

# Albertland Heritage Museum Inc



Patron:  
Mr Richard Te Haara



## Newsletter - March 2025

### Open Hours

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

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Picture at the heading of this newsletter  
2004-2-98-484

View west (early 1900s) from Minniesdale Chapel looking towards Atiu Point. Minniesdale was built in 1867, the framework and coloured glass windows of this Chapel were bought out from England by the Rev. E.S. Brookes (Snr) of Nottingham.

#### Editors Message:

As the autumn leaves fall to the ground and the mornings start to get chilly, I look forward to cooler days and hopefully a little rain. A report on the 6 o'clock news that it has now been five years since we were plunged into our first Covid-19 lockdown also stirred many memories for me, and I am sure it is the same for everyone else to. How things have changed since those scary days of Covid and to read in our 'Century Apart' section that 100 years ago New Zealand was in the grips of a Polio epidemic is also quite chilling.

After two years of planning we are getting awfully close to hosting the NZ History Conference between 17-18th May with attendees from all over New Zealand. We have a busy programme organised and have partnered with Te Hana Te Ao Marama (<http://www.tehana.co.nz/>) to host some of the special events organised. This year we will not be having a separate event for our 29th of May celebrations but will be instead including those celebrations as part of this special weekend. In our April newsletter we will be giving details of activities that our friends and supporters can also take part in to make this weekend a great event. Thank you, everyone, for paying your membership fees which were due January 1st! If you haven't yet, there's still time to do so – every little bit helps!

*Rose and Rob*

## *Settler Spotlight: Emily Marian Edger and the Journey to a New Life in 1860s New Zealand*

Emily Marian Edger was a member of the distinguished Edger family and a remarkably talented musician. Born in 1850 in Kimbolton, Herefordshire, England, she was the eldest daughter of Reverend Samuel Edger and his wife, Louisa Harwood. In 1862, at the age of 12, Emily emigrated to New Zealand with her family as part of the Albertland settlement.

In 1866, recognizing her natural musical talent, Emily left Albertland to receive formal training for her sweet, pure mezzo-soprano voice. She became one of the earliest members of the Auckland Choral Society, quickly rising to the role of soloist. Demonstrating her exceptional abilities, she returned to London in 1873—eleven years after arriving in New Zealand—to

study at the Royal Academy of Music for two years, chaperoned by her brother, Judge Edger. Following her marriage to William Frederick Judson in 1879, she became one of Auckland's most esteemed music teachers, a position she held for nearly twenty years. In 1891, she took her only daughter, Dora Judson, a well-known pianist, to train at the Conservatorium-am-Main in Europe.

Beyond her musical career, Emily played a significant role in education and women's welfare. She spent six years overseeing one of the women's hostels affiliated with the Welsh University at Aberystwyth. Returning to Auckland in 1899, she became a dedicated supporter of the Theosophical Society and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She later spent nine years in Nelson, where her daughter held a position at the Nelson School of Music. In 1904, Emily travelled to India, working as an editor in Benares for the Theosophical Society for five years. On a second trip to India, she and her daughter visited Emily's youngest sister, Lilian, who was then residing in Benares. Emily finally settled in Auckland with her daughter in 1921.

Emily's husband, William Frederick—known as Fred—was a remarkable figure in his own right. He purchased land at Nihotupu, on the right-hand side of Piha Road, and came from a family deeply rooted in music, intellect, and progressive values. Emily and Fred were first cousins, and after moving to Auckland, Fred worked as a pharmacist. Both were actively involved in the temperance movement and the Anti-Poverty League. As dedicated Theosophists, they embraced a spiritual philosophy that blended Eastern and Western beliefs, including reincarnation and universal brotherhood.

In the early years at Nihotupu, Fred was assisted by his nephew, Stanley Judson, who later became famous for his bravery in World War I, earning a Victoria Cross. Fred himself was slightly eccentric and had an unusual habit of digging holes into banks and sitting in them.

In 1905, Fred's home and 361 acres of land were taken by an Act of Parliament to support Auckland's growing water supply. Forced to relocate, he moved to the junction of Scenic Drive and Piha Road, where he built the Waiatarua Boarding House. The name 'Waiatarua,' suggested by one of the workers, meant 'Song of Two Waters'—a tribute to the breathtaking views of both harbours. The boarding house, with its 30 rooms and a welcoming dining room became a stop-over for weary travellers and a health resort for Aucklanders looking for a place of retreat. Another building on the property, "The Bungalow," nestled in bush, became a night time attraction where visitors could marvel at glow-worms.

Fred's nephew, Stanley, managed the boarding house for a time, but when he left for war, his wife, Ethel, took over, raising their children there while they attended Oratia School. Fred later retired to a home beside the boarding house, where he lived until his passing in 1931. He left the property to his daughter, Dora, who



Mrs Marian Edger and Mr Frederick Judson 2004.2.93.6

eventually sold it in 1938 for development.

Emily came from an exceptionally accomplished family. Her siblings included Kate Milligan, Louisa Florence, Gertrude Evangeline, Herbert Frank, and Margaret Lilian Florence. The five sisters—Emily, Kate, Louisa, Gertrude, and Lilian—were primarily educated by their father, Reverend Samuel Edger. Kate made history in 1877 as the first woman in New Zealand to graduate and the first in the British Empire to earn a Bachelor of Arts, specialising in Latin and Mathematics.

Emily's niece, Geraldine Hemus, daughter of her sister Gertrude, followed in the family's pioneering footsteps, becoming the third woman in New Zealand to qualify as a barrister and solicitor. Lilian Edger, another of Emily's remarkable sisters, also earned a university degree. In 1888, she established Ponsonby College, a secondary school for girls. By the 1890s, she had become a prominent lecturer in Auckland, speaking on topics such as 'practical theosophy' and 'karma and reincarnation.' In 1899, she embarked on an 18-month lecture tour across India and Australia before settling in Benares, India. There, she taught, wrote extensively on theosophical subjects, and served as Principal of the Theosophical Girls' School. She was even entrusted with educating the two sons of the Maharaja of Darbhanga. After decades of dedication to education and spiritual thought, Lilian returned to New Zealand, passing away in 1941 at the age of 79.

Emily's legacy reached far beyond music and education. She was cherished for her kindness and unwavering generosity, leaving a lasting impression on all who knew her. But perhaps one of her most remarkable contributions was the set of townhouses she built at 203–209 Ponsonby Road, Auckland—an achievement that adds yet another fascinating chapter to her story.

Credit: Terraced Houses 203-209 Ponsonby Road 1977 (Auckland Libraries Kura Heritage Collections Online Creator Doyle, Philip).

Acknowledgement to: Papers Past, New Zealand Herald, Volume LXXII, 18 April 1935 and Waiatarua Boarding House – <https://waiatarua.org.nz/waiatarua-boarding-house/>



# The Curator's Chronicle

For the second year in a row, a group of our dedicated volunteers attended the Warkworth A & P Lifestyle Show on Saturday, 16th March. And what a stunning day it turned out to be—though incredibly hot! With that in mind, our chosen theme, “Wash Day,” was perfectly fitting, inspired by the iconic Harold Marsh photograph of Bess Farr helping her mother with the laundry in true settler style.

Packing up the car with all the essentials, we brought along an old tin wash tub, a washboard, Sunlight soap, a wooden clothes horse, and even a makeshift clothesline strung from one side of the gazebo to the other. Water—a precious commodity at the moment—was stored in several 20-litre containers, ensuring we had enough to recreate an authentic wash day experience. A few items of period clothing and other necessities were included to engage the children, but as it turned out, it was the adults who truly embraced the nostalgia. Conversations flowed about cloth nappies, long johns, handkerchiefs, flannel children's nighties, and stockings—everyday items from the past that are now rarely seen.



2004.2.96.40 Washing Day at Marsh's. Grace Marsh and Bessie,  
Camera Settings: 12' F8 1/8,  
Taken at The Opou



Sandra was a standout with her enthusiastic wash day demonstrations. Though it's possible the attraction had as much to do with cooling down in the soapy water as it did with reminiscing about traditional laundry techniques! Meanwhile, Peter drew a crowd of his own with the old gramophone, spinning classic tunes that had our neighbouring stallholders singing along. This particular gramophone is unique in that it allows volume control by opening or closing the doors underneath—open for louder, closed for softer. It was a wonderful piece of history that brought joy to many.

Our photo board showcasing the history of A & P Shows in both Wellsford and Warkworth was another highlight. Many attendees took great interest in the rich visual history we displayed, and we would love to remind everyone of the extensive photographic archives housed at the Albertland Heritage Museum. Our

collections feature the works of Harold Marsh, Cliff Grant, Don Worsnop, and many more. If you're searching for a particular piece of history, get in touch—we just might have what you're looking for!

Overall, the day was a fantastic success. We thoroughly enjoyed engaging with the large crowds passing through the gates, sharing stories, and celebrating the heritage of our community. We can't wait to do it all again next year – but would like to order a slightly cooler, partly cloudy day if possible!

Where there are A & P Shows, bustling crowds, and animals, the unexpected can always happen.



On March 20, 1960, during the Wellsford Agricultural and Pastoral Show, a dramatic incident unfolded when a horse bolted into a group of children sitting in front of parked cars. Thankfully, none of the children were injured, but the rider suffered a harrowing fall.

The horse, aptly named Anniversary, was competing in a saddle trotting race when it refused to round a bend at the southern end of the track. Instead, it charged straight towards the parked vehicles, sending spectators into a frenzy. The children scattered just in time, avoiding what could have been a disastrous collision.

The jockey, from Kaipara Flats, was thrown violently over the bonnet of a sleek American sedan before crashing headfirst through the rear window of a neighbouring car. Miraculously, he escaped with only minor abrasions on his back.

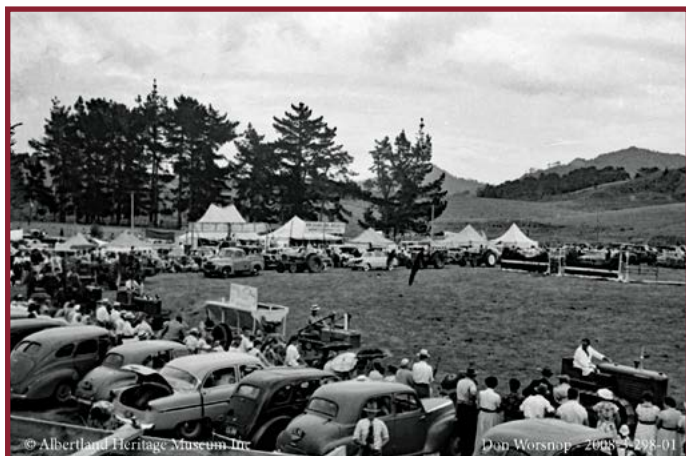
Meanwhile, Anniversary tumbled onto its back atop the sedan's bonnet before sliding to the ground. Despite the chaos, the horse was unharmed, leaving onlookers both stunned and relieved at the spectacle they had just witnessed.

Source: Papers Past, Press, Volume XCIX, Issue 29159, March 21, 1960, Page 10.

Photos 2008.3.172.03 (Don Worsnop) Wellsford Show (year unknown)



Photos 2008.3.298.01 (Don Worsnop) Warkworth A & P Show Feb 1955



## *Birthday Wishes*

Wishing all of our loyal supporters and volunteers a very Happy Birthday from the team at Albertland Heritage Museum!

**March** – Peter Buckton, Rob Lennon, Mikayla Journée, Grahame Henderson, Kevin Gallagher, Val Patridge, Val Martin, Owen Treadwell, Julie Cotton and Jenny Lambert!

## Visit to Mangawhai Museum

On a sunny Monday in early March, several members of our committee visited the Mangawhai Museum, where we were warmly welcomed by a wonderful visitor host. From the moment we stepped inside, we were captivated by the museum's engaging displays and rich storytelling. A huge well done to the Mangawhai team for the incredible effort that has gone into curating such an inspiring experience—we came away with plenty of ideas and a deeper appreciation for the art of museum storytelling. For me the highlight was the old tram/Bach full of items which housed many items in my own personal collection that I didn't think were old enough to belong in a museum!

Our day got better when we were invited into a large shed by volunteer Tony who gave a full account of the restoration project on the Daring which was recovered by the Daring Rescue Group on the 4th May 2021 and transported back to Mangawhai for restoration.

Full details of this amazing boat are available at [https://www.classicyachtcharitabletrust.org.nz/trust\\_boats.htm?boat\\_id=17](https://www.classicyachtcharitabletrust.org.nz/trust_boats.htm?boat_id=17)

To assist with this preservation of and bringing the stories of the Daring to life please donate either going to

<https://givealittle.co.nz/org/mangawhai-daring-trust> or direct debit by bank deposit to the Mangawhai Daring Trust bank account 12 3094 0278831 00 record Daring in particulars and your name in reference.

Tax receipts available by emailing your name and amount donated to [daringtrust@gmail.com](mailto:daringtrust@gmail.com).

A visit to this incredible museum is a must! Conveniently located next to the skateboard park, it also features a fantastic café. A great school holiday outing.

<https://www.mangawhai-museum.org.nz/visit-us>



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*Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower - Albert Canus*

# A Century Apart – Then & Now

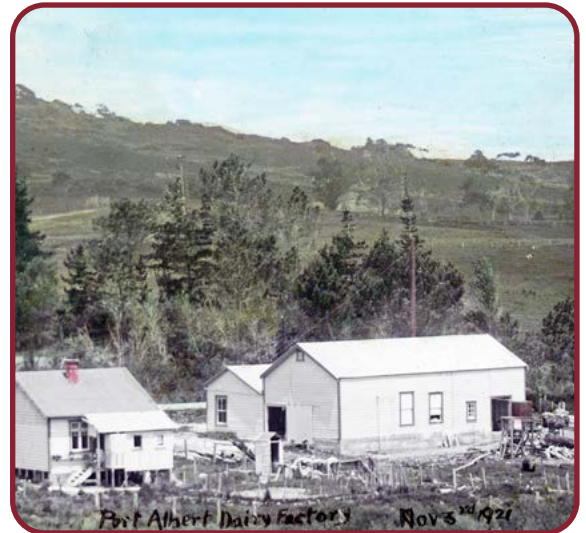
## Looking Back 100 years ...

Reports in Papers Past (Rodney and Otamatea Times, 4 March 1925) that the Wellsford Show would now abandon their show for this year due to the ongoing polio epidemic gripping the country. The Whangaripo Athletic Club also postponed their sports meeting until Easter Monday, 13th April hoping that by this time the Health Department's restrictions would be lifted. 1925 was the worst year for deaths from polio when 173 people died.

In 1925, dairy farming saw steady expansion in the Rodney County region, particularly around the Wellsford and Wayby stations. Expectations were high for the Port Albert butter factory, which was set to receive cream from farms stretching between Wellsford and the Kaipara Harbour. Production was projected to reach 150 tons, a 20-ton increase over the previous season.

With more dairy cows being added, further growth was anticipated for the following year. Meanwhile, cream from Wellsford and Wayby was transported by train to the Helensville factory. Improved farming practices, including the increased use of manure and green feed, allowed farmers to sustain larger herds through the dry summer months.

To counterbalance the financial strain caused by low butter-fat prices, many dairy farmers turned to pig farming, supplementing their income by raising pigs for market sale.



## 2004.2.2007.413 Port Albert Dairy Factory 3 November 1921

Wellsford saw the return of Dentist, Mr Vercoe, who was back by popular demand at his rooms in the boarding house on Wednesday, March 18th 1925, between 2 – 5 pm subject to the roads being passable by car!

## Today in the District .... 2025

A wonderful service was held this month at the Port Albert Methodist Church, with a fantastic turnout from our local community! If you haven't joined us yet, why not come along and experience it for yourself?

Our services are warm, welcoming, and informal, making them perfect for anyone looking to connect, reflect, and be part of something special. Plus, this historic community-owned heritage building relies on ongoing support to keep its legacy alive for future generations.

We'd love to see you there—everyone is welcome!

**The next Service will be held on Sunday 13th April at 1.30 pm.**

The second Port Albert Settlers' Market took place at the Port Albert Temperance Hall on Sunday, March 16th, with a wide variety of stallholders, some returning and some new and a fantastic turnout from the local community. The event was a great success, creating a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere for all who attended.

**The next Settlers' Market will be held on Sunday, April 20th 2025 (Easter Sunday).**

We need your help to continue to bring this market to the district and welcome any feedback to our email [portalbertmarkets@gmail.com](mailto:portalbertmarkets@gmail.com) or our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61572007720147>





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### **Wharehine Hall is available to hire for events and functions.**

Check out Facebook page:

Wharehine Community Hall

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=473686244792368&set=a.473686218125704>



### **The Wellsford RSA, 1 Olympus Road,**

great place for Friday night dinner! A great choice of meals and a huge salad bar for a reasonable price. Come along and join in – great atmosphere.

Check out Facebook page:  
Wellsford RSA inc.

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Wellsford-memorial-RSA-inc-100075853601977/>



### **Helping our community .... Wellsford Lions Club**

Check out Facebook page:

Wellsford Lions Club <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=281233064419430&set=a.281233027752767>

### **Port Albert Hall**

Port Albert Hall is available to hire for events and functions

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=409266471368108&set=a.409266451368110>



Don't forget if you have something to promote in our community to let us know.  
Contact Rose at [albertlandmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:albertlandmuseum@gmail.com)



*Atiu Creek is a remarkable gift of 843 hectares, generously donated to the Auckland Regional Council in 2005 by Pierre and Jackie Chatelanat.*

Officially opened on April 5, 2008, this stunning regional park offers unspoiled access to the Kaipara Harbour for walking, mountain biking, and picnicking, as well as hosting large events such as the recent Earthbeat Festival (March 19–23, 2025).

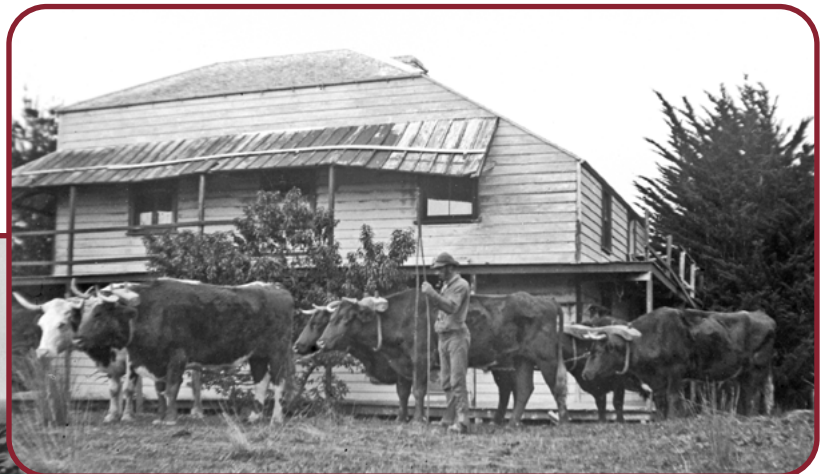
<https://earthbeatfestival.com/#:~:text=FESTIVAL%202025,the%20world%20grounded%20and%20inspired!>

### Historical Background

Atiu Creek was once part of a vast 25,000-acre property covering most of the Okahukura Peninsula. Purchased in 1876 by T. E. Fitzgerald, the estate was originally known as FitzGerald's Run, later shortened to "the Run."

### 2004-2-2007-1289 Handrawn Map of Okahukura

In 1912, the property was divided into two: Okahukura and Seaview. After World War II, the New Zealand Government took over Okahukura as a soldier rehabilitation settlement, while Atiu Creek Farm remained part of the northern section of the Seaview Estate.



2004-2-98-990 Frank Smith Stockman from Okahukura Feb 1902 outside Old Homestand at Fitzgerald's landing

2004-2-98-998 Believed to be an old Maori landmark at Awhiowhio. Fitzgeralds Landing. 9 May 1902

In 1916 a bungalow was built at Awhiowhio, but after only two years it was dismantled and the timbers were loaded onto a barge to be towed up the Oruawhoro River into Takahe Creek with the intention of rebuilding near the Boundary at the Wharehine end of the property. However, the launch owner found Takahe Creek very narrow and overgrown with mangroves so gave up on reaching the head of the creek and turned back, offloading the timber at a natural landing nearly a mile from the road. There the house was rebuilt and became known as Boundary House, even though it was not on the boundary! For many years it was occupied by shepherds working on 'Seaview' Station, finally being sold for removal when Pierre Chatlenat built his new home on the site.



2004-2-2007-840 Looking across Takahe Creek to the Boundary House – Seaview Station circa 1918

### **Pierre Chatelanat's Legacy**

Pierre Chatelanat, a young Swiss traveller, arrived in New Zealand in 1951 during the waterfront strike. After traveling north on a moped, he reached Wellsford in search of land and was directed westward. He discovered a scrub-covered peninsula opposite the Kaipara Harbour entrance and purchased it. In total, he

acquired 4,046 hectares of the Seaview Estate from Mr. and Mrs. Mackie.

Soon after, the government approached him and purchased 3,237 hectares (8,000 acres) of the property. The remaining 843 hectares, which he retained, became the foundation of Atiu Creek Farm. Over the next decade, Pierre dedicated himself to breaking in the land before departing to Rome to join the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. Despite his global career, he continued to visit the farm regularly, overseeing its transformation into a model estate. In 1998, he and his English-born wife, Jackie, retired there permanently. The Chatelanats had no children and lived a quiet life on the farm, making occasional trips into town for supplies. Passionate about the environment and the Kaipara Harbour, they ensured that future generations would be able to enjoy the landscapes they had nurtured. Their generosity in gifting Atiu Creek to the public is often compared to Sir John Logan Campbell's donation of Cornwall Park in 1901.

#### **The Park Today**

Situated on the Tapora Peninsula, Atiu Creek is protected by a QEII Trust open space covenant and continues to operate as a working farm. The park boasts extensive harbour frontage, large tracts of native forest, and wetlands, blending open spaces with spectacular views. Rich in both Māori and Pākehā history, it offers visitors a deep connection to the past.

At the official opening, guests could enjoy ranger-guided and self-guided walks, a shuttle bus loop to scenic lookouts, and historical exhibits featuring farm machinery. To mark the occasion, the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) arranged for a special train service from Auckland to Wellsford, with connecting buses to the park.

Leading up to the opening, a significant cultural event took place on March 8, when iwi and ARC representatives gathered to unveil a pou, symbolizing protection for past, present, and future generations. This was the third pou installed in the park, carved from local macrocarpa under the guidance of master carver Graeme Grace and his team from the Whakairo Raku Carving School. The pou represents the guardians of the land and sea, including Chief Horomona Karokina Te Arai (Solomon), native birds, the taniwha Pokopoko, and the waka Mahuhu. The modern protector, the QEII Trust, is also intricately woven into the carving's design.

One notable figure in the farm's history is Harold Marsh, who began working on the Run in 1897. Alongside other local men, he felled bush, built fences, sowed grass seed, and formed roads. In 1901, he purchased his first camera, documenting the region's development until his death in 1947. His photographic collection includes images of bushmen, gumdiggers, teamsters, cattlemen, and other workers, preserving an invaluable visual history of the area.

It is time to reflect on the seventeen years this park has been open and to honor the vision and generosity of Pierre and Jackie Chatelanat, whose gift of natural beauty, history, and recreation continues to be enjoyed by all.

Credit to Auckland Council Website - Atiu Creek 2025 <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/parks>



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### **The Tuirangi loading wool at Awhiowhio – December 1911, at the new wharf.**

Visit the Albertland Heritage Museum to see a model of the Tuirangi and other local trading boats, expertly crafted by Gordon Hendriksen of Port Albert.

