessings for a joyous holiday season,
Rose and Rob

