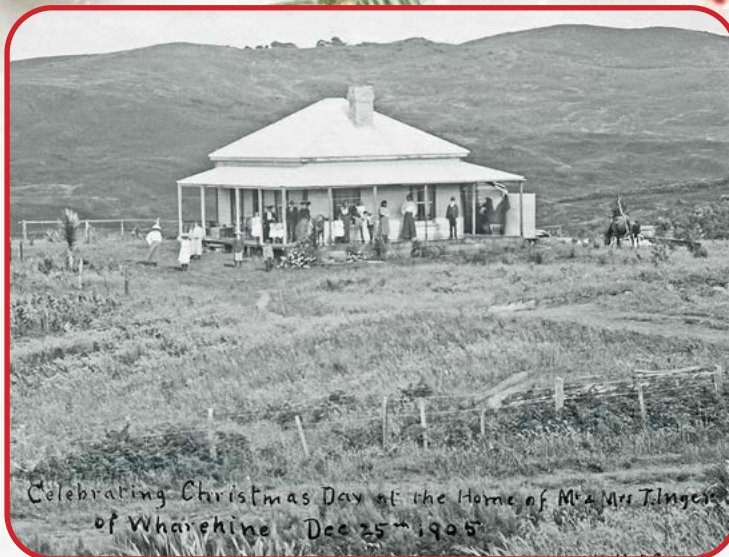


# Albertland Heritage Museum Inc



**Patron:**  
**Mr Richard Te Haara**



Celebrating  
Christmas Day at the  
home of Mr & Mrs T  
Inger of Wharehine  
Dec 25th 1905

## December 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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### Editors Message:

Every year we stare at the calendar in disbelief and mumble something along the lines of "where did that year go?" or "I can't believe it's Christmas" — and yet, here we are. The busyness of Christmas soon takes over: buying presents and food, and quietly worrying about whether you'll have everything you need for that special day. More often than not, it all works out just fine and everyone is happy.

This year, a significant factor for many of us is the cost of living — food, gifts, power and insurance all weigh a little heavier. For me personally, I treated myself this week to a leg of lamb from Pak 'n Save at just \$15.99/kg. Trust me, that will be a beautiful gift for my family to enjoy over the Christmas period.

Make your own memories, enjoy time with your family, and try not to get stressed (it really will all be fine!). If you're able, remember those who may be alone or without family during the holiday season and offer a little kindness.

Rob and I have very much enjoyed producing these newsletters for you throughout the year, and we look forward to returning once again in the New Year. Until then, have a safe and happy holiday season, everyone.

Warm regards,  
*Rose and Rob*



2004-2-96-121  
W H Marsh

## Wellsford Railway Opening 1909

### Further history of our 2026 Calendar photos

New Zealand Herald, Volume XLVI, Issue 13980, 9 February 1909, Page 6

The ceremony in connection with the opening of the Wellsford railway station is to take place on February 15, when a complimentary luncheon is to be tendered to a visiting Parliamentary party.

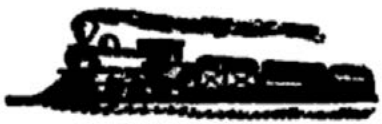
#### ALBERTAND SETTLEMENT.

New Zealand Herald, Volume XLVI, Issue 13981, 10 February 1909, Page 12

OPENING OF RAILWAY. All old Albertland Settlers or their Descendants are requested to kindly communicate with Mr. J. Becroft, Jervois Road, or Dr.

F. W. King, as early as possible, in order that arrangements may be made for attendance at the Opening of the North Auckland Railway to Wellsford on February 15

### Railways.



## NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS.

### OPENING OF LINE TO WELLSFORD.

Article image

**Holiday Excursion Tickets** will be issued from Auckland and intermediate stations to **Wellsford** on **MONDAY, 15th February**, available for return up to **WEDNESDAY, 17th February**.

A train will leave Auckland for **Wellsford** at 7.0 a.m. on **MONDAY, 15th February**, arriving **Wellsford** 12.30 p.m., and will return from **Wellsford** at 1.40 p.m., arriving Auckland 6.50 p.m.

**BY ORDER.**

## Quotation for December

“I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.”

– Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol



# Feedback Wellsford Vet Clinic

In our November 2025 newsletter, we briefly touched on the Wellsford Veterinary Club (page 7), which is currently undergoing some modifications. Since then, we have received some lovely feedback from Cushla Marsh, who kindly shared a personal memory of the Vet Club with us. With her permission, we're delighted to share Cushla's story with you today. If you have a personal memory that you would like us to pass on to the amazing team at Wellsford Vets we would love to hear from you. Thank you, Cushla for sharing this with us.



'Dear Editor

Your interesting article of the Wellsford Vet Clinic reminded me of the time I had to take "Billy" in for an operation.

Background...my parents Fred & Hinemoa McCarthy were amongst the first residents of the Wellsford Masonic Village in the mid 1970's. Sometime in the late 1970's they acquired a blue budgie they named Billy. They were devoted to this bird, he was allowed free flying time around their home, he had a special cover that went over his cage at night. In general, he was part of their family.

In 1984 my father became very ill and my sisters and I took turns to spend time with my parents to help out. During one of my visits, my father was very upset because Billy had a growth under one wing and he couldn't fly, so he asked me to take Billy to the vet.

To ease his concern, I contacted the vet clinic and explained the situation (and not expecting them to be able to do anything) and they suggested that I bring the bird in, which I did.

Yes, he did have a growth and the chances were that it may very well lead to Billy's demise. The vet was very understanding re my father's situation, she said that an operation was the only chance for Billy BUT she had never operated on a budgie before and was unsure if he would even survive the anesthetic. I assured her that Dad would rather she tried than leave Billy to suffer so she agreed to operate.

We went into another room with a large stainless steel table. I had to hold Billy on a little wee cloth on this big table while the vet placed a large mouthpiece about 15cm from Billy's head to 'knock him out'.

I left then, leaving the vet to do her best. I got a phone call later to say the operation had gone well Billy could come home.

Needless to say, my father (and mother) were so happy that Billy would be ok.

Unfortunately, my father passed away shortly after that episode, but Billy lived on with my mother and he was a real companion to her. He was her 'pretty boy' and they would breakfast together every morning. Billy had his own bowl and nibbled on a couple of dry cornflakes – yes, at the table - before he has his morning exercise flying around the unit.

Mum passed away on 4th October 1990 and Billy one week later.

Thanks to the Wellsford Vet Clinic for making such a difference to an elderly couples' life.

Cushla Marsh'

# The Curator's Chronicle

## The Earliest Story: Ted Halfpenny's Baby Book

What a delight to uncover this Baby Record book from 1921, belonging to Edward (Ted) Halfpenny.

Many of us have a childhood memory like this — small and well-worn, and devoted to a very small person: a much-loved baby. For generations, these books gave mothers a place to lovingly record a baby's birth, first smiles, illnesses, and those early moments that might otherwise have slipped quietly away.

By the early twentieth century, baby books had become increasingly popular. Some were given by department stores such as Milne & Choyce while from 1920 Plunket issued its own version, boldly stating on the cover, 'Instructions in this book are for YOUR baby only. Always bring this book!' Published by Whitcombe & Tombs in Dunedin, the Plunket book offered practical advice based on the organisation's '12 essentials of baby care'.



Ted's book is a beautiful example of those gifted by Milne & Choyce, an upmarket Auckland Department store founded in 1867 by Mary Jane and Charlotte Milne. They began their drapery business in 1863 on the corner of Wyndham Street and Albert Street. After Charlotte's marriage in 1876 they were joined in business by her husband Henry Charles Choyce and Milne & Choyce as it was then known firmly established itself as a premier retailer in the city of Auckland. By 1923 the original wooden building at their premises at 131 Queen Street was replaced by an impressive nine-storey structure, boasting six lifts, fire alarms, a private telephone exchange, and workrooms producing custom-made garments and in-house labels. It is not surprising that this complimentary, refined baby record book would have been given away to expectant mothers possible when visiting the store to purchase items for their soon to be born babies.

Looking more closely at the book, we find the signature C. M. Burd on the beautiful illustrations accompanying the pages of measurements and carefully recorded details of this young baby's life. Further investigation reveals the artist to be Clara Miller Burd (born 1873), an American illustrator and stained-glass designer. Burd, a highly esteemed New York artist also trained in Paris before working for the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company in New York and is remembered both for her stained-glass work and for her illustrations in children's books and magazine covers.



Mothers were encouraged to weigh and measure their babies, note milestones, and record daily progress. Advertising and advice of the time reinforced the importance of a properly outfitted nursery and the perfect diet for a growing baby. Little pearls of wisdom in the Plunket book were 'a half hour of sunbathing is recommended each morning' or this little gem 'in the mornings and evenings there is much that the father can do to help his wife and get to know his child.' The Plunket Nurse would also add her own words of advice to the book after each visit.

In our case we are able to see that Ted was born at Helensville Private Hospital, delivered by Dr. Max Meinhold, a German doctor who had qualified from the University of Bonn on February 26th 1906 and became a resident of Helensville where he built the private hospital close to the post office and overlooking the railway station, wharves and river. His own home adjoined the hospital and servant's quarters, wash house, storerooms, workshop etc. were at the back under the main building on the sloped section. The hospital had its own operating room, a good supply of fresh water, and several large rooms and patient toilets throughout the building. This hospital was a blessing not only for Helensville expectant mothers but others from further afield like some of our own mothers from the Wellsford and Wharehine districts. Dr Meinhold died in 1924 aged only 48 years old.

Within the beautiful Milne & Choyce book in our collection we glimpse a pictorial history of Ted from the age of 1 month – 2 ½ years, small faded photos of this little boy as he grew up and no doubt delighted his family with his own unique characteristics.





We get an insight into his family tree, his parents and grandparents, great details for those genealogists amongst us. Also, we see notes for ‘giving up the dummy’ at 16 months of age and more intriguing is the handwritten note ‘Baby Shortcoated’ on 18th October 1921, six weeks after his birth on 2nd September at 5 pm! This is not a term that is commonly referred to today, so what did it mean? At birth babies wore long gowns or robes that extended well below their feet, making walking impossible so ‘shortcoating’ process was the first major clothing transition in a child’s life. Typically, it would happen around the age of one year old when they were crawling or learning to walk. The new “short clothes” were still dresses or skirted garments but the length was reduced to the ankle or calf. Today these books, small in size, have largely been replaced by social media, where parents and caregivers share births, milestones, and everyday moments online. Yet there is something especially touching about these handwritten pages — intimate, personal, and never intended for an audience beyond family — quietly preserving the earliest story of a life.




---

The Stork by Eugene Field  
 Last night the Stork came stalking,  
 And, Stork, beneath your wing  
 Lay, lapped in dreamless slumber,  
 The tiniest little thing!  
 From Babyland, out yonder  
 Beside a silver sea,  
 You brought a priceless treasure  
 As gift to mine and me!

Last night my dear one listened -  
 And, wife, you knew the cry -  
 The dear old Stork has sought our home  
 A many times gone by!  
 And in your gentle bosom  
 I found the pretty thing  
 That from the realm out yonder  
 Our friend the Stork did bring.



Last night a babe awakened,  
 And, babe, how strange and new  
 Must seem the home and people  
 The Stork has brought you to;  
 And yet me thinks you like them -  
 You neither stare nor weep,  
 But closer to my dear one  
 You cuddle, and you sleep!

Last night my heart grew fonder -  
 O happy heart of mine,  
 Sing of the inspirations  
 That round my pathway shine!  
 And sing your sweetest love-song  
 To this dear nestling wee  
 The Stork from 'Way-Out-Yonder  
 Hath brought to mine and me!



# 2026 Calendar



## *From Tracks to Township : Wellsford's Early Years*



### **Opening of the Wellsford Railway Station 15th February 1909**

Albertland Heritage Museum Inc, Library Plaza, 15 Port Albert Road, Wellsford. 0900  
www.albertland.co.nz - email: albertlandmuseum@gmail.com - Ph : +64 09 423 8181

### **Our 2026 Calendar – From Tracks to Township – Wellsford early years --- is here!**

Celebrate the first 50 years of Wellsford's growth following the arrival of the railway in 1909. Discover the people who shaped the town, see how it looked in those early days, and learn what brought about another wave of change in 1955.

This special edition calendar is a wonderful keepsake and a perfect gift. Be quick—copies are selling fast! \$25.00 from the museum or \$37.00 online delivered.

**This Calendar is proving very popular and going out the door very quickly. Almost sold out**

Website address link: <https://albertlandmuseum.co.nz/product/calendar-2026/>

## ***Birthday Wishes for December***

Statistically, December isn't one of the busier months for birthdays — and it's easy to see why, with the Christmas season already in full swing!

That said, here at the Albertland Heritage Museum we are lucky to have several of our wonderful friends and volunteers celebrating birthdays this month. We'd love to send very happy birthday wishes to Pauline, Paul, Ivan, Jill and Laurel Becroft on December 21st. We hope your special days have been filled with warmth, cake, and a well-earned moment in the spotlight amidst the Christmas bustle.

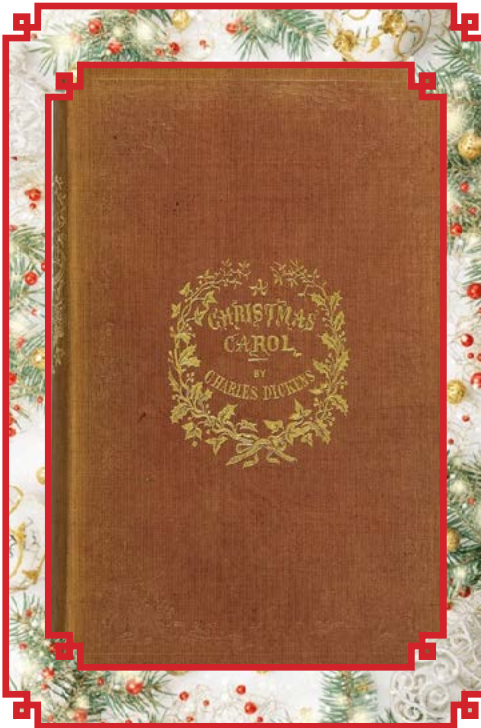
Also celebrating a very special milestone is Ann Shepherd, who turns 101 on Christmas Day. We hope Ann enjoys her remarkable day at the Heritage Rest Home in Wellsford, surrounded by friends, family, and plenty of festive cheer.

A very special happy birthday to you, Ann — what a wonderful achievement





## A great read for Christmas – the classic 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens



A Christmas Carol is the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a grumpy old man who thinks Christmas is a waste of time and money. On Christmas Eve, he gets a very surprising visit from the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, followed by three more ghosts. They take Scrooge on a whirlwind tour of Christmases from his past, present, and possible future.

Along the way, Scrooge is reminded of happier times, shown how others celebrate Christmas, and given a rather frightening glimpse of what could happen if he doesn't change his ways. By the end of the night, Scrooge wakes up on Christmas morning full of joy and determination. He becomes generous, kind, and good-hearted, discovering that Christmas—and caring for others—can be wonderful after all.

First edition cover (1843)



*Dawn Greenwood giving a short video demonstration on piano and history of songs of the era*



To watch a short video produced by Natalie Watene for the Albertland Heritage Museum.

Click this link below to view:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/bxxp2r-iLM?>

# Obituary

Rennie Urquhart : Sunrise - 25 March 1941 - Sunset - 14 November 2025



Rennie was NZ born and travelled to Canada in 1965 and was there until 1985 driving articulated trucks for the 20 years he was there. Met a young lady by the name of Laura and came for visit back in New Zealand in 1984 which she loved so much and they decided NZ was the place and moved here permanently in 1985.

Lived in Auckland and became a Bus Supervisor for Johnstone Blue Motors until the move to Wellsford in 2000 where he worked for Alex Hayes at Warkworth repairing computers. Retired and became a member of the Albertland Museum of the day and then on the committee from 2003 for a couple of years. But continued until 2020 as a volunteer at the museum photo scanning during his Monday duty.

Rest in peace Rennie you have earned it. Rob

---

## What's On

### Thursday 25th December

Xmas Day

Merry Christmas everyone!

### Sunday 28 December

Minniesdale Chapel Anniversary Service

See attached flyer for details.

1.30 pm

### Sunday 18 January 2026

#### *The Settlers Market*

9.00 am – 1.00 pm

Port Albert Hall, 980 Port Albert Road, Wellsford (variety of stalls and food and drink available)

This market will have a special focus on the young creative people in our area. If you are — or know — any school-aged children who have spent their holidays making beautiful things, or growing plants and vegetables, please encourage them to get in touch with our market co-ordinators at [portalbertmarkets@gmail.com](mailto:portalbertmarkets@gmail.com) to book a stall.

We'd love to see their creativity on display and look forward to filling our spaces with youthful energy and talent.

### Port Albert Church Service

*There is no Sunday service in January.*

In February there will be a celebration of 10 years of community ownership. More updates to follow:

Be sure to check our wonderful local paper, Mahurangi Matters, for what's on around the district. Pack a picnic and head to the Port Albert Domain — the gas barbecues work particularly well on a hot summer's evening — or venture out to Atiu Creek Regional Park for a refreshing walk. And don't forget our beautiful East Coast beaches, Snells Beach, Forestry and Mangawhai.







*Coming This Sunday 28th December 2025*

## **Minniesdale Chapel**

Shegadeen Road, Wharehine

### **2025 ANNIVERSARY SERVICE**

The next Anniversary Service in our historic Chapel will take place on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at 1.30 pm.

We remember the original settlers on this day who paved the way for the generations that have followed.

After the service all are invited for afternoon tea at Wharehine Hall. In true country tradition please 'bring a plate' with something to share at the table.



# *Albertland Review 2025*

As we draw near to the end of 2025, we find ourselves looking back on what has been another truly wonderful year for our museum. With only a very small group of active volunteers, we simply couldn't do what we do without reaching out for support — and we are incredibly fortunate to have such an amazing group of people we proudly call our Friends of the Museum.

We are also deeply grateful for the strong connections we share with other organisations across our community, many of whom have stepped in and lent a helping hand throughout the year in ways both big and small. Together, that support has made all the difference.

Unfortunately, as with any year, the highs are accompanied by lows, and this year we have lost several dear friends. We acknowledge with gratitude our own volunteers, past and present — Rennie Urquhart, Heather Power and Elva Reid — and also Paul Casci, who had deep ties to our museum through his marriage to Linda Casci and through the incredible donations made by her grandfather, father, and Linda herself.

We are truly grateful for the contributions each of these people made to our museum and to our wider community. We also extend our heartfelt sympathy to all of you who have lost loved ones this year. Our thoughts are with you, especially during the Christmas period.

It is only fitting that we also take time to reflect on our many achievements this year.

Early in 2025, our much-loved donated rocking horse travelled to Ashhurst to be restored by Stuart, following a very kind offer from Roger Farr and the Wellsford Lions Club to fund this work. He returned home to the museum in August, unveiled with quite a fanfare, and now stands proudly and lovingly in our main gallery — delighting visitors both young and old.

In March, we took part in the Warkworth A & P Show, bringing along a good old-fashioned washing day for visitors to enjoy — complete with a washtub full of sunlight, soapy water and wooden pegs hanging from a string line.

April saw us once again opening our doors on Anzac Day, welcoming the public following the dawn service at Memorial Park. Our volunteers served Anzac biscuits and hot drinks and made valuable connections while advancing our project to restore the Memorial Gates to their former stature. This has included a deputation to the Local Board and collaborations with Te Hana Te Ao Marama, the Wellsford RSA, and the Māori Battalion. This important project is ongoing, and we hope to have more to report in the New Year.

In May, we were proud to host the 53rd Annual AGM and Conference of the New Zealand History Federation. The weekend included events held at the Wellsford RSA, Minniesdale Church, Wharehine Hall, and Te Hana Te Ao Marama. With 54 attendees, the conference was a tremendous success and a testament to what can be achieved through teamwork. We were, however, missing Rob, who became ill just before the conference and spent many weeks in hospital. We are very pleased to say that he is now slowly but surely making a good recovery.

We have also enjoyed many other community partnerships throughout the year, including taking part in a community planting at the Railway Reserve at the southern end of town. We are now caring for this area by weeding and keeping it tidy, giving the plants every chance to thrive. We hope the reserve will be renamed in the future and that signage can be installed to tell the story of our town's history. This ties in beautifully with our 2026 calendar, now on sale, which depicts the first 50 years of the Wellsford township up until the Great Fire of Wellsford.

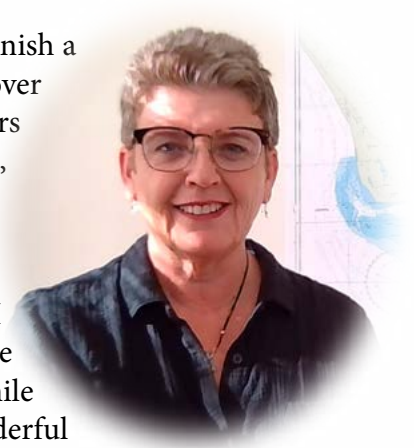
We have also been incredibly grateful to be on the receiving end of our supporters' generosity, with significant donations made towards a much-needed computer upgrade to help us care for our collections. A huge thank you to everyone who helped us reach our \$5,000 goal, enabling the purchase of three new, up-to-date computers. With our Strategic Plan recently reviewed, we are now confidently looking ahead to another great year. We would also like to celebrate Clare and Mikayla for their academic successes this year (more details below), achievements that will have a meaningful impact on our museum. Well done to you both.



## Two Doctors in the House!

### *Clare Joensen*

In 2015, at the age of 50, I thought it was time to go back to university and finish a BA I started in the 1980s. My husband Tony was very supportive and took over as the main breadwinner for what was to be a two year undertaking. Ten years later, he's still working too hard and I have only just finished being a student, graduating with a BA in anthropology and a minor in History in 2017, a Masters in anthropology in 2020 and like my colleague Mikayla, I finished my Doctorate mid 2025. My PhD research led me to the museum and when my good friend and research buddy Lyn Johnston suddenly passed away, I thought it was time to step up and join the committee. Next year I will be working as a researcher and Pre-reading consultant at Massey University while trying to do my bit as President of the Albertland Museum alongside the wonderful people I have gotten to know there these past few years.



### *Mikayla Journée*

I've been incredibly fortunate this year to have had a Postdoctoral Research Fellow position at Auckland University to research the Harold Marsh photograph collection. Harold Marsh is my great-great-grandfather, so undertaking this work has been an absolute privilege. I've been able to study a family archive and collection of research materials that belonged to my great-aunt Lyn Johnson. Being able to talk to Lyn, and at times my great Gran Belle, and Harold himself, through the archives, has been special and emotional at times. I completed my Art History PhD examination in the middle of the year. And then I was lucky again to receive a Judith Binney Trust Writing Award to keep developing my research and begin to write a book on Harold Marsh and his photography in the context of his social world and the wider history of NZ photography. Next year I'll be teaching in Art History and Museums and Cultural Heritage at Auckland University, writing my book around the semester teaching time, and continuing to research the Albertland Museum collection and archive!





## **'Twas the Night Before Christmas (A Visit)**

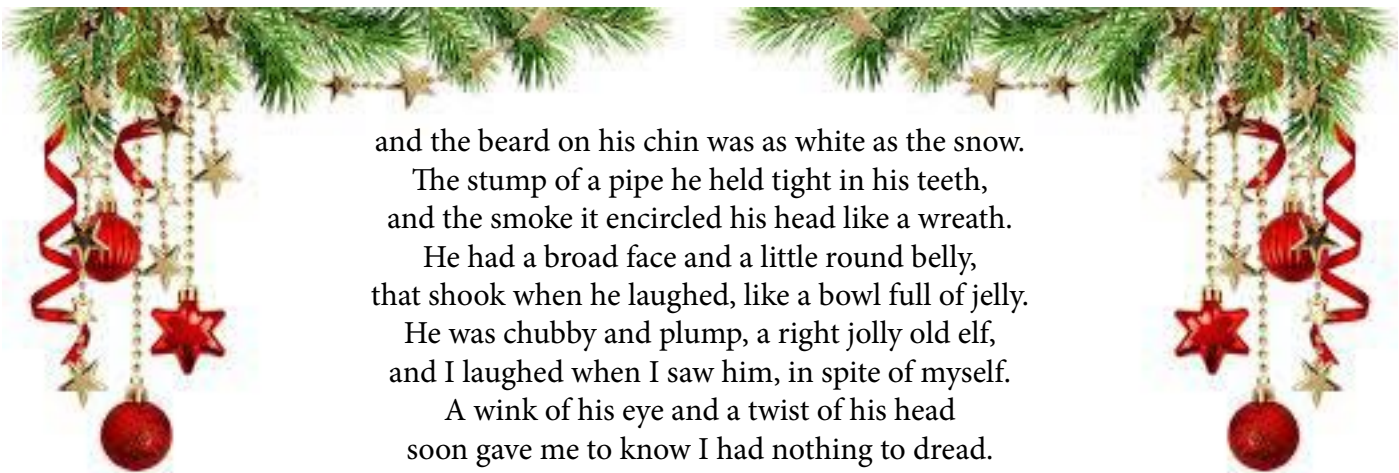
Full Poem

Clement Clark Moore 1823

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
while visions of sugar plums danced in their heads.  
And Mama in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.  
When out on the roof there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
tore open the shutter, and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
gave the lustre of midday to objects below,  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
but a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles, his coursers they came,  
and he whistled and shouted and called them by name:  
    'Now Dasher! Now Dancer!  
    Now, Prancer and Vixen!  
    On, Comet! On, Cupid!  
    On, Donner and Blitzen!  
    To the top of the porch!  
    To the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! Dash away!  
    Dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
when they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky  
so up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
with the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas, too.  
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
the prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head and was turning around,  
down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
and his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
and he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.  
His eyes—how they twinkled! His dimples, how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,





and the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
and the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.

He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
that shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
and I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head  
soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
and filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk.

And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
and giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.

But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight,  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

Most of us know 'Twas the Night Before Christmas by heart, or at least its opening line. It's the poem many families return to on Christmas Eve — read aloud by the fire, beside a twinkling tree, with carols softly playing in the background. But the poem we love today didn't always go by that familiar name.

When it was first published in December 1823 in a small New York newspaper, it was titled "A Visit from St. Nicholas" and appeared without an author's name. The verses tell the charming story of a father who, on Christmas Eve, glimpses St. Nicholas — a cheerful, round little figure arriving in a sleigh pulled by eight reindeer and quietly delivering gifts while the household sleeps.

Over time, the poem became hugely popular, reprinted in newspapers and Christmas books and read aloud in homes all round the world. Clement Clark Moore later claimed he had written it to amuse his children, drawing inspiration from a winter sleigh ride and the image of a jolly, bearded driver. Although some debate remains about who truly wrote the poem, its influence is beyond question.



## Christmas Gift Ideas - Helping Us Preserve our Community Treasures

Our district is rich with cherished landmarks—churches, halls, and places like our museum—all lovingly cared for by small groups of dedicated local volunteers (in many cases the same volunteers helping each organisation). Preserving these treasures for future generations is no small task, and we can't do it alone.

Every contribution, no matter how small, makes a meaningful impact. Your kind gesture during this festive season of a few dollars you might be able to spare—can go a long way in helping us maintain these local gems or you may like to consider a membership as a gift for that 'Albertlanders' or locals who are hard to buy for!

With your support, we can ensure these buildings continue to inspire and delight for years to come.

Thank you for supporting our community's heritage!

### Minniesdale Chapel

On a picture-perfect site overlooking the Oruawharo River, an arm of the Kaipara Harbour, Minniesdale is the oldest surviving church in Albertland. The timber framework and stained-glass windows in this little Gothic building were brought to New Zealand from England by the Rev. E S Brookes (snr) one of the driving forces behind the 1860s Albertland Emigration Scheme. A Category 1 Historic Places Trust building, Minniesdale Chapel can be hired for services, weddings and Christenings. We have our AGM in May each year and are always looking for Trustees to help keep this beautiful historical building and the grounds kept up to an acceptable standard in remembrance of the early settlers and those people who are the future. Many thanks to our current trustees and the Wellsford Lions who mow the lawns and trim the weeds around the headstones.



Website: [www.minniesdale.com](http://www.minniesdale.com)  
Email: [minniesdale@outlook.co.nz](mailto:minniesdale@outlook.co.nz)  
Follow us on Facebook

All donations gratefully received. Send us an email and we will happily pass on our bank details.

### Wharehine Hall

One of the region's few remaining community-owned facilities, the Wharehine Community Hall sits on a ridge on Pah Hill Road overlooking the Ōruawharo River west of Wellsford and was built in 1879, starting life as the district's schoolhouse. This small hall is great for family functions, community gatherings and receptions following services down at Minniesdale Chapel. Membership costs \$30 per household per year (which includes half price hall hire) and 'friends of the hall' do not need to live in the immediate area.



For full details, email chairperson Clare Joensen at [clare.joensen@gmail.com](mailto:clare.joensen@gmail.com) or treasurer Sancher Honnor at [s.grevers@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:s.grevers@yahoo.co.nz)

Wharehine Hall Bank account is 12-3094-0152796-00

### Port Albert Church or 'Little Church on the Hill'

When the Methodist church made the decision to no longer hold services in Port Albert, a group of very community minded locals set about to try and purchase the church in order to protect its place in the district. After a few years of negotiations, the 'Port Albert Church Preservation Society' took over ownership and in





February of 2015, began to hold a monthly service, inviting anyone to attend, no matter what denomination they were. The church committee is a dedicated team of locals. All the committee give many hours of their time to maintain and preserve this wonderful historical landmark. The old Sunday School building at the rear of the church is now listed as a 'Historic Place of Interest' but the main church and hall, which have had additions over the years are not listed, but nevertheless, still require a lot of upkeep. For further details, contact Jenny Lambert [m.j.lambert@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:m.j.lambert@hotmail.co.nz)

Port Albert Church Bank Account: ASB 12 3094 0219743 00

## Port Albert Hall

On May 28, 1913 the original Temperance Hall was destroyed by fire and a new one built in Port Albert Central. On 27 May 1915 the Reverend William Gittos officiated at the opening of the new Hall. Since then, the hall has been the hub of the district. A wonderful old building, beautifully maintained by volunteers, it is now over 100 years old.

Become a Friend of the Hall \$25 (per family). Payments or donations can be made to Port Albert Hall Committee showing your name as a reference.

Please advise of your payment and email address by emailing Steph at [treadys88@gmail.com](mailto:treadys88@gmail.com)



Port Albert Hall Bank Account: ASB 12 3094 0120399 00

## Albertland Heritage Museum

The Albertland Heritage Museum was set up to chronicle the story of the Albertland Non-conformist Society of the 1860s, our museum is home to a rich and exciting range of family archives, records, photographs, memorabilia and artefacts.

You can join as a financial member of The Albertland Heritage Museum Inc and you will receive unlimited entry, for that financial year, to the Heritage Centre, receive prior notice of all functions, including various displays in the Harold Marsh gallery, newsletters and significant events for only \$20 per year. Our Membership financial year is 1st January to 31st December. Check out our website for more details: <https://albertlandmuseum.co.nz/become-a-friend-of-the-museum/> or contact Museum Secretary at [albertlandmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:albertlandmuseum@gmail.com) for further information.



Albertland Museum Bank Account: ASB 12 3094 0077415 01

## Loaves & Fishes Foodbank Wellsford

Always doing great work in our community is Loaves & Fishes foodbank.  
Email: [foodbankwellsford@gmail.com](mailto:foodbankwellsford@gmail.com)  
Phone: 021 090 89333

Website: <https://www.foodbank.co.nz/wellsford-foodbank>

Loaves & Fishes Foodbank Wellsford Bank Account: ASB 12 3094 0284123 50



## Creating New Christmas Memories in Albertland:

In 1862, when settlers left England to establish their "new society" in Albertland, they brought not only essential supplies but also cherished traditions.

Christmas in the "old country" was marked by open fires, frosty weather, and snow. Trees adorned with wax candles, barley sugar, sugar plums, paper roses, apples, and tinsel reflected customs popularised by Prince Albert, who introduced the tradition of decorating fir trees from his childhood in Germany. The settlers, who named their community in his honour after his death on December 14, 1861, upheld these festive practices. Victorian children eagerly anticipated Christmas stockings and handmade gifts, especially sweets.



In their new land, Christmas unfolded in the warmth of summer, a stark contrast to the winters they had known. Instead of snow, they found blooming roses, vibrant flowers, and the scent of a semi-tropical climate. Adding to the wonder, pōhutukawa trees burst into bloom with their iconic red flowers, earning their place as New Zealand's Christmas Tree.

Stories of early celebrations are filled with nostalgia and reflections on Christmas in their new home. In a letter to the Daily Southern Cross on January 6, 1863, Henry Marcroft described their first Christmas as "the contrast of the season, weather, and circumstances was felt by all of us to be most complete." The day

featured a Sunday School festival with plum cake and tea, followed by a gathering in the Co-operative Association's newly opened store, adorned with evergreens and "V.R." initials crafted from laurel leaves in honour of Queen Victoria.

One memorable story tells of Mrs. Cray, who, when asked by visiting Māori about Christmas, explained about the Christmas fare she was making and its traditions. To her surprise, a boatload of local Māori arrived the next day in their finest attire. Rising to the occasion, she stretched her Christmas feast to ensure all could share in the celebration.



On Christmas Eve, 1862, Chief Manukau invited North Albertland settlers in Paparoa to his village for Christmas Day. They were warmly greeted, and a feast of pork, new potatoes, damper, and tea awaited them. After lunch, Manukau expressed hopes for ongoing friendship and proposed a shared feast the following year, which the settlers happily agreed to, promising to bring puddings while the chief supplied a bullock.

The celebration concluded with generous gifts of kumara, fish, and pork from Manukau, with the settlers learning that it was customary to reciprocate such kindness when they next visited.

The day after Christmas, the same settlers enjoyed their own picnic along the Matakoho River, complete with boiled pudding, pigeon pie, and tea, savouring the festive spirit of their new home.

Meri Kirihimete and Happy New Year from all of us at the Albertland Heritage Museum!



## Christmas Night Television Viewing

As you sit quietly on Christmas night, watching the Kings' Message, consider the many changes in television since those early days when it arrived here on the shores of Aotearoa in 1960.

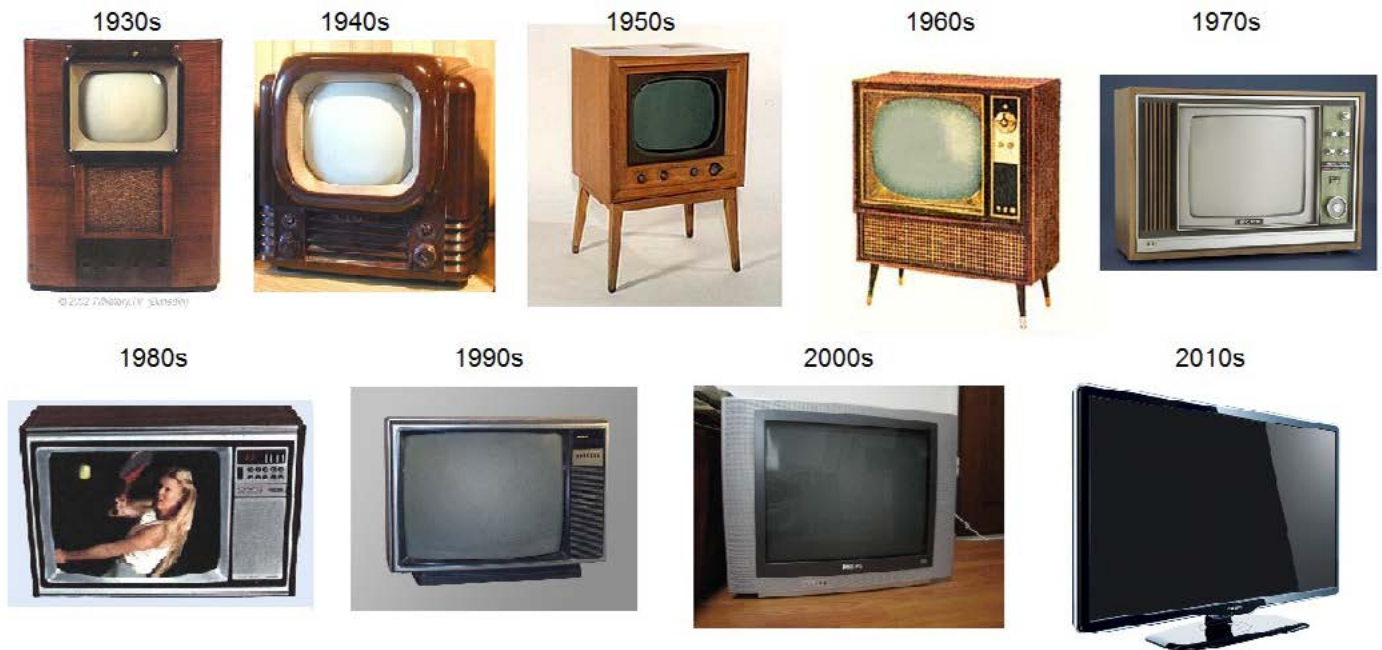
Television doesn't have a single inventor — it emerged through the work of several innovators, each building on the ideas of others.

Paul Nipkow, a German researcher, laid important early groundwork in 1884 when he patented the Nipkow disk, a spinning disk that could scan and transmit images electrically. He called it an “electric telescope.” Although Nipkow never built a working television, his system became the basis of mechanical television.

That next crucial step was taken by Scottish inventor John Logie Baird. Building on Nipkow's ideas, and on theoretical work by fellow Scot Alan Archibald Campbell-Swinton, Baird successfully transmitted moving images.

On 26 January 1926, in Soho, London, he gave the first public demonstration of television, showing flickering moving images to members of the Royal Institution. His early broadcasts included a ventriloquist's dummy named Stooky Bill, followed soon after by the first televised human face.

Across the Atlantic, Philo Farnsworth was developing something different — and ultimately more enduring. While Baird's system was mechanical, Farnsworth pioneered fully electronic television in the late 1920s. Because modern television is electronic, Farnsworth is often credited in the United States as the “father of television.”



### Reminder!

Membership subscription due 1st January 2026. For only \$20.00 or \$30.00 Family membership per year, you get entry for the year to the museum. Remember this helps to keep the doors open and keeping the artifacts in a condition to be able to display.

You can make direct payment to the Albertland Museum account - ASB 12-3094-0077415-01 or click this link to get the Membership Form which is interactive to fill in:

<https://albertlandmuseum.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Membership-Form-2026.pdf>