

The Albertland Gazette



Patron:
Mr Richard Te Haara



2004-2-01-21 - W H Marsh

Photo has been
AI regenerated for clarity



Wharehine
Memorial
Cenotaph
1914-1918

Prospect Hill

April 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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Our photo was taken shortly after the First World War, when the Wharehine community erected a simple grey granite obelisk on Prospect Hill (top of Shegadeen Road) to honour local soldiers. Inscribed in memory of those who "fought for freedom," it names Privates Frank Stables, Henry Sefton, and Alfred Moffatt, with Private I. E. Blackburn added after the Second World War. The memorial was relocated to the Wharehine Hall grounds in the 1950s.

Editors Message:

You may have noticed a few little changes this month. We're delighted to include a lovely new photo of our Patron, Mr Richard Te Haara, taken on Anzac morning. Richard took part in the Dawn Parade, delivering 'The Ode' in Te Reo—a meaningful addition to an already moving service.

Anzac Day holds a special place in our hearts, and it was wonderful to see so many attend the parade, with around 80 people joining us at the museum afterwards for a cup of tea and an Anzac biscuit. This special event, organised by the RSA Wellsford, truly brings our community together.

You may also have spotted that our newsletter has a new name. Inspired by the early Albertlanders, who produced their own newspaper—The Albertland Gazette and Ocean Chronicle—aboard the Matilda Wattenbach during their voyage from England, we have chosen to honour that remarkable effort.

Printing at sea in the 1860s was no easy feat, especially when trays of typeset were scattered across the deck! In tribute, our newsletter is now proudly titled The Albertland Gazette.

As always, we'd love to hear what you think.

Warm regards,
Rose and Rob

Wellsford Butchery

Further history of our April 2026 Calendar photo.

The Butcher's Paddock to Wellsford Butchery

Long before there was a shop window, a counter, or the familiar swing of a butcher's door, the people of Wellsford relied on one man.

Newton Arthur Worker.

In those early days, when the settlement was little more than scattered homes and muddy tracks, Newton took it upon himself to provide for the community. There was a quiet understanding that if meat was needed, Newton would see to it. He was, as they said, "killing for the village." But Wellsford was growing.

The land Newton held was vast—over 200 acres at first, and then more again after his father's death in 1900. By

the turn of the century, much of what would become the heart of Wellsford lay in his hands. The future of the district was not in wide paddocks, but in streets, shops, and people.

In 1907, that future began to take shape.

Newton started to divide his land along what would one day be called Rodney Street. Two five-acre sections were cut from the frontage, and with that simple act, the beginnings of a township were set in motion. Stores arrived, trades followed, and the once quiet paddocks slowly filled with the sounds of enterprise.

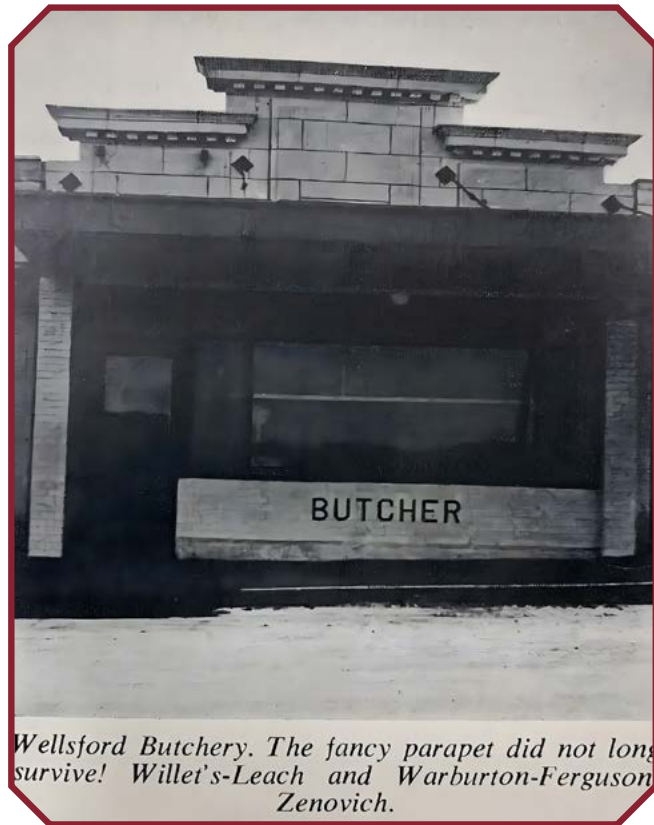
One section, in time, became known by a name that would endure—the butcher's paddock.

It was here, in 1924, that J. W. "Jim" Willetts established Wellsford Butchery. For the first time, the trade that had once depended on one man's labour became a permanent fixture of the town. A place where people could purchase what they needed—no longer from a paddock, but from a shop built to serve a growing community. Around it, Wellsford blossomed. A bakehouse opened. A general store. The town's first garage. Businesses lined the street, many proudly carrying the name "Wellsford," marking them as the first of their kind in the village. Yet through all the change, the butchery remained.

Ownership passed from Willetts to Leach and Warburton in 1935, and later through other hands, including Clive Ferguson and Alf Zenovich. Each brought their own chapter, but the name endured—Wellsford Butchery. It was more than a business; it was a thread connecting generations.

And so, the butcher's paddock remained just that—though no longer a paddock, and no longer just one man's responsibility.

From Newton Worker's early efforts to provide meat for a growing village, to a business that has endured for more than a century, Wellsford Butchery is far more than a shop—it is woven into the history of the town, a story of continuity, community, and the quiet beginnings from which Wellsford grew.



Wellsford Butchery. The fancy parapet did not long survive! Willet's-Leach and Warburton-Ferguson Zenovich.



THE CAB Easter Trail 2026

This Easter, we were very proud to support the Wellsford Citizens Advice Bureau, who ran an interactive “Discovery Trail” from 3rd to 17th April.

This initiative, delivered in partnership with Warkworth CAB, encouraged children to get outdoors and stay active during the school holidays. By offering a fun, incentive-based trail, it provided a healthy, screen-free way for families to explore their local environment together.



We're delighted to report that the trail was a great success. Over the two weeks, we welcomed a steady stream of children and parents to the museum, all eager to take part and engage with our volunteers. The basket of Easter eggs and lollipops—kindly supplied by CAB—disappeared quickly, but we're pleased to say no one went away empty-handed!

A fantastic effort by both Wellsford and Warkworth CAB—well done to everyone involved.

Footnote: Tayler Stables, grandson of our own volunteers was also the recipient of one of the wonderful prizes donated by all participating local businesses.

A big Thank You!

The heart of our museum—operating without external funding—rests on the support of our community. Memberships, donations, and the steady stream of visitors we welcome each month are what keep our doors open.

Without these, meeting the ever-increasing costs of running a small museum can be challenging. Every contribution, no matter the size, truly makes a difference.

This month has been especially heartening, with the receipt of two generous donations.

Equally meaningful, however, are the smaller acts of kindness—like a thoughtful contribution from Kathleen at The Port Albert Store.

A visit to The Port Albert store is always a pleasure, rain or shine. Whether you're stopping in for a coffee or treating yourself to a classic serve of fish and chips, you'll find a warm and welcoming atmosphere inside the historic building once known as Bennetts' Store. It's well worth a visit.

Thank you, Kathleen, for your valued support of the Albertland Heritage Museum.
<https://www.facebook.com/p/Port-Albert-General-Store-100089201067535/>



Volunteering at the Museum

If you have volunteered for a while like Barbara you look around and start a project if you think something needs fixing.

Over the past few months, Barbara has systematically made new labels for our very old folders with disintegrating plastic label holders and covered them with handmade, laminated labels that are great to look at and easy to read.

This has taken quite some time and it was a moment of relief when she could finally stand back and look at the great job she has done.

Just another improvement to the look of the museum ready for our many visitors who come in and use these folders for research.



Inside each folder are paper copies of the work of our three local photographers, Harold Marsh, Don Worsnop and Cliff Grant as well as WW1 and WW2 soldiers from our district, School registers and land titles – all at the end of our fingertips.

Great job Barbara – thank you. If a project like this is something you would like to be involved in please give us a call at the museum – 09 423 8181 to have a talk.

‘NEDDY’ THE HORSE UPDATE

Some things in the museum simply can't help attracting attention—and recently, Neddy has been one of them. During the CAB Discovery Trail, which brought many children through our doors, he quickly became a favourite.

A visit from Wellsford Preschool, with eight young children, saw Neddy once again delighting his audience—this time even giving gentle “rides,” something we all agreed would be the right thing to do once his wonderful restoration, generously sponsored by the Lions Club of Wellsford, was complete.



Wellsford Pre-School kids with Neddy

But it's not only the young who are smitten with this beautiful boy. When long-time supporter of the Albertland Heritage Museum, Rowena Dowson, brought her daughter Vicky Fane in for a visit, Vicky too fell under Neddy's spell. So much so that she later sent Rowena back with something very special—a blanket made from her Albertland Pony Club ribbons.



Rowena Dowson presenting the blanket to Neddy

These ribbons were won during her time with the Hakaru Pony Club, competing at the Albertland Show Day on her pony “Cosy” and her horse “Cherry.” Lovingly sewn together by Vicky, the blanket now rests proudly on Neddy's stand—a beautiful and meaningful addition that connects past and present.

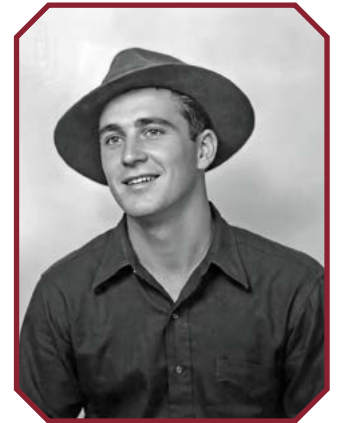
It's a lovely touch to our display, and thanks to Vicky's generosity, Neddy can now proudly be known as an Albertland Pony Club horse.

The Curator's Chronicle

- The Diaries of Colin Rotherham

Bringing together an idea for our Anzac Day display in the Marsh Gallery, we began searching for a local man who had left his family to serve in World War II. Exploring our extensive database, one name stood out—Colin Rotherham, a local young man who was working on the Gubbs' farm at the time of his enlistment.

Knowing that Colin had kept diaries during his time as a farmer and truck driver, we wondered if he might also have recorded his wartime experiences. A quick search confirmed that a copy of his War Diary 1942–1945 (376147) is held at Auckland Museum. While we hold several of Colin's diaries in our own collection, this particular one was missing.



We reached out to Raewyn and Terry Trail of Orewa. Raewyn, Colin's younger daughter, along with her husband Terry, has generously supported us in the past with information about early Port Albert and Wellsford history. Hoping they might be able to help, we were delighted when they offered to bring the diary to the museum so we could scan it while they visited family in the district.

words vividly to life.

What arrived was something truly special—a 90-page volume carefully compiled by another family member, enriched with photographs and references that brought Colin's



One of the most meaningful aspects of this story is what happened next. Once digitised, we were able to send a copy to Raewyn and Terry's daughter, Melanie, who was at that very time travelling in Egypt—walking in the very places where her grandfather had served. Her stay in Cairo, near Maadi where New Zealand troops were based, created a powerful connection across generations.

Within the pages of the diary, we found exactly what we had been searching for—the deeply personal story of a young soldier. Newly married, with a nine-month-old daughter, Maureen, Colin left New Zealand shores and his wife Eva behind to face the uncertainty of war. Just before departing in December 1942, he learned that he was to become a father again. He would not meet his son, Brian, until his return nearly three years later in 1945.

His letters home are touching and heartfelt. Time and again, he asked his parents to look after Eva and the children, revealing a sense of helplessness that must have weighed heavily on him. He wrote of meeting other local men while serving in Egypt—familiar Albertland names that still resonate in our community today. Birthdays, anniversaries, and milestones passed in his absence, each one carefully recorded in his diary.



Our display, titled “Separation, Hardship, and Distraction,” reflects these shared experiences.

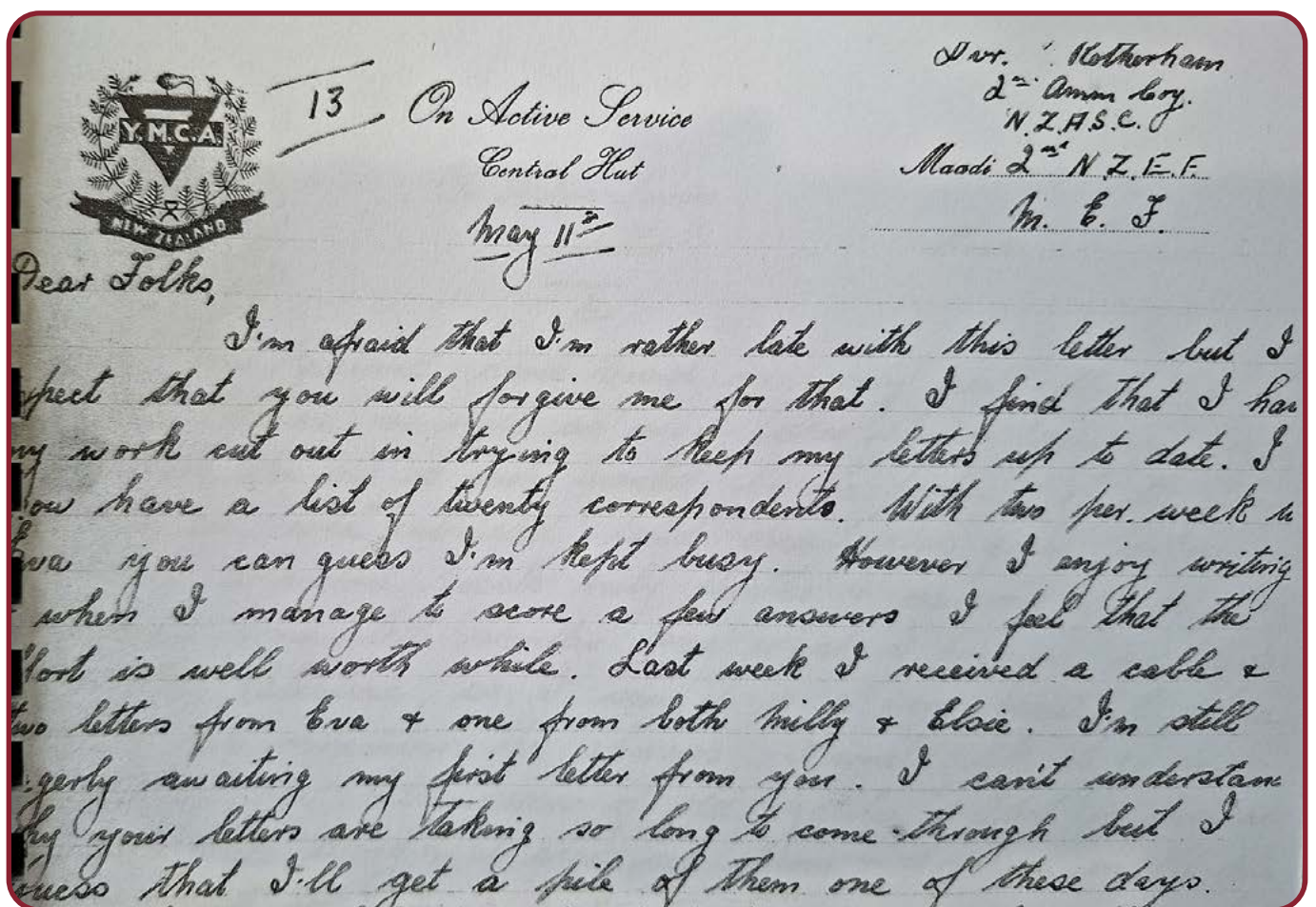
Separation speaks to the soldiers leaving their families behind.

Hardship reflects life on the home front, marked by rationing and shortages.

Distraction acknowledges how people carried on—through music, films, friendships, and community.

Now digitised and printed, Colin’s diary will be accessioned into our growing collection of family histories, ensuring it is preserved and accessible for future generations.

We warmly invite you to visit and view this special display, carefully curated by our newest volunteer Diane Smith, which will run until the end of May 2026. The museum is open Wednesday to Saturday from 11 am to 3 pm, and Sunday from 1 pm to 3 pm. If these times don’t suit, please feel free to email us at albertlandmuseum@gmail.com to arrange an alternative visit.



Diane with the Colin Rotherham Exhibition

Those Special Moments

There are some donations that arrive quietly... and then there are those that seem to carry a presence with them. When a few carefully packed boxes were gifted to the museum from the family of the late Elva Reid, it felt very much like the latter. Nearly a year on from her passing, these treasures offered a gentle and elegant glimpse into her life — a reminder of grace, style, and the small details that once mattered so much.

As the lids were lifted, there was a shared pause among the team. Inside lay not just a collection, but a story — a beautiful array of hats, each one with its own character, its own occasion imagined. And then, nestled among them, the gloves.

They were exquisite.

Soft ivory tones, delicate stitching, tiny beads and subtle embroidery — the kind of craftsmanship that speaks of another era, when dressing for an outing was an event in itself. You could almost picture them worn to a wedding, a church service, or an afternoon gathering, paired with one of those elegant hats and a quiet confidence.

Naturally, curiosity (and a little excitement) got the better of us.

Unable to resist, the gloves were carefully slipped on, bringing them momentarily back to life. Hands outstretched, side by side, the contrast in styles became clear — each pair unique, yet equally refined. It was a simple moment, but one filled with admiration... and perhaps a touch of wonder at the lives these pieces had been part of.

In that small act of modelling them for a photograph, the gloves became more than objects. They became a connection — between past and present, between Elva and those now entrusted with her treasures.



Moments like these are what make our work so special. Not just preserving history, but feeling it, even if only for a fleeting moment, in something as simple — and as beautiful — as a pair of gloves.

Thank you to Elva's family for donating these items to Albertland Heritage Museum.

Birthday Wishes for April

April has certainly kept us on our toes—with the Easter break, school holidays, and the meaningful reflections of Anzac Day all woven into a very busy and memorable month.

But in the midst of it all, we didn't want to let the moment pass without celebrating something just as important—our special birthdays.

Emma Fairweather, Trish Treadwell, Lisa Crisp, Christy Weightman, Sean Harris, Bonny Harris, Thereasa Powell and Lynette Gubb.

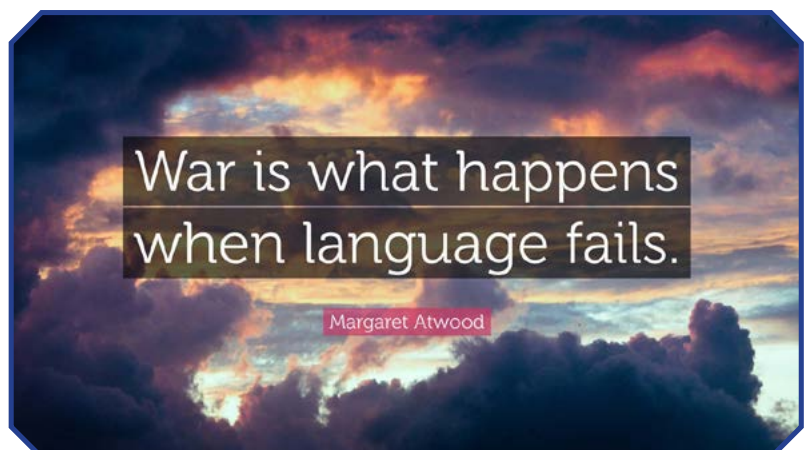
To everyone who has marked a birthday this month, we send our warmest wishes. May the year ahead bring you good health, happiness, and many moments to treasure with family and friends.

And if we've missed your special day, please do let us know—we would love to add you to our list and celebrate with you too.

Quotation for April

This renowned quote was written by Canadian author and poet Margaret Atwood, who was born on November 18, 1939, in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Since 1961, she has built an extraordinary literary career, publishing 18 books of poetry, 18 novels, 11 works of nonfiction, nine collections of short fiction, eight children's books, two graphic novels, and numerous small press editions of both poetry and fiction.



What's On

09th May – Celebrating Gordon Hendriksen's 90th birthday at Port Albert Hall. For more details phone Jenny Lambert 09 423 8963.

10th May – Port Albert Community Church 1.30 pm (Please bring a plate)

17th May – Minniesdale Chapel – AGM (See flier below for more details)

30th May - Albertland Heritage Museum Open Day 10.00 – 4.00 pm

If you would like a date added to our calendar please send details to albertlandmuseum@gmail.com

29th of May Celebrations – 164 years

This year, we've made the decision to keep our 164th Albertland 29th of May commemorations a little more low-key, mindful of the current cost of living and rising fuel costs. However, we would still love to see you.

If you would like to join us, the museum will be open on Saturday 30th for a relaxed open day. It's a wonderful opportunity to spend time with our volunteers, share your family connections, and explore our current displays at your own pace.

Minniesdale Chapel & Cemetery

Past History

Reverend Edwin Stanley BROOKES Senior arrived from England in 1866 saying he intended to build a house of God in which they could hold divine worship. He brought the framework and the stained-glass windows with him on the ship and with the community behind him the chapel was built and the first service was held on the 29th of December 1867.

Reverend BROOKES departed Wharehine in 1897 and passed away in 1899. Between 1897 and 1899 five services were conducted by a visiting preacher from the Baptist Union. Due to a lack of membership, the church ceased to function as a separate denomination in 1902 and was given to the district by the Baptist Union for the use of all denominations and run by a committee.

Between 1902 and 1922 seven quarterly meetings were held. From 1922 proceedings were conducted in a more business-like manner and in 1925 Mr Harold MARSH began 22 years as Chairman.

For those who would like to read a more detailed history of Minniesdale Chapel there is a booklet for sale.

Trustees and their role

In early years, many residents of the area made personal donations, took out subscriptions, and held concerts in order to raise funds for necessary repairs in order to preserve the chapel. In more recent decades there have been a number of bequests from estates plus donations from Albertland descendants and others that have helped to keep this beautiful building in a wonderful condition. Thanks to those generous people.

The current group of trustees continue to ensure that the chapel is maintained and the cemetery grounds are kept in a tidy condition and it is a credit to all since the early 1900's that families have a beautiful place to lay their loved one and to share the view of the Oruawharo River on the Kaipara Harbour.

All are welcome to become a trustee and must attend two meetings held each year in the chapel plus attend the AGM which is held in May. Then, at the end of each year near the 29th of December a service is held to remember those Albertlanders who settled in Wharehine and surrounding districts.

The role of a trustee is not onerous and if you would like to hear more about this then come along to this year's AGM which is being held in the refurbished Wharehine Hall in Pah Hill Road, Wharehine. All the details for this AGM are on the enclosed notice in this Albertland Heritage Museum newsletter.



Minniesdale Chapel & Cemetery Trust

AGM

Will be held

Sunday 11am 17th May 2026

At Wharehine Public Hall

Pah Hill Road, Wharehine

Join us to learn more about the trustee role, as we're looking to expand our board (especially welcoming those with accounts or admin experience).

Doors open at 10.30am for a cuppa and biscuits before commencing.

Email: minniesdale@outlook.co.nz

ALL WELCOME

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL ANZAC DAY – APRIL 25TH 2026

The Wellsford Anzac Day Parade was a well-organised and highly successful event, with a strong turnout from our local community. After several planning meetings to ensure road closures, the smooth progression of the parade to the Memorial Gates, and coordination of sound, music, and official guests, the day began early for us at the museum. We arrived just on 5am to put the hot water on—ready for that all-important cup of tea and Anzac biscuit, which has become the Albertland Heritage Museum’s contribution to this significant day in our calendar.

A heartfelt thank you to the RSA Wellsford (Terry Blakemore), the Rt Hon. Chris Penk, Captain Jonathon Beadsmoore, Mark Carrell, Ray Hollis, Richard Te Haara, Sandra and Kevin Berry, Roger Farr, Terry Reid, Trent Jones (piper) and Rob Lennon, along with our local schools, clubs, organisations, and everyone who marched and participated. Your collective efforts made the morning a memorable success.

Anzac Day remains a deeply important occasion for our community—a time to remember all of our local men and women who served, and especially those who were lost in conflicts across the years.

We are also currently advocating for the reinstatement of the archway at the entrance to Memorial Park, restoring the pillars to something closer to their original form. We would greatly value community input on this project, so please get in touch if you have ideas or would like to be involved. Our next public meeting will be held on 27 May—email us at wellsfordmemorialarchway@gmail.com to be added to the mailing list.



Photo of some of the visitors at the open morning after the Anzac Dawn Service



Later that day, the Wharehine Hall Committee invited the community to a special unveiling of their newly refurbished war memorial. It was a truly magical afternoon. The sun shone across the Oruawharo River, and the restored monument stood gleaming, its newly inscribed names clear and easy to read.

Special guests included Ben Hita, Colin Smith, and family members of the men from Wharehine who lost their lives in service. Piper Trent Jones, after his early start in Wellsford, once again moved the crowd as he played from the hill overlooking the harbour. The scene was made even more powerful by the presence of two horses and their riders standing before the monument, in recognition of the Mounted Rifles who played such an important role in Wharehine’s history.



It was another remarkable achievement by a dedicated group of volunteers, honouring the memory of their local men. The afternoon concluded with a well-Home



enjoyed gathering over tea.

Albertland Heritage Museum was also proud to contribute a poignant moment to the day. A schoolteacher's table, once used at Wharehine School and captured in an early photograph of Elizabeth Marcroft casting her vote on 25th November 1902, was returned to the community. The table had resided at the museum for many years but was no longer able to tell its full story in that setting. Our committee made the decision to return it on permanent loan to Wharehine Hall, where plans are underway for its restoration. In time, it will take pride of place once more, with its history properly recognised and shared.

If you would like to comment on this story or any others in our newsletter, please contact us at albertlandmuseum@gmail.com



Ben Hita

Clare Joensen

Kevin Berry



Wharehine Hall - Teachers Table that was used for the General Election 25th November 1902



Cr Colin Smith - Cutting the Ribbon