

Albertland Heritage Museum Inc



Patron:
Mr Richard Te Haara



Belle & Dot

Danthonia Stripper
Remnants

February 2026

Open
Hours

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

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Newsflash – A new community project begins!
We're pleased to announce the formation of the Wellsford War Memorial Restoration Committee, a group of local residents working to restore the memorial gates to their former glory.
Watch this space for updates and future opportunities for community involvement.

Editors Message:

Life at Albertland Heritage Museum is slowly returning to normal after our Christmas break and the run of public holidays – a well-earned rest for our wonderful volunteers.

Because our volunteers work on different days of the week, they don't always get the chance to catch up as a group. So later on today we hope to bring together everyone who can attend for a social get-together and a chance to check in on how things are going at the museum. Their input is vital to the way the museum operates, and we truly value their ideas and feedback.

Our visitors are welcomed by these knowledgeable and friendly members of the community who generously give their time, usually one day a week, to keep the museum running smoothly. Alongside regular shifts, there are always special projects underway to lend a hand with – so there is never a dull moment! Is this something that you would like to help with? Contact us at albertlandmuseum@gmail.com if you would like to talk more. We can also offer remote projects, items that have been scanned and need transcribing that sort of thing.

Several planning meetings have already taken place as we look ahead to the year before us. What will it bring? New displays, refreshed cabinets, or perhaps something even more exciting. Watch this space!

Warm regards,
Rose and Rob



Wellsford Police Station

Further history of our February 2026 Calendar photos

Our history – Our Policemen

Following the arrival of Governor Hobson in New Zealand in 1840, Police Magistrates were granted authority to appoint selected men to act as police officers in the young colony. These early appointments laid the foundations of law and order in a land that was still rough, isolated, and rapidly changing.

An ordinance for the establishment and maintenance of a Constabulary Force was passed on 9 October 1846. This saw police forces formally created in Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury. These newly appointed policemen were kept extremely busy dealing with crimes of violence and theft, particularly among those who had flocked to the goldfields in search of fortune.

By 1857, the main centres of Wellington and Auckland each had a police force of only 20 men. Their primary task was to maintain order among drunken sailors, sawyers, bushmen, and itinerant workers. Policing in those days was demanding, often dangerous, and carried out over large districts with very limited resources.

Albertland's First District Constable

In our own district of Albertland, the first appointed District Constable was Thomas Inger, who took up the role in 1870, eight years after arriving in New Zealand aboard the *Matilda Wattenbach*. His position was wide-ranging and reflected the practical needs of a small rural settlement.

Constable Inger's principal duties included collecting Education Tax and Dog Registration fees for the council. However, he was also responsible for enforcing the bylaws of the Highway Board. These could involve checking that the iron tyres of dray wheels were not too narrow, ensuring that teams were not using too many bullocks or horses, and making sure that carts did not exceed walking pace when crossing bridges — a rule designed to prevent damage and accidents.

On occasion, Constable Inger issued summonses for unpaid debts or attended inquests following fatalities in the district. When more serious crimes occurred, he had full powers of arrest.

One such case involved a gum digger accused of stealing a packet of tea worth 1s 6d from local storekeeper William Armitage. It was alleged that Ralph James had come to the store to sell gum and purchase goods, but while Mr Armitage was weighing nails, Ralph placed the tea into his bag without paying. When questioned, Ralph claimed he had told the storekeeper he would pay for it the following Saturday, but was unsure if he had been heard. The magistrate dismissed the case due to insufficient evidence.

This small incident gives us a vivid glimpse into everyday life and justice in early Albertland.

A National Police Force

In 1886, The Police Act established New Zealand's first national, civil police force of generally unarmed officers. When Constable Inger retired in 1891, another local resident, George Edward Thompson, became District Policeman.

George Thompson was well known in the community as the local butcher and also served as an Albert Riding member on the Rodney District Council. In 1892 he appeared in court to give evidence in an unusual case involving a missing pet steer.

The animal had strayed onto another property and was later slaughtered. When its hide turned up in Mr Farrand's store, ready to be forwarded to Auckland, a witness recognised it as belonging to the missing steer. The head and carcass were later found in a creek, partially concealed. The policeman observed the removal of the steer's ear, which clearly showed the owner's brand and was used as key evidence in court.

The accused was found not guilty after stating he believed he had permission to slaughter cattle grazing on the property and did not know the beast belonged to someone else.

From the early 1900s, constables often served only short periods before being transferred elsewhere. Constable John Thomas Cowan arrived on 21 February 1907 but left in 1909 for a post in Helensville. He was replaced by Constable Edward Driscoll, who initially served in Port Albert but was soon relocated to the new station in Wellsford, along with the district gaol, which was moved just in time for the opening of the new railway station. Next came Constable Robert Patterson Boag (Police Registration No. 1110), followed by Jeremiah Horan (Police Registration No. 1125), who served for four and a half years before transferring to Mercer, south of Auckland. Constable Arthur Moloney (Police Registration No. 1375) served the district faithfully from 1915 to 1924. He had joined the Police Force in 1907 and went on to complete 34 years of service, retiring on 10 November 1941. His dedication was recognised with a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1922, a 22-year clasp in 1929, and a 30-year clasp in 1937.

Under Constable George, who arrived on 22 August 1901, one of the more unusual cases involved three children — two girls and a boy — whose parents lived on the gumfields near Wellsford. The children pleaded guilty to breaking into Shepherd & Co.'s store at Te Hana Bridge and helping themselves to lollies and 3s 6d worth of biscuits. The magistrate sternly warned them of the serious consequences of unlawful behaviour and ordered that they come up for sentence if called upon again.

Little is known of Constable George Rushton, who worked in Wellsford between 1924 and 1927 before being replaced by Constable Daniel Ryan, who had spent 13 years stationed at Mt Eden Prison. Constable Ryan went on to serve a total of 37 years in the Police Force. A dramatic episode during his time in Wellsford involved the arrest of William Marryatt, who had escaped from police custody in Auckland by jumping from a train. Marryatt made his way north by foot, horseback, and train, travelling through Tauhoa, Hoteo, Kaipara Flats, and Te Hana. After eluding police for a week, he was finally located in a gum digger's hut. Constable Ryan woke him while he lay sleeping in bed and placed him under arrest. The prisoner, believing he had thrown the police off his trail, was shocked to discover he had been found.

Constable Thomas Dale – Twenty Years of Stability

The arrival of Thomas Dale (Police Registration No. 1931) in 1935 brought 20 years of stability to Wellsford policing. This much-loved Irishman was firm but fair and known for his dry sense of humour.

He became the district's first Probation Officer and Arms Officer in addition to his regular duties as Constable and Bailiff. During the war years he strictly enforced regulations such as the prohibition of alcohol at dances. Fines of £3 plus court costs were issued for being in possession of liquor near a dance hall.

In 1936, after keeping a house under observation, Constable Dale helped seize a large quantity of illegally sold liquor. The defendant was fined £20 and court costs. Other cases heard that day included selling wine without a licence and using offensive language in public.

Constable Dale met the morning and afternoon express trains, attended court sessions, responded to traffic accidents, and carried out both day and night patrols. He retired on 6 May 1954 and remained a respected citizen of the town he had served so faithfully.

Community Farewells and Gifts

When a constable left the district, it was customary for the community to host a farewell evening. On 23 October 1915, a large gathering of farmers and townsfolk attended a farewell social for Constable Jeremiah Horan. With Mr Harry Pardington as MC, guests enjoyed singing and dancing before speeches and the presentation of a silver spirit kettle on behalf of the community.

Upon retirement, Constable Arthur Moloney received a fountain pen engraved by his Wellsford friends. This treasured item is now held at the Albertland Heritage Museum, having been donated by his family.

Constable Daniel Ryan was farewelled with a chiming clock, presented by Mr A.J. Murdoch, MP, at a large public gathering.



Pen belonging to Constable Maloney

Courts and Justice

In the earliest years, John Shepherd served as Chairman of the Court of Petty Sessions, equivalent to today's Justice of the Peace. Court was held in the district's first public hall and dealt with a wide range of offences, from unpaid debts to charges that could result in three months' hard labour for obscene language.

All constables were also appointed Clerks of the Court. After the Port Albert Court closed in 1909, sittings moved to the Rodney Central Hall in Wellsford. By August 1929, Wellsford sittings had ceased and court sessions later transferred to Warkworth as motor transport made travel easier.

In more recent years, Wellsford has been served by many dedicated officers, far too many to list in full. However, names such as Adrian Siret, Graham Gough, and Dan Picknell stand out as examples of the continuing tradition of service and community connection.

From collecting dog taxes and enforcing bridge speed limits to tracking escaped prisoners across muddy Northland roads, the story of our local policemen is one of dedication, and quiet heroism. These men were not only law enforcers but vital members of the communities they served — respected, farewelled, and remembered. Their legacy remains an important chapter in the history of Albertland and Wellsford.

This story is an edited version of a Albertland Heritage Museum Facebook Post 5th September 2022 by Rose Reid.



Handcuffs



Soap

NEW ZEALAND POLICE FORCE.				
Diary of Duty and Occurrences at		Station,		
16 th June 1941				
DATE	RANK AND NAME	DUTY	OCCURRENCES	
1941		Specifying its Nature and Duration: Places visited, Reasons for and Result of Visit, Ac.	Offences reported, Steps taken, Arrival at and Departure from Station of Visitors, Condition of Houses, Ac.	
June 16 th	Const Dale, Thos.	9 AM to 1 PM office duty and Police inquiries. 2 P.M. to 5-30 P.M Inspecting Dealers License at TE Hanga (Hathrell & Sons, & Albertland Dairy Co. & also at Post Albert Cms Inspect Co. Bennett Books, Police inquiries & Street Patrol.		
" "	" " Dale, Thos.	9 AM to 1 P.M Police inquiries in Town ships. office duty and Patrol. 2 P.M to 3 P.M serving civil summons at Hales North. & Whanganui & J J Russell. office duty 7-30 P.M 28-30 P.M		
" "	" " Dale, Thos.	9 AM to 1 P.M inquiries for William Webster wanted for execution of Warrant Default Fine & books and serving summons at Post Albert		

The Curator's Chronicle

On the 8th of February, our community gathered at Port Albert Church to celebrate a very special milestone — 10 years of community ownership of this much-loved little church.

When the building was no longer required by the Methodist Church, a group of dedicated community members stepped forward to purchase it. Ever since, they have lovingly maintained the church and continued to hold monthly services, ensuring its historical and spiritual significance remains alive in our district.

Members of that group, Lynnette Gubb, Jenny Lambert, Pat Bennett, Vicky Sheriff, Shirley Busbridge, and the late Margaret Neal — have done a truly wonderful job. Their commitment, care, and perseverance over the years are a real credit to them and to our community.

At present, scaffolding surrounds the church as recent funding allows this “old girl” to receive a much-needed makeover. It is heartening to see her being restored for future generations to enjoy.

And here's where you might be able to help...

Can you spare a few hours?

Whether it's lending a hand, sharing a skill, or simply offering support, every little bit makes a difference. This church belongs to all of us — and its future depends on the same community spirit that saved it ten years ago.

If you'd like to be involved, now is the perfect time.

To help make this special day even more memorable, Albertland Heritage Museum created a display board showcasing treasured moments that have been photographed at the church over many years. It proved to be a popular addition to an already full and joyful day of celebration.

The Museum also presented a beautifully framed crocheted Lord's Prayer to be hung in the church foyer on long term loan with the permission of its donor, Mr Ian Campbell of Warkworth. This spectacular piece of handiwork using a filet crochet technique was lovingly created by his mother, Emily Morrison, in 1967. Remarkably, it took her 105 hours to complete — truly a labour of love and devotion.

If you would like to see this special artwork for yourself, please come along to the next service at Port Albert Church on 8th March and take a moment to admire this beautiful piece of history.



“Grandma’s Washday”

1. Bild a fire in back yard to heat kettle of rain water.
2. Set tubs so smoke wont blow in eyes if wind is pert.
3. Shave one hole cake of soap in bilin water.
4. Sort, things, make three piles, I pile white, 1 pile cullord, I pile workbritches and rags.
5. Stir flour in cold water to smooth then thin down with bilin water.
6. Rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard, then bile, rub cullord but dont bile - just rench and starch.
7. Take white things out of kettle with broom stick handle then rench.
8. Blue and starch.
9. Spred tee towels on grass.
10. Hang old rags on fence.
11. Pore rench water in flower bed.
12. Scrub porch with hot soapy water.
13. Turn tubs upside down.
14. Put on cleen dress - smooth hair with side combs -
brew tea - set and rest and rock a spell, and count
blessins.



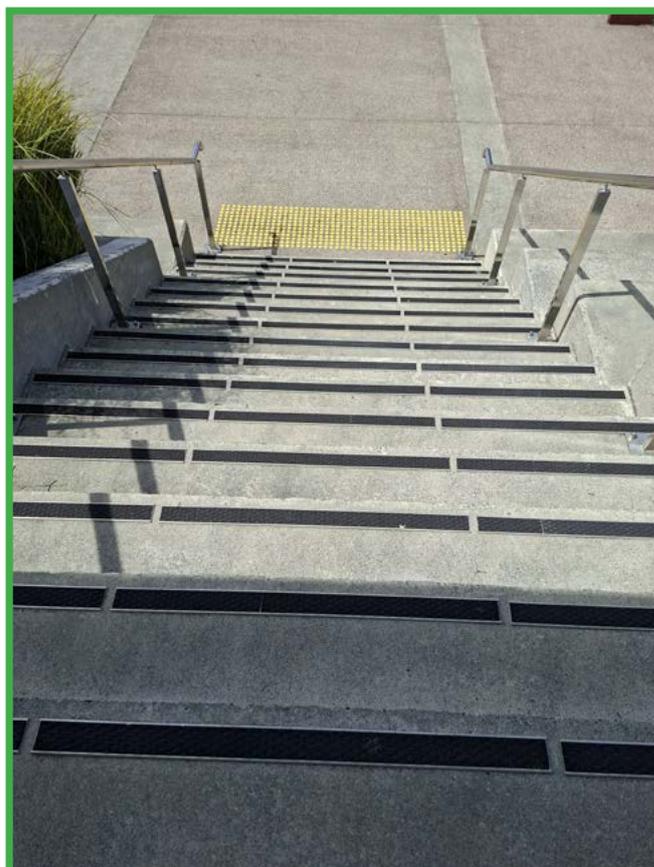
A Souvenir from
The Lakes District Centennial Museum
Arrowtown, Otago
New Zealand
CRAIGS 59398

A big shout out to the Auckland Council contractors who kindly included the water blasting of the Museum stairs as part of their recent clean-up of the library courtyard.

This has made a huge difference for our volunteers and for the many visitors who come to the Museum each week.

The stairs are now safer, cleaner, and so much more welcoming.

We truly appreciate your thoughtfulness and support — thank you!



A visit from Colin Childs

For many of you who have visited **Albertland Heritage Museum**, you will have admired the four beautiful replica ships that represent the vessels the Albertlanders travelled on from England in 1862 and 1863.



It is always a special moment when the creator of these models drops in to check that they are being displayed just right. On his recent visit, he was delighted to see them now proudly positioned front and centre as you enter the main gallery — exactly where they belong.

These remarkable replicas were crafted with incredible care and patience by local Wellsford resident **Colin Childs**. Each model represents many hours of painstaking work. Colin even sent away to England for the original ship plans before beginning, ensuring every detail was as authentic as possible.

They are not just models — they are miniature tributes to our Albertland settlers, who made the long journey to begin a new life in our district.

Next time you visit, take a moment to really look closely at them — they truly are works of art.

Birthday Wishes for February

Wishing everyone celebrating a birthday in February a very Happy Birthday!

A special mention to our own wonderful volunteer, Allan Peake — we hope your day is filled with cake, smiles, and well-deserved celebrations.

Thank you for all that you do for our museum community.

Quotation for February

What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness.

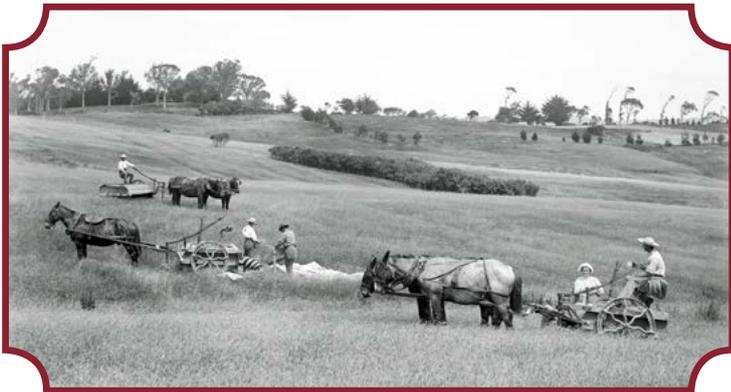
John Steinback

On reflection, this summer, even the small glimpses of summer felt special. We are grateful for every sunny day, every patch of blue sky, and every moment of warmth that lifted our spirits and reminded us of brighter moments ahead.

Danthonia Seed – A Grass That Helped Albertland Survive

In the early years of the Albertland settlement, life was far from easy. New settlers faced heavy clay soils, dense bush, and long delays in receiving supplies from outside the district. Flour, sugar and other essentials were often scarce, and families had to be resourceful with whatever the land could provide.

One unlikely hero of these difficult times was danthonia seed, taken from native tussock grasses sometimes known as oat grass. This grass thrived on the gumfields — land once regarded as almost worthless for farming or grazing. Growing naturally on the open hills and rough country around Port Albert and Wharehine, danthonia proved hardy and reliable where European grasses and crops failed.



After manuka scrub was burned off, danthonia quickly appeared even in the poorest soils. Its value soon became clear: sheep and cattle grazed on it and thrived, often fattening well where little else would grow.



Danthonia seed also became a small but important local industry. Sacks of seed were collected and shipped out from Port Albert by boat. Some was used locally for pasture, while the rest was sold further afield. For struggling families, this work provided a modest but vital income and helped households survive through difficult seasons.

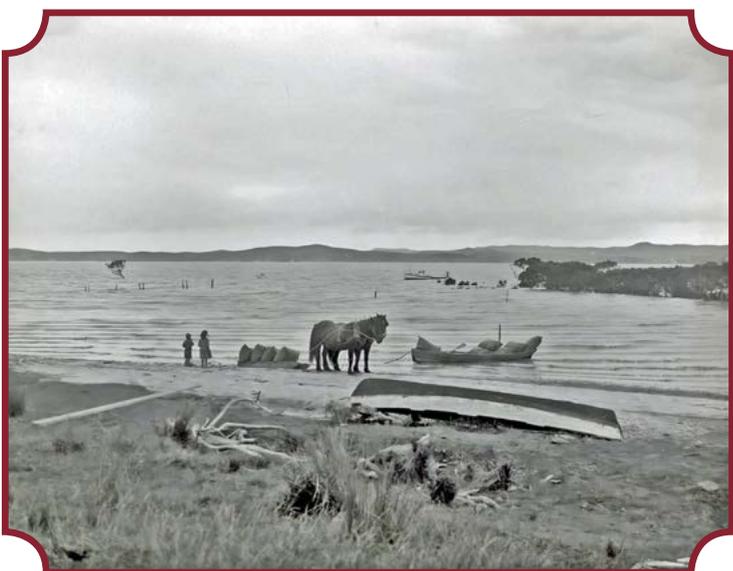
In 1909, the New Zealand Herald published an article titled “In Praise of Danthonia.” It reported:

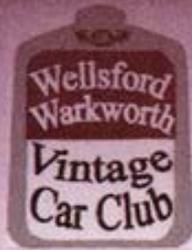
“On land where permanent pasture cannot be continued with English grasses, danthonia is not equalled by any other grass in our possession... it may yet be regarded as the salvation of the poor lands of the North Island, particularly the much excavated gum lands.”

By 1929, the pastures of Rodney County contained more danthonia than any other district in the North Island. Farmers came to recognise danthonia as a truly permanent species.

Unlike imported grasses, which failed when soil fertility declined, danthonia held its ground. As other grasses disappeared and weeds such as moss, hawkweed, dandelion and fern took over, danthonia spread into the vacant spaces. Its freely produced seed and tough nature earned it the name of a “fighting grass.” It could even withstand heavy stocking by sheep and cattle.

Today, the story of danthonia seed stands as a reminder of the determination and ingenuity of the early Albertlanders.





SWAP MEET

Saturday 28 February 2026

Swap Meet starts at 7.00 a.m.

Entry: Sellers \$10.00 Buyers/Browsers \$5.00

Children (under 12) Free

Vintage Car Display - Car Parts Old & New - Motoring Books & Manuals

Collectibles – Retro Clothing - Bric-a-Brac

Refreshments – Sausage Sizzle – Bacon Butties

Venue: Wellsford/Warkworth Vintage Car Clubrooms

Satellite Station Rd –off SH 1 – 3km south of Warkworth

All enquiries to 027 423 8122 or wellsfordwarkworth@vcc.org.nz

What's On

28th February Wellsford/Warkworth Vintage Car Swap Meet (see flyer)

8th March – Port Albert Church ‘The Little Church on the Hill’ – Service 1.30 pm (bring a plate)

13 – 15 March - The Auckland Wooden Boat Festival <https://www.aucklandwoodenboatfestival.co.nz/>

14th March – Wellsford Rugby Club Centenary Dinner

<https://events.humanitix.com/wellsford-rugby-club-centenary-dinner>

21st March - Warkworth A & P Show (come and say hi to our volunteers)

<https://www.warkworthshow.co.nz/>

22nd March – The Settlers’ Market at Port Albert Hall, 980 Port Albert Hall, Wellsford 9 – 1 pm.

Save the Date!!!!

22nd March Wellsford RSA AGM at the RSA, 1 Olympus Road, Wellsford 1.30pm

8-10th May - Tomarata Rugby Club is turning 100!

https://www.facebook.com/tomaratarugby/photos/tomarata-rugby-club-is-turning-100-save-the-date-2026next-year-marks-a-century-s/1337800018187992/?_rdr

Anything else happening – let us know and we will advertise for you!

Memories from Alf Bennett 1998

While attending the Port Albert Church – 10 year celebration earlier this month I couldn't help but notice the huge involvement of the Bennett and Neal families in the running and upkeep of this beautiful little church. These were both very prominent families in those early years of Albertland settlement.

The local store was also hugely important for locals and the Bennett family did a great job keeping in touch with their customers to see what was needed in the way of meat, bread, or groceries which they would deliver from either Wellsford or their own store.

This is an account as told by Alf Bennett in 1998 ...

Around 1934 they (Bennett family) took on the mail run contract from Stan Inger who had been doing the run from Kokako (the area around Wellsford Valley Road and the Port Albert Domain or 'Rec' as it was called by locals) to Port Albert and back, until 1934 when the first rural delivery out of Wellsford was started. Laurie Curel who worked with the Bennett's at that time did it occasionally but mostly Alf did it, or sometimes they did it together because they picked up the bread from the bakery at Wellsford, Flemings as it was then, in behind where the Fish Shop was but is now Peppers Café.

When asked to describe the landings on the river and whether or not they all had jetties or whether they would have to run the boat up to the shore, Alf explained that on the Cream Run there was always a jetty at the main pick-up point, but at Gubbs' landing they had a jetty at the low tide but this was no use as the tide came right around the end of it, so they ran the cream down with horse and sled.

Describing the small settlements around the river, Te Hana was the railhead, but there was no dairy factory there at first so there was no clump of houses, only the railway station, and the store. Becrofts had started their orchard then but there was no garages or village that we see today. These all came later after 1936 when the Port Albert Dairy company shifted to Te Hana.

Paparoa was a far bigger settlement than Port Albert. They were also a part of the Albertland settlement, but as far back as Alf could remember they always thought of Paparoa as a little town. There were quite a few old buildings around, but they didn't amount to very much altogether.



Maungaturoto was a sort of halfway place for the railway. They used to have tea rooms there at one time, and a turntable for the railway engines. At one stage he remembered the railway finished at Te Hana. He also remembered going to Matakoho by boat and for some reason or other, going across to the Maungaturoto station and watching them switch an engine around that was heading North and turned it around on the turntable ready to head South again. He was doubtful at the time of his interview whether or not it would still be there today.

Kaiwaka was very little. Jaques' store started up there in the late 1920's he recalled. Alf's grandmother had a little bit to do with financing that store and he remembered his father taking her there once to see 'old man' Jaques, who was the father of the Jaques boys who were still running it in the 1990s.

Matakoho was just a little seaside village as well as Whakapirau and Pahi. Pahi had a lead on the others because it had the hotel and the big boarding house. Whakapirau was straight across from Pahi, the two wharves being opposite each other, and Jackman's store was there too.

Alf also remembered the steamship 'Minerva' in the 1920s which was owned by Charlie West from West's sawmill in Helensville that did quite a lot of rafting of logs from up the Wellsford creek through to Helensville. They also took an amount of Kauri out from the Maeneenee which is on the Topuni side and took it through to Helensville as well but mainly they took the pine trees that were cut out from around the orchards at Port Albert and dragged out by a bullock team owned by Bob Brunton. Alf can remember the piles of logs on the side of the road past



the Domain (or Rec grounds) waiting to be pushed into the creek and rafted out. He recalled once when they were struck by bad weather going down the Oruawharo River and the raft broke up. Rodney Morgan had a little launch which he had managed to get going with an old Ford engine and he and Alf spent all of one weekend helping to collect logs from all around different parts of the river. Charlie West paid them for their trouble.

When they towed the rafts of logs down, they had a mooring at the bottom of Freeman's Bay which was just above the 'Deep Hole.' They would leave the raft until the next high tide when they would take them out to the Kaipara Heads and hopefully get up to Helensville on the next incoming tide, so it would take a day and a half to tow the raft to Helensville, all being well. The trip was done for two or three years, by the steamer 'Minerva' about one raft a month. The 'Ivy' run by Ed Curel would meet up with the steamers at the mouth of the River to pick up general goods for the store like chaff, flour, and potatoes. Captain Dan Sellars also ran a boat named the 'Ruawai' from Helensville to Dargaville.

There was one notable hazard when travelling the river, the sandbank on one side of Hargreaves Bay, and the rocky points that came out on the Wharehine side were where the channel became fairly narrow and was usually marked with buoys. However, in bad weather, they were liable to get dragged or blown away. In those days there were no navigational aids in the river, once out of the river you could pick up lights from South Head, Pouto, and the lights from further up on the Helensville side or the Dargaville side, between these two, was where most of the shipping was. In the River, you mostly relied on the buoys or perhaps sticks, along with a bit of common knowledge. Today there is a buoy in Hargreaves Bay, a good one with moorings on, which is regularly serviced.

Alf fondly remembered the availability of snapper in those days, especially from September/October right through until March when there was plenty of fish to be caught and they were large snapper! Up to 16lbs or more and it was quite common to go down for an afternoon's fishing and you would catch 100 – 150 snapper, but he recalled that no one ever thought of taking anything home that was under 3lbs. At the time of his interview, he said it was unfortunate today if you were fortunate to find one that does weigh that much! In the early spring when the big snapper used to run up the river, by putting out a line with 3 or 4 hooks on it just down by the Port Albert wharf at night and returning in the morning you would be very 'unlucky' if you didn't have two fish that were 10lbs upwards waiting to be brought ashore. They used to do this right up until about 1970 and by then the Japanese longline boats were coming outside the Kaipara. They were not supposed to be inside the bar, but Alf had gone down to the lagoon, deer hunting with Rodney Morgan and one or two others, and at night they could hear the boats working, especially on a moonlit night. He was certain they weren't outside the Bar. He seemed to think that was the start of the finish of the big hauls of snapper.

When carrying cargo, it was usual to carry two crew as some cargo was too heavy for one person to handle. For example, they would pick up bags of super or black slag from the Te Hana railway siding. On one occasion when Reg Connelly was crewing, Alf remembered well coming out of Te Hana creek after loading up this black

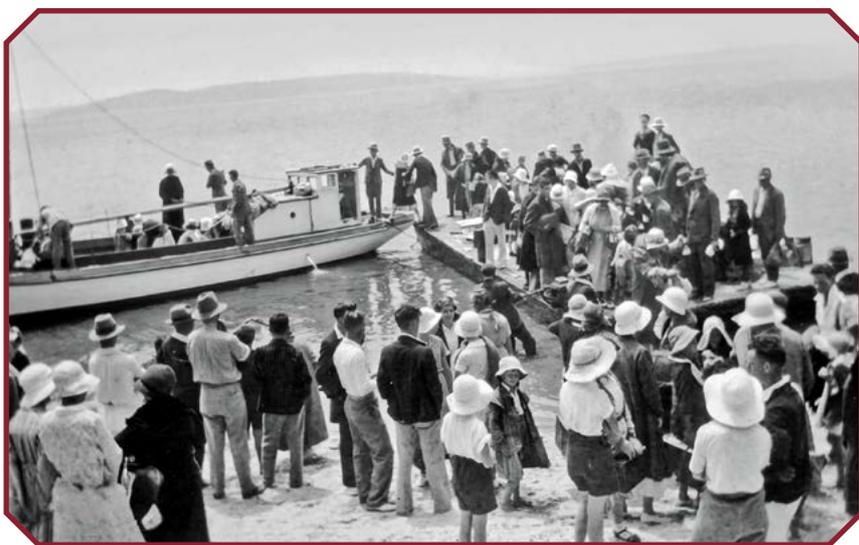
slag. Reg had been in the hull of the boat stacking. He had the dirty end of the stick, as the others were just sliding the bags down the gangplank to him, and he was taking them and stacking them in the boat. He got covered with this black dust and a bit of sweat and when they got going out of the creek, he got the anchor line and took it to the stern, put it around the stern bollard, and said, 'I am getting over.' Then he hopped over into the water, hung on to the rope, and got towed behind for quite a little distance. Of course, the boat with a load like that would probably be only doing 5 knots, even less, out of the creek. Reg seemed to think it was a good idea for getting cleaned up.

Alf's father Len would take the 'Belle' up the river to pick up apples, as being the smaller craft with shallow draft she could pick them up from the landings, and bring them to the wharf where they would be loaded onto the larger 'Ivy' and taken to Dargaville.

In the late 1930s, a chap by the name of Paikea was drowned when a dinghy broke away from a small launch owned by the Māori and it blew ashore just below the Deep Hole at the mouth of the river. This chap went swimming ashore to get the dinghy but never made it, he never came up! They got all the available launches and Alf and his dad spent a day just cruising around the mouth of the Port Albert River but his body was never found. Today there is a stone monument on the shore just where he was drowned.

Alf recalled those early days of carting sheep on the river, especially one lot coming up to Port Albert when his uncle, Ed Curel was running the 'Ivy.' He bought a barge load of sheep up and they were unloaded down at the 'Point' at Port Albert and held overnight in the horse paddock at the Boarding House. The next day they were driven up the road probably to the sale yards in Wellsford. This was possibly around 1920/1922 but he could also remember some being carted from Hargreaves Bay because their main shearing shed and pens were practically right on the beach and he remembered several years after that the race was formed from the shearing shed to the beach and that they were still loading sheep on to barges but he could not remember where they were going.

Talking about the landings on the river, Alf said that starting at the bottom there was the wharf at Fitzgerald point, at the top of Freeman's Bay which was known as Homestead Point. That point serviced what was known as Seaview and Okahukura. Opposite Hargreaves's Point was another place where the boat used to go in at the top end of Seaview Estate. There were one or two houses and he remembered going in there with goods on several occasions but was not sure what the name of the creek in there was called. Another landing



was out from Brooke's homestead and they would leave a small number of goods there to supply Shegadeen's store at Wharehine as well as supplies for the Brookes and Marsh families. These supplies were dropped off by his father Len by the 'Ivy' or the 'Belle'. Other landings were Gubbs' landing which was a small jetty with tramlines and above that was Dan Farr's creek and on the other side was where Sid Smith and Sinclair Eyre had quite a big jetty which was one of the main pick-up places for the cream. Then they would come around the corner to Neals' landing in Neal's creek and on special occasions they would deliver down to the Māori landing below where the school is at Oruawharo but mostly they would come over in their dinghy and pick up their own goods. The special occasions were mostly when they had a tangi or when they had a lot of supplies so they would be taken by boat.

Wellsford Creek was not a regular call and Te Hana was only when there was a truckload of manure or something like that. There was a crane on the railway wharf at Te Hana for heavy loading.

When Alf mentioned that they had to run the boat pretty well up on the shore for collecting cream and such, most of these landings or small jetties were high water or half tide so we just had to pick the place where there was limestone, and not too much mud and hoped to power the boat ashore. Customers would then have to come down and collect the goods by horse and sled usually.

After Alf's grandfather George drowned at Batley his grandmother was left running the business. Quite a remarkable woman, she wanted her children to have a better education than she had. She had been born at Port Albert in 1863 and was the eldest daughter of John Shepherd and Sarah Ann (nee Longbottom) who were new settlers from Lincolnshire. Her parents had moved to their own land at Port Albert by the time of her birth and had built a whare out of nikau palm which was basically two rooms divided by a curtain. She had met her husband George after being sent to Auckland at the age of 13 to live with the Reverend Edgar who was Port Albert's first minister. She worked as a servant and also in the millinery department of Smith & Caughey in Newmarket and met her husband-to-be while attending church. After his death, she was left with seven children, a boarding house, and a cooperative store. She was strong in faith and kept a good garden as well as sewed for her family. She died at the age of 88 years in Auckland after having been a widow for over forty years.

We thank Pat Bennett again for providing this wonderful story written by her father-in-law Alf, which gives us a reminder of how it was for the families in the very early days of settlement.

Check out this exciting restoration project being carried out on the Steam Ship 'Minerva'
<https://www.tsstheminerva.com/>

If you have a family story that you would like to share please contact the museum. We would love to hear from you.

Using AI Technology

Last month we raised the topic of AI-generated images and invited your thoughts ... with no response. At Albertland Heritage Museum, we hold deep respect for the original photographic images taken by Harold Marsh and other local photographers. These precious photographs are an important part of our history and are treasured just as they are.

For our display at the Port Albert Church celebrating 10 years of community ownership, we created a special display board featuring many images of the church through the years — including this beautiful wedding photograph of Andrew Armour and Jessie Grant on their special day.

Rob decided to colour the image using AI technology!

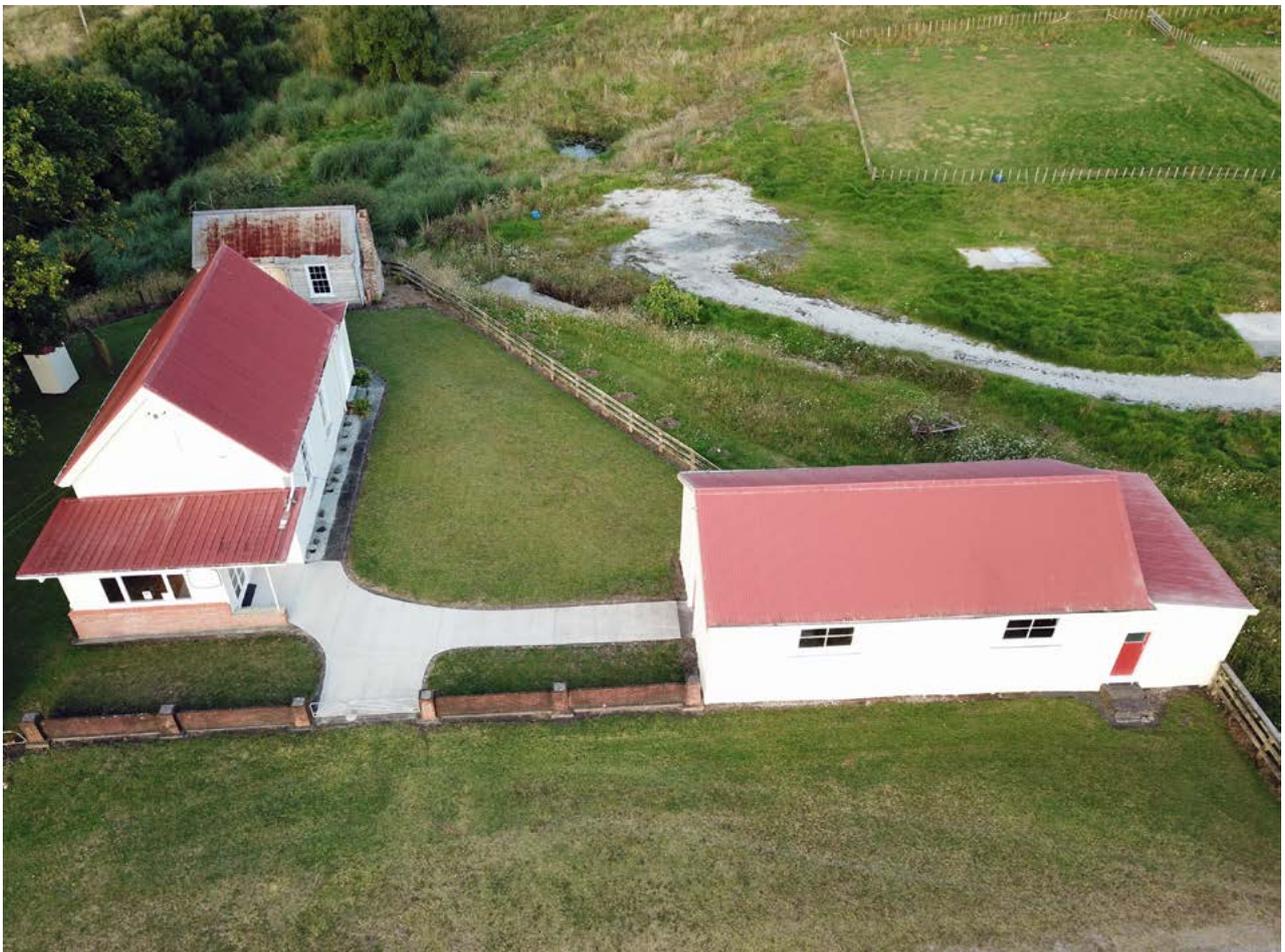
It certainly gives the photograph a new life and perspective. However, there is something a little unexpected hidden within the image. Look closely at Andrew's bowed head and let us know if you can spot it too...

We'd love to hear your thoughts:

- Do you enjoy seeing old photographs brought to life with colour?
- Or do you prefer them to remain exactly as they were captured?

History meets technology — and the conversation continues.





Rob Lennon: Drone shots early morning of the 10-year celebration of Community Ownership of the Port Albert Church. 8 February 2026