

# Albertland Heritage Museum Inc



Port Albert from across the River

## Newsletter - August 2024

*O p e n  
H o u r s*

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

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### *Editors Message*

As winter gradually fades and the promise of spring brings longer days, I'm excited about the opportunity to fit more into my schedule. As a long-time calf rearer, my days are quite busy from July through December, which sometimes impacts deadlines for newsletters. My apologies for the lack of last month's edition, but I hope you enjoy this latest one for August.

The museum is buzzing with activity, with upcoming visits from local schools and a garden group. If you're interested in bringing a group from your organization for a visit, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Our AGM is coming up on September 22nd. Everyone is welcome to join us, but please RSVP if you plan to attend.

Looking ahead to next year, we have some exciting events in the pipeline. Stay tuned for more details and updates.

Happy reading!

*Rose and Rob*

## Visitor Russell Armitage with friend Professor Peter Lineham

It was such a pleasure to welcome Russell Armitage to our museum on July 19th, 2024. Russell is busily planning a Gittos Reunion weekend for March 2025, inspired by our current exhibition, "Mission on the Kaipara – William and Marianne Gittos." We're thrilled to be assisting Russell with his preparations, and we're looking forward to sharing more details in upcoming newsletters.

To our delight, Russell also brought along his friend, Professor Emeritus Peter Lineham, a retired History Professor with a specialty in Religion from Massey University. What a wonderful surprise!

To find out more about Professor Emeritus Peter Lineham please visit

[https://nz.video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?](https://nz.video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?ei=UTF-8&p=professor+peter+lineham&type=E210US792G0#id=1&vid=d95110d1f4fc9b5a405efc04bf9036c4&action=click)

[ei=UTF-8&p=professor+peter+lineham&type=E210US792G0#id=1&vid=d95110d1f4fc9b5a405efc04bf9036c4&action=click](https://nz.video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?ei=UTF-8&p=professor+peter+lineham&type=E210US792G0#id=1&vid=d95110d1f4fc9b5a405efc04bf9036c4&action=click)



## EDITOR'S PICK

### *William Edwin Oldfield*

While researching for a history column for our local paper, I was struck by the number of beautiful dogs captured in the photographs of our early settlers. Among these images, one stood out as particularly special: a photo of Mr. W. Oldfield with his loyal dog, taken in 1912. This image, so full of character, led me to delve deeper, and I believe this Mr. Oldfield to be none other than William Edwin Oldfield.

William Edwin Oldfield was born in Bromley, Middlesex, in 1858 and made the long journey to New Zealand with his parents, William George Oldfield and Frances Elizabeth Oldfield (née Brown), to settle in Albertland. Records show that seven members of the Oldfield family sailed on board the Matilda Wattenbach in 1862, William George Oldfield and his wife Frances Elizabeth (nee Brown) and their children, Frances E. Oldfield (born 1854), Frank Obed Oldfield (born 1856), William Edwin Oldfield (born 1858) and Eliza Oldfield (born 1860). There is also an Annie on the passenger list which would account for the seven members of the family.



William Edwin Oldfield : 2004-2-98-1503 Harold Marsh

The Oldfields made their home on a farm in Hoteo North, which they named Piedmont. The family endured the loss of their father in 1892, just one year after William Edwin married Annie Elizabeth Western at Port Albert. By 1912, William Edwin was 54 years old, and this photograph of him with his dog captures a moment of quiet companionship between a man and his best friend. It's more than just a photo; it's a timeless snapshot of a life well-lived, filled with the bonds of family and the simple joys of rural life in early New Zealand.

You can find the latest Mahurangi Matters History Column by searching:-

<https://www.localmatters.co.nz/profile/rose-reid/>

## Rodney Museums Association Bi-Annual Meeting

It was such a delight to host our fellow museums from the Rodney Museums Association Group on the 19th of August, 2024. We had a full house, with museums joining us from as far south as Helensville and Silverdale, all the way up to Te Hana Te Ao Marama in the north. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase our museum, hear how others are doing, and enjoy a fantastic lunch prepared by our amazing volunteers. All in all, a truly successful day!



Members in attendance at the RMA Meeting

### *Links to Rodney Museums:-*

- Helensville Museum - <https://museum.teawarora.nz/wp/>
- Helensville Railway Museum - <https://www.helensvillerrail.org.nz/about.php>
- Silverdale Pioneer Museum - <https://www.silverdalemuseum.org.nz/>
- Puhi Museum - <http://puhoiheritagemuseum.co.nz/>
- Couldrey House - <https://couldreyhouse.org.nz/historic/>
- Warkworth Museum - <https://warkworthmuseum.co.nz/>
- Te Hana Te Ao Marama - <http://www.tehana.co.nz/>

# Albertland Heritage Museum

# AGM

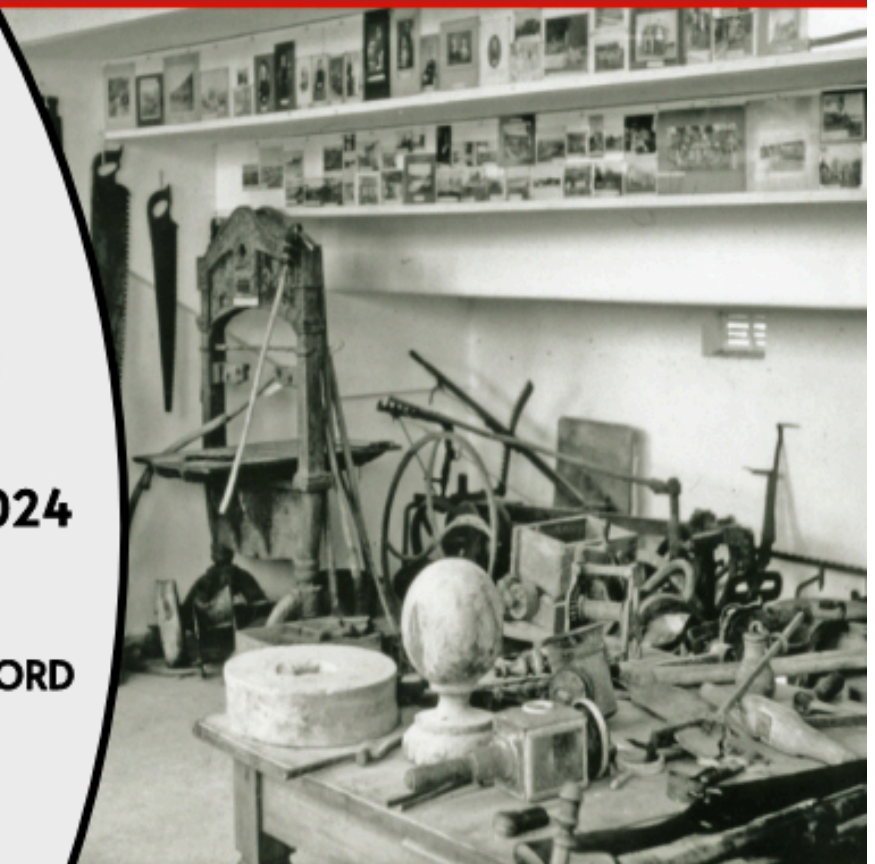
**Come and Join Us**

**On Sunday, 22nd SEPT 2024  
@ 1.00 PM**

**TO BE HELD AT THE RSA WELLSFORD**

**1 OLYMPUS ROAD  
WELLSFORD**

You are welcome to join  
us afterwards for  
afternoon tea



**EVERYONE WELCOME**

**Our Guest Speaker**

*Dr Jason Smith*

*Museum Director at Kauri Museum  
and Albertland descendant*



Please RSVP to Museum Secretary or  
contact us for more information



**09 423 8181**



**albertlandmuseum@gmail.com**

# *A Step Back InTime - Wellsford - 6 April 1961*



*In Memory of*

*Linda Ngaio Casci*

09/02/1956 – 10/08/2024

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the passing of Linda Casci on August 10th, 2024. Linda was the beloved wife of Paul and a devoted mother to her four daughters, Rachelle, Amanda, Taryn, and Liana, and more recently, a doting grandmother to her grandson. Linda's family will feel the profound loss of her kind and loving presence, as will the close-knit community she dedicated so much of her time and heart to. She carried forward the legacy of her grandfather Cyril and father Ted Halfpenny with great care and devotion.

Linda had recently returned to the museum, contributing to our School history program and generously sharing her wealth of knowledge as a historian. Her dedication, warmth, and passion for our community will be deeply missed. Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences go out to her family during this difficult time.



## Seven-a-Side Tournament in Port Albert, 1929

In 1929, the Port Albert Recreation Ground was renowned for having the finest all-weather field in the country. Its charm was enhanced by Roy Becroft's packing shed, which not only served as a changing room but also doubled as a makeshift grandstand. The shed, with its abundant supply of apples, kept players well-fueled throughout the matches, and the ease of hopping over a ditch to the field added to its allure.

Given these exceptional amenities, it's no surprise that the Rodney Union chose Port Albert to host a grand Seven-a-Side Tournament that year. The preparations began in May, with the Union contributing £1-5-0 for afternoon tea. Mrs. Roy Becroft and the local hockey girls volunteered their time, while Ray Gubb generously provided milk. A joint committee from the Hockey and Football clubs also organized a dance for the tournament night, June 3rd.

Teams from Matakana, Warkworth, Omaha, and Kaipara Flats competed against those from Port Albert, United, Wellsford, and Tauhoa. The fierce competition saw Port Albert emerge as the champion. A photograph from the event shows players in white jerseys with "W.R.R.U." (West Rodney Rugby Union) across their knees, while some red and black striped jerseys featured open necks and white collars, reflecting ongoing changes to the club uniform.

The tournament dance proved financially successful, with both the football and hockey clubs making a profit of £4 each, thanks to free music and supper. It was truly a golden era for local sports.

Visit our museum to explore our local rugby history display, including the red and black velvet cap purchased in 1909 from Cox's in Auckland. This cap, marked "O.R.U. 1909," was donated by Mrs. Bob Heywood and was proudly worn by notable players such as Lionel Littin, Cecil Booth, Archie and Harold Becroft, George Brown, and Frank Palmer.



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Seven-A-Side Tournament 1929

## Unwelcome Visitors:

A huge thank you to Sian from Auckland Zoo for making the trip up to our museum on Friday, 2nd August 2024, to share her expertise on pest control management. This is a crucial topic for museums, as pests lurking in dark corners can pose serious threats to our collections. For example, borer can damage wooden items like pianos and furniture, while moths could wreak havoc on our textile and fabric collections—nobody wants to see garments full of holes! Our paper-based archives are also vulnerable to silverfish, and of course, cockroaches are always unwelcome guests.

Thankfully, we were pleased to find very little evidence of these critters in our collections, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our team in cleaning newly acquired items and, when necessary, freezing them to eliminate any infestations. Sian worked closely with our curators, helping to strategically place traps throughout the museum and providing a detailed spreadsheet of their locations. We are incredibly grateful to Sian for spending her time with us and teaching us how to identify, eliminate, and monitor pests to protect our valuable collections.



Rose

Jenny

Sian

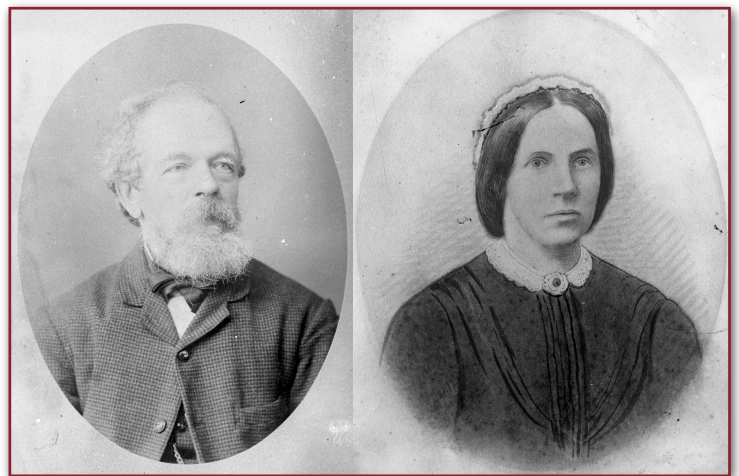
## From Port Albert to Portland:

### *The Adventurous Love Story of William Day and Elizabeth Cray*

On July 11th, 1866, Port Albert buzzed with excitement as Rev. William Gittos officiated a special wedding. The groom, 24-year-old William Walter Day, had journeyed far from his roots in Walsall, Staffordshire, England, where his father, John Day Esq., was a surgeon. Born on June 2nd, 1842, young William had embarked on a life of adventure, arriving in New Zealand at the age of 18 aboard the 'Nugget' from Woolwich as a Private in the 65th Regiment.

William's regiment, the 65th (2nd Yorkshire, North Riding), was steeped in history. They had fought in the first American war and against the French in the West Indies. In 1803, they were sent to the East Indies and Ceylon, enduring gruelling service until 1822 when they returned to England, bearing the Royal Tiger as a mark of their valour. They later served in the West Indies and Canada before arriving in New Zealand in 1846. By the time William joined them, the regiment was entrenched in New Zealand's history, and as the regiment's final companies prepared to leave for England in October 1865, many members like William chose to settle in this new land.

William, aged 24, had met Elizabeth Wheeler Cray, the eldest daughter of Charles Doudney Cray, a tea dealer from Southampton, Hampshire, and his wife, Margaret Cray (née Wheeler). The Crays had arrived at the Albertland settlement aboard the Hanover in 1862, along with their seven children. Charles took charge of the Patoka Point store, initially established for the settlers by William Brame, the settlement organiser. Margaret, fluent in Te Reo, once calmed a potentially dangerous situation when troublemakers from Rotorua threatened the peace. Eventually, the Crays bought land in Wharehine and opened a store there.



Charles and Margaret Cray

With no picture of their wedding, we can only imagine the dress that Elizabeth wore on her wedding day. In the mid-1800s, bridal fashion underwent a significant transformation as the practice of wearing white wedding dresses became popular, thanks largely to Queen Victoria's marriage to Prince Albert in 1840. Before this, wedding dresses were simply the best dress a woman owned, and colours varied widely. However, Queen Victoria's choice of a white gown, adorned with lace, set a new standard for bridal attire that symbolized purity, wealth, and social status. This trend quickly spread, including to New Zealand, where colonists followed British customs closely.



Home of the Cray's

Throughout the late 1800s, wedding gowns evolved to reflect the prevailing fashion trends of the day. Dresses were characterized by high necklines, tight, structured bodices, and long, full skirts supported by petticoats or crinolines. The invention of the sewing machine in the mid-19th century revolutionized dressmaking, allowing brides or their family members to create intricate gowns at home, while those with means often hired professional dressmakers or purchased gowns from department stores. By the 1890s, wedding dresses became

more elaborate, often featuring extensive use of lace, flounces, and decorative trims. Corsets created the desired hourglass silhouette, with the bodices typically featuring 'wedding band' collars that sat high and snug on the neck. Sleeves grew larger throughout the decade, ballooning into 'leg-of-mutton' shapes that added a dramatic flair to the ensemble. The overall look was one of opulence and formality, with every detail—from the rich fabrics to the ornate embellishments—reflecting the bride's status and the importance of the occasion.

After their wedding, William and Elizabeth's love story blossomed against the vibrant backdrop of Port Albert, and while the couple began their family in New Zealand they soon set their sights on America, where their family grew to an impressive 15 children. Elizabeth passed away in Portland, Oregon, in 1907 at the age of 58, and William followed her in 1916 at the age of 74.

These two early settlers crossed oceans and borders, carving out new lives in distant lands. For more on the 65th Regiment's time in New Zealand, one can dive into the rich archives of Papers Past, particularly the Wellington Independent, Volume XX, Issue 2285, dated November 16, 1865. William and Elizabeth's journey, from a small ceremony at Port Albert to a bustling life in America, describes the adventures of a bygone era, filled with courage, love, and a touch of adventure.

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## We Need Your Help!

Albertland Heritage Museum, was established on May 29th, 1962, to proudly showcase a rich collection dedicated to the Albertland settlement. Our volunteers tirelessly devote countless hours to caring for the collection and welcoming visitors.

However, a frequent comment we receive is about how cold the museum can be, especially during this past winter, which has been particularly harsh on both visitors and volunteers.

With rising power bills, we are actively exploring more efficient ways to heat our spaces, such as installing an air conditioning system. However, to make this a reality, we need funding not only for the installation but also for the ongoing operational costs.

We are currently pursuing various funding options, but if you think you can assist us in any way, we would be grateful to hear from you.

Your support would make a big difference in creating a warmer and more welcoming environment for everyone at the museum.



## Birthdays in July and August: The (Very) Quiet Season!

Well, folks, July and August are so quiet on the birthday front at the museum that you could hear a pin drop! But not completely – because for one of our youngest volunteers, Lockie Reid, he turned the big 1-1 on July 14<sup>th</sup>!

Lockie, a proud Cancer, shares his star sign with the late Lyn Johnston, our much-loved former Museum Secretary (and a whole lot more). Cancers are ruled by the moon, symbolised by the Crab, and tend to be creative souls who love painting, writing, or even just diving into a good book.

They are emotional, loyal to a fault, and will go to the ends of the earth for the people they care about. They have a soft spot for rubies and are partial to orchids and white roses. If you knew Lyn, you would possibly say, 'Yep, that was her to a tee!'

As for August? Well, no birthdays to report, but if you know someone who should be on our list, don't be shy – drop us a line!

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# Albertland Heritage Museum

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HARDSHIP  
WATTENBACH  
MINNIESDALE  
PATOKA  
ALBERTLAND  
BOATS  
MILES  
GERTRUDE  
TRAGEDY  
COURAGE  
FAMILIES  
FORTITUDE  
COMMUNITY  
STRENGTH  
HORSES  
MATILDA  
DR BELL  
GITTO  
EDGER  
BRAME  
ORCHARDS  
SETTLERS  
MUD

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/7425315/>