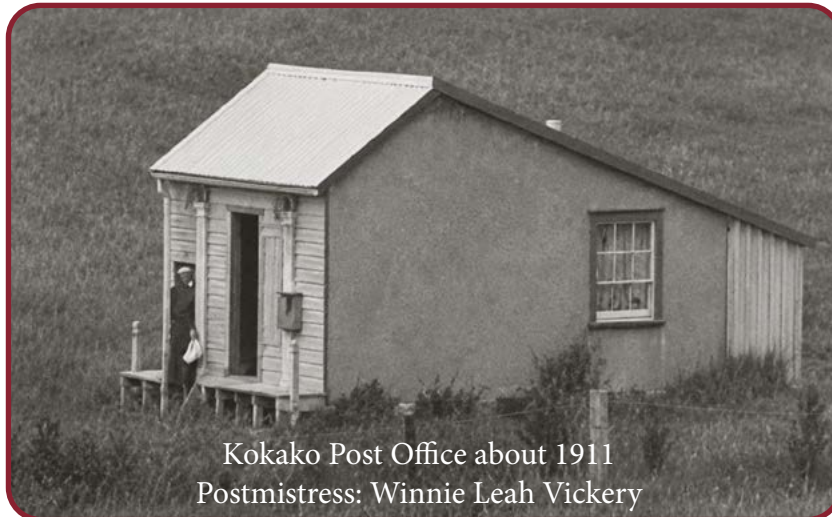


The Albertland Gazette



Patron:
Mr Richard Te Haara



Kokako Post Office about 1911
Postmistress: Winnie Leah Vickery



This Photo of the Kokako Post Office is taken out of a photo by Harold Marsh. The photo has been put through AI to get a much clearer view.

August 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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Editors Message:

What a busy and interesting month it has been around the Albertland Heritage Museum and our wider community! One of the things I particularly enjoy about working on The Albertland Gazette is seeing just how many stories there are to tell about our local people, places and history. This month's edition is no exception, with stories ranging from very special visitors to birthday celebrations, community restoration projects, and fundraising. The highlight for me was seeing Rhona reaching 103 which is certainly an achievement, and Rhona's wonderful stories and memories are a reminder of the living history that exists within our own community. Fundraising continues to be an important part of keeping our museum operating, and once again our volunteers have been busy helping at community events. It is only through the generosity, time and enthusiasm of our volunteers and supporters that we are able to continue preserving and sharing the stories of Albertland and the surrounding district.. And finally, a reminder that our Annual General Meeting is coming up on Sunday 13th September at 1.00pm at the Wellsford RSA. Everyone is welcome to come along, hear what has been happening at the museum over the past year, meet the committee and enjoy afternoon tea with us. We are also very pleased to have Sean Harris, a steam boat enthusiast, as our guest speaker, talking about the boats of Kaipara Harbour. As always, thank you to everyone who contributes stories, photographs, memories and ideas to The Albertland Gazette. Every contribution helps us build a record of the people and events that make our district so special. Until next month,

Warm regards,
Rose and Rob

Rodney Hotel - Our Calendar Story



The Rodney Hotel – From Boarding House to Hotel

The story of the Rodney Hotel is closely woven into the development of Wellsford, and its beginnings go back to the difficult years of the Great Depression.

The building was constructed by local builder Frederick Utting for his brother-in-law, Ernest Martin (Tim) Davies. The first person to lease the premises was a Mrs Mason, followed by Mrs E. G. Connell, whose daughter, Mrs J. D. Sellar, was later well known in Wellsford. Mrs Connell's husband had also played an important role in the early development of the town, serving as Wellsford's station-master between 1913 and 1918, when the railway station and post office were still combined.

In 1940, Miss Edna M. Paton purchased the property. It was not an easy time to take on a new business, as rationing, coupons and wartime restrictions were soon to complicate everyday life. In 1941, Edna married Wellsford businessman Bob Shepherd, and it was during their ownership that an important improvement was made to the property.

A reliable water supply was essential, so Edna decided to have a bore drilled. Some locals apparently thought she was wasting her money and laughed at the idea, but the bore proved them wrong, producing a plentiful supply of water for the needs of the time.

The Shepherds made several small additions to the building before selling the property in 1946 to W. W. (Bill) Duck. Bill was Wellsford's only plumber at the time and was a familiar figure in the local business community. He later sold his plumbing business to another well-known local businessman, George Sexton. Bill Duck's ownership of the premises was short-lived. In 1947 he sold the property to Gordon Logan, a man who would go on to make his own mark on Wellsford. Logan was involved in local affairs, serving on the Town Committee and as secretary of the Memorial Park Committee.

For several years the premises operated without a publican's licence. Then, in the 1950s, the Licensing Commission decided that a licence could be made available for Wellsford. An extensive hearing was held, with the field of applicants eventually narrowed to two: Rhodes-Williams, licensee of the Cumberland Hotel at Leigh, and Gordon Logan.

Rhodes-Williams was initially granted the licence, but this was conditional on suitable premises being provided. However, no progress was made and within two years the award had lapsed.

In 1955, the licence was finally granted to Gordon Logan. After carrying out the alterations required by the Licensing Commission, Logan opened his public house in September 1955. Wellsford now had its own licensed hotel.

The Rodney Hotel continued to develop as Wellsford itself grew. By 1964, the premises and business were

once again on the market. The successful purchaser was Norman McLeod, a Dargaville businessman who had previously held publican's licences at Parua Bay and Silverdale.

McLeod was described as a progressive businessman and quickly began an ambitious programme of improvements. Extensions and upgrading were carried out, including the addition of guest rooms with private bathrooms. These improvements significantly lifted the standard of accommodation available in Wellsford and gave the Rodney Hotel an important place in the town's growing business and social life.

From its beginnings during the Depression, through wartime rationing, the struggle to establish a licensed hotel, and the expansion of the 1960s, the Rodney Hotel's history reflects the changing face of Wellsford itself—a town steadily growing from a small settlement into a busy country centre.

Information from the book WELLSFORD - Tidal Creek to Gum Ridge by Harry Mabbett which is available to purchase from the Albertland Heritage Museum.

Remembering our former Curator Rex Eagle

It is with great sadness that we farewell our former Curator, Rex Eagle, who passed away at Warkworth at the end of July.

Rex and his wife, Emma, joined Albertland Heritage Museum in January 2022 as the Covid Pandemic was nearing its end, with Rex taking up the role of Curator shortly afterwards. He brought with him a wealth of knowledge, enthusiasm and a genuine passion for history and collecting.

Rex was a keen collector of many things, but his particular loves were bottle collecting and Willow China. His home was a wonderful treasure trove, filled with collections gathered both here in New Zealand and during the many years he lived in the Falkland Islands, where he also met his wife, Emma.

Many in our local community will remember Rex from his earlier years as a teacher at Wellsford Primary School and as a soccer coach at nearby Port Albert, where he made his home. He also had an extensive knowledge of local history, including connections with the Bennett family and store at Port Albert.

During his time at the museum, Rex generously shared his knowledge with others, holding several workshops where he spoke about his collections and passed on some of his incredible expertise. His enthusiasm and willingness to share what he knew made a lasting impression on those who had the opportunity to learn from him.

Rex will be remembered fondly by the museum volunteers and the wider community for his friendship, his knowledge and his many contributions to preserving our local history.

Our sincere condolences go to Emma and to Rex's family.

Link to the Falkland Islands tribute.

<https://www.facebook.com/firunning/posts/we-are-saddened-to-hear-of-rex-eagles-passing-rex-served-as-the-clubs-chair-and-/1497679969062520/>



The Curator's Chronicle

The Wonderful World of Scrapbooks

This month I thought we would take a look at something many of us may have tucked away in a cupboard, wardrobe or box somewhere — scrapbooks.

There is quite a debate within museums and historical societies about whether scrapbooks are worth keeping. They can be bulky and take up valuable storage space, but here at the museum we believe they can be little treasures of personal and local history.

Scrapbooks capture something that digital photographs simply cannot. Alongside photographs and newspaper clippings, you may find handwritten notes, ticket stubs, invitations, letters and captions. Together, these seemingly ordinary items can tell a very personal story about an individual, family or community.

They also give us an insight into the person who created them — what they considered important, the events they attended and the people who mattered to them. Turning the pages of an old scrapbook can bring back wonderful memories and give us a glimpse into the past.

But scrapbooks do present problems.

Many older scrapbooks were made using materials that are not ideal for long-term preservation. Paper can become brittle and stained, while old glues and sticky tape can cause damage. Damp conditions can encourage mould and insects, while heat and sunlight can also cause deterioration.

So, don't throw them out simply because they are old or untidy! They may contain information that is irreplaceable.

Where possible, store scrapbooks flat in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Handle them gently and avoid using glue or tape to repair loose pages or items, as this can cause further damage.

SUGGESTIONS WANTED FOR WELLSFORD STREET AND ROAD NAMES

Suggestions are invited by the Wellsford County Town Committee in regard to names for two small roads as yet nameless, officially.

One is known locally as the "stock route," running from Centennial Park Road to Rusty Brook Road, and known on Show days as the "Scotchman's Grandstand."

Local people will recall that Centennial Park Road itself was formerly known as Schute's Road and sometimes as Slaughterhouse Road.

The second unnamed road is usually called "McGillivray's Road," and runs to a dead end off School Road, but when it becomes opened to the State Highway as it must eventually, it could become to the north end of the town, what Davies Road is to the southern end.

Names in Wellsford are sometimes based on the "use" idea, e.g. School Road, Station Road and Centennial Park Road.

Others are commemorative of early settlers, such as Workers Road, Davies Road and

Armitage Road, or events of importance in New Zealand's story—Batten Street, Tobruk Road, Olympus Road, Monowai Street and Hanover St. come in this class, while Hood Street running parallel to Rodney Street would appear appropriate to most people.

There are still some of the original "grantees" of land yet to be recognised, pioneer ships to be remembered and famous men and their deeds to be honoured.

If you have an idea, please pass it on to Secretary Forbes Greenfield to be recorded; some suggestions from the past are: Ramsbottom, Harrison, Welton Browne, Wilson, Smyth, Whaka-o-kinga, Hushbrook, Treadwell, Watson, Dibble and Oldfield, names connected with both Wellsfords, the older and the newer.

What about digitising them?

Digitising is a wonderful way to preserve the information while reducing the need to handle the original. It is important, however, to preserve the scrapbook as a whole. The arrangement of photographs, clippings and handwritten captions is part of the story.

A digital copy allows the scrapbook to be shared with family members, researchers and future generations while the original can be safely stored.

One of the great things about museums is that history isn't always found in grand documents. Sometimes it is hidden in the most ordinary things.

A scrapbook containing a photograph of a local school group, a newspaper clipping about a community event or a handwritten note



Today *Papatoetoe & Otahuhu Week* launches a new community service column for our readers.

If you have a question or something that's just been bugging you for a while – drop us a line and we'll try to get some answers for you.

We kick off this new weekly column with a question from Andrew Biggs of Otahuhu, who has an Anzac Day project to complete. Andrew asks:

Q: How did the First World War start?

A: The First World War, which broke across the world like a clap of thunder on August 3, 1914, began when Germany declared war on France and invaded Belgium, pitting Germany and Austria-Hungary against Russia, France, the British Empire, and eventually the United States.

The war grew out of a diplomatic crisis when Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb student revolutionary assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo.

Princip's actions served to ignite a holocaust of death of imaginable proportions.

The archduke was the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary and Austria-Hungary sought to punish Serbia; Russia defended Serbia, a fellow Slavic State; Germany insisted that the rest of Europe keep out of Austria-Hungary's business with Serbia; and France was bound by treaty settlement to assist Russia. Everyone assumed the conflict would be over by Christmas but it did not end until November 11, 1918, by which time historians estimate that 13 million people were killed, including 16,697 Kiwis while on active duty.

Send your questions to:

What's your question? Manurewa Week, c/o Community Newspapers Ltd, PO Box 32, Auckland – or email us at: manurewa_week@wilsonandhorton.co.nz

Papatoetoe & Otahuhu Week
Wed. 24 Apr. 2002.

identifying someone can provide valuable information about our past.

So, if you have an old scrapbook sitting on a shelf at home, take another look before deciding it is simply taking up space. What may look like an old collection of clippings and photographs today could become an important piece of history tomorrow.

Scrapbooks are personal, sometimes messy and occasionally fragile — but they are wonderfully unique records of the lives we have lived. Once they are gone, they can never truly be recreated.

CAREFUL. I wouldn't want you to drop my new house.
Surely Mr Peter Sellers would have had thoughts like this running through his mind as his new house was moved, or manipulated into place in Bellevue Ave., Wellsford, on Thursday.
The contractors did not drop it, although getting the building into its corner section did have its moments.



JOURNEY OF THE MATILDA WATTENBACH Continued

The Matilda Wattenbach Arrives in Auckland

We again join the Albertlanders aboard the Matilda Wattenbach as their long and difficult voyage finally came to an end and they arrived in Auckland at the beginning of September 1862.

After everything they had endured at sea, reaching Auckland Harbour must have been an extraordinary moment. Friends and supporters of the Albertland scheme came aboard to welcome the newcomers, who were soon to become part of a very different kind of settlement in the Kaipara.

Auckland itself would have looked very different to the city we know today. Maria Judson later remembered walking up Queen Street and seeing a gully full of arum lilies where the Town Hall now stands. At the bottom of Shortland Street she remembered picking watercress. The waterfront was largely mudflat, covered with water at high tide, while areas such as Khyber Pass and Karangahape Road were still considered to be “in the country”, covered in fern and manuka scrub. There was certainly no City Link railway to be seen!

The Albertlanders were given a formal public welcome on 10 September. The emigrants were taken from the Matilda Wattenbach to the wharf by the paddle-wheel steamer Tasmanian Maid, arriving ashore shortly after ten o'clock. A procession had originally been planned, with the Auckland Rifle Volunteers Band leading the settlers from the wharf to the Council Chamber. However, this plan was abandoned and the emigrants instead made their way in smaller groups. The Daily Southern Cross reported that this was done to avoid drawing too much attention to the procession and the criticism it might attract.

Once gathered, the settlers were treated to a very impressive welcome. The captains and masters of vessels in the harbour hoisted their flags in honour of the occasion, creating what was described as a pleasing sight from the shore. A large tent had been erected in case of bad weather, with a platform nearby for the speakers.

The event attracted a considerable crowd. Several leading Auckland businessmen even closed their premises for the day so they could attend. The Auckland Rifle Volunteers Band, conducted by Mr Beale, added to the occasion with a selection of music including Old Folks at Home, Cheer Boys Cheer, Irish Emigrant, Manoeuvre March and God Save the Queen. Dr Pollen chaired the proceedings, with several clergymen and prominent

merchants also taking part.

The speeches were full of optimism for the future of the Albertland settlement. The chairman acknowledged the considerable effort that had gone into establishing the scheme and spoke of the large blocks of land that had been set aside in the Kaipara. He assured the settlers that they had been provided with a generous amount of land and that much of it was among the finest in the province. With this first important requirement taken care of, he believed the success of the settlement was now largely in the hands of the emigrants themselves.

Mr Whitaker, who had long been associated with the Albertland scheme, then addressed the newcomers. His message was encouraging, but also realistic. He reminded them that they were not coming to an easy life. They were setting out to make homes in what was still wilderness and would need plenty of energy and determination.

He also had some rather pointed advice. The settlers would no doubt hear plenty of opinions about what they should or should not do, but he urged them to be careful about whose advice they followed. Those who had failed themselves, he suggested, were often the quickest to tell others how things should be done! His advice was simple: look around, make their own judgements and remain determined to succeed.

His welcome also carried a much bigger vision. Whitaker believed that New Zealand had the potential to become a great country and suggested that these new settlers could regard themselves as founders of its future. He reminded them of how much the colony had already developed in just twenty years and encouraged them to believe that, with patience and perseverance, they too could achieve great things.

The official address presented to the Albertlanders congratulated them on their safe arrival and welcomed them as fellow colonists. It acknowledged that life in a young colony would bring trials and hardships, but assured them that those who worked diligently could expect success. The settlers were also promised friendship, advice and support from those who had welcomed them in Auckland.

William Brame then spoke on behalf of the Albertland emigrants. He expressed their genuine gratitude for the warmth and generosity with which they had been received. They had certainly expected to encounter difficulties, but they had not expected such a warm welcome from the people of Auckland.

Brame was keen to make it clear that the emigrants had not arrived with unrealistic expectations. They knew that hard work lay ahead and were prepared to face the trials of establishing a settlement. He believed there were many among the group with the determination, energy and enterprise needed to make Albertland a success. He also pointed out that people in England were watching closely and that the success of the settlement could encourage many more to make the journey to New Zealand.

But beneath all the optimism and speeches, there was already a rather serious problem emerging.

The settlers had genuinely believed that arrangements would have been made for them to travel from Auckland to the site of their new settlement. Unfortunately, this was not the case. While still aboard the Matilda Wattenbach, a ballot had been held to determine their land allocations, a system considered to be the fairest way of settling the question. The results had apparently been received with general satisfaction.

Now, however, the settlers discovered that they were largely being left to make their own way to Albertland. The journey ahead was around 70 miles through extremely difficult country. There were no roads or convenient transport routes to carry the newcomers and their belongings to their promised homes. After the months spent at sea, this must have been a considerable disappointment. The delay and difficulty of getting to the settlement would become one of the chief reasons that many of the emigrants failed even to make the attempt to reach their intended destination.

And so, the Matilda Wattenbach story did not quite end when the ship reached Auckland. In fact, for the Albertlanders, it was only the beginning.

It was around a week after the ship's arrival before the last of the passengers had disembarked. They had been welcomed with music, flags, speeches and promises of friendship, but their real challenge was still ahead. Their

destination, Port Albert, was isolated and without roads or many of the everyday comforts they had known at home.

The Albertlanders had crossed the world believing they were beginning a new life. Now they faced one final, exhausting journey into the wilderness before they could even begin to build it.

Join us next month for the final chapter of this incredible story – The Albertlanders set out for their new home.



AUCKLAND, 1862
The Capital of New Zealand.

Happy Birthday wishes for August

Birthday Celebrations at Port Albert Church

It was a busy and very special day at Port Albert Church on Sunday, 9th August, as we gathered to celebrate Rhona Olesen's monumental 103rd birthday.

What a wonderful milestone to reach, and it was lovely to mark the occasion with family, friends and a small gathering of well-wishers.

The celebrations didn't stop there, as Brian Becroft was also celebrating his special day. It was a lovely opportunity to share birthday wishes, stories and good company with two very special members of our community.

From all of us at the Albertland Heritage Museum, we would also like to wish Nella Allen a very Happy Birthday.

We hope all three birthday celebrations were filled with happiness, laughter and plenty of wonderful memories.



Quotation for August

**“We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails” and
“You’ll never do a whole lot unless you’re brave enough to try.”**

Not one but two inspirational quotes from the late Dolly Parton.

Dolly Rebecca Parton

19 January 1946 – 25 August 2026

Dolly Parton, affectionately known as the **“Queen of Country,”** is one of the most recognisable and beloved figures in music. A hugely talented songwriter, singer, actress and entrepreneur, she became one of the most honoured country performers in history, selling more than 100 million records worldwide.

Born into a large family in rural Tennessee, Dolly showed an extraordinary talent for music from an early age. She wrote her

first song at just six years old, was performing regularly on television by the age of ten and made her first recording at eleven. By sixteen, she was already working professionally as a songwriter.

Over a career spanning more than six decades, Dolly gave us an unforgettable catalogue of songs, including **“I Will Always Love You,” “Jolene,” “Coat of Many Colors”** and **“9 to 5.”** She also famously recorded **“Islands in the Stream”** with Kenny Rogers.

Beyond her remarkable musical career, Dolly will be remembered for her warmth, generosity, humour and determination, as well as her enormous contribution to country music and popular culture.

Take the time to put on one of your favourite ‘Dolly’ songs in honour of this truly remarkable lady whose music and legacy will undoubtedly live on for generations to come.



NEAL Moira Obituary

NEAL, Moira. Aged 90, passed away peacefully on the 15th of June 2026. Loved wife of Barry (Rev.) and cherished mother of Donald, Rosemary, Andrew and Jennifer. A special Nan to seven grandchildren. A service was held at Chartwell Co-operating Parish, Comries Road on Friday 19th of June at 1pm. Rest in Peace.



PIC OF THE MONTH

A Snapshot of Social History

While this isn't a Wellsford photograph, this wonderful image from the Don Worsnop collection, showing the opening of Wilmot Motors in nearby Warkworth (in 1956), is a great snapshot of social history.



Photographs such as this capture far more than the opening of a local business. They provide a glimpse into the people, fashions, vehicles, buildings and community life of the time, helping us understand what the area looked and felt like in an earlier era.

Wilmot Motors became a well-known Warkworth business, with the Wilmot family's association with the automotive industry dating back to the 1950s. Today, photographs like this help preserve those

memories and remind us of the important role local businesses played in the growth and development of our neighbouring communities

Don Worsnop's photographs are a wonderful part of our local heritage, recording everyday moments that might otherwise have been forgotten.

What's On

6th September 2026 – Fathers' Day – Don't forget to spoil your father on this special day!

13th September 2026 – Albertland Heritage Museum AGM 1.00pm at the Wellsford RSA, 1 Olympus Road, Wellsford. RSVP Museum Secretary, albertlandmuseum@gmail.com or 09 423 8181 no later than **11th September**.

PLEASE NOTE: Museum will closed

20th September 2026 – Port Albert Community Church Service – 1.30pm at Church Hill Road, Port Albert. Please bring a plate. (This date has been changed from the 13th of September because of the Museum's AGM).

27th September 2026 – Daylight Saving begins – Don't forget the clocks go forward one hour!

10th October – Shape Note/Sacred Harp Singing with Helen Diaz – **Saturday 10th October 10 – 3pm**. This is a unique opportunity to join others at the magical Wharehine Hall (built in 1879) overlooking the Oruawharo River.

What is Sacred Harp?

Sacred Harp is more than just a style of singing – it is a tradition built around the most accessible instrument we all have: the human voice.

Originating in the American South in the late 1700s, Sacred Harp singing, also known as Shape Note singing, is a communal tradition where people come together to sing a cappella, usually arranged in a “hollow square”, facing one another. Rather than being a performance where people sit back and listen, everyone takes part. The combined voices can create a wonderfully powerful, moving and almost physical sound.

The songs are often deeply religious, reflecting on the shortness of our lives and the hope of salvation beyond this world. However, you don't need to be religious to enjoy or participate in Sacred Harp. The themes can also be understood as a kind of memento mori – a reminder of our mortality – or simply appreciated for the remarkable music and communal experience.

Come along and discover Sacred Harp for yourself and discover why Sacred Harp has continued to bring people together for more than two centuries!

Join Helen Diaz at the wonderful historic Wharehine Hall to learn more about this unique singing tradition and experience the power of singing together.

If you're curious about what Sacred Harp sounds and feels like, you can watch the documentary trailer here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjtGexg2eqk>

Home

SHAPE NOTE ON THE HILL

A day of Shape Note/Sacred Harp singing with Helen Diaz

Saturday 10th October 10 am - 3 pm

per singer \$60 with lunch

\$50 BYO lunch

To sing please register & pay before 03 October

helendiazsings@gmail.com



This singing event is a fundraiser for the Wharehine Public Hall Society Inc, who cares for the Wharehine Hall; one of the region's few remaining community-owned facilities.

Wharehine Hall sits on a ridge on Pah Hill Road overlooking the Ōruawhoro 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 per household is available (which includes hall hire discount) and 'friends of the hall' do not need to live in the immediate area. For full details please email:

chairperson Clare Joensen at clare.joensen@gmail.com

Cooking Up a Storm for the Museum!

To help raise much-needed funds for the museum, the Wellsford Horticultural Society once again invited our catering team to lend a hand at a wonderful cooking demonstration featuring the Destitute Gourmet, Sophie Gray.

What a great day it was!

Held at the Wellsford RSA, Sophie arrived with everything prepared and organised, ready to treat an audience of around 40 enthusiastic gardeners to some amazing tips, ideas and recipes. Her focus was on creating delicious food that is easy on the pocket without compromising on taste — something we can all appreciate!

Over three busy hours, we were all assigned tasks both in and out of the kitchen as Sophie guided us through a wonderfully organised cooking session. There was plenty of activity, lots of laughter and, of course, some delicious food to enjoy along the way.



Sandra, Clare, Sophie the Destitute Gourmet, Terry, Rose

A big thank you to Trish at Clever Endeavours for the embroidery of the new aprons

A huge thank you to Gail and the Wellsford Horticultural Society for giving our museum catering team this opportunity to raise funds. We really appreciate your ongoing support and the wonderful community spirit that makes days like this possible.

And, of course, a very big thank you to Sophie for such an entertaining, informative and enjoyable day. We certainly came away with plenty of ideas to try in our own kitchens!

If you'd like to discover more of Sophie's recipes and cooking inspiration, check out the Destitute Gourmet website <https://www.destitutegourmet.com/>

And if you're a keen gardener — or simply looking for a friendly local group to join — why not take a look at the Wellsford Horticultural Society Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1JnEfHwpRG/>

Albertland Heritage Museum AGM – 13 September 2026

Don't forget, you are all invited to our Annual General Meeting, to be held at the Wellsford RSA, 1 Olympus Road, Wellsford, on Sunday, 13 September 2026 at 1.00pm.

Come along and hear reports on how the museum has been going over the past 12 months, meet our new committee, and see officers elected for the coming year. There may even be an opportunity for you to put your hand up and join the committee yourself!

After the formalities, enjoy a relaxing afternoon tea and a chance to catch up with our committee members, volunteers and fellow museum supporters.

We are also in for a real treat, with Sean Harris, steam boat enthusiast and owner of the historic Druid's Hall, taking to the microphone. Sean will give us an informative and entertaining talk about the boats that once plied the waters of the Kaipara Harbour, carrying passengers and goods and providing pleasure and adventure for those who travelled its waters.

It promises to be a fascinating afternoon celebrating the history of our local area and the wonderful people who help keep that history alive.

Don't miss out – we would love to see you there!

**Please phone or email your RSVP to the Museum Secretary
Phone 09 423 8181 or Email albertlandmuseum@gmail.com**



Keeping Our Grand Old Lady Looking Her Best

It has been a wonderful sight over the past year or so to see the Hoteo North Hall, Wharehine Hall and Port Albert Methodist Church all being restored and given some much-needed TLC. The amazing efforts of their local communities, together with funding from various sources, are helping to ensure these much-loved buildings remain looking pristine, welcoming and useful for many years to come.



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2390046627833675/>



<https://www.facebook.com/p/Wharehine-Community-Hall-00064529896172/>

Make sure you check out the Wharehine Hall flier in What's On to see what is happening at their well supported local hall.



Of course, none of this happens without a huge amount of hard work and dedication from the committees behind the scenes. They tirelessly seek funding, organise working bees, find volunteers and tackle the many jobs required to keep these community buildings alive.

If you have driven past the Port Albert Hall recently, you will know that our **"Grand Old Lady" of Port Albert** is looking a little worse for wear. She could perhaps even be considered the mother of all the smaller outlying halls! Big in stature, she would have hosted many events over the years when the locals from the surrounding districts would have been spilling out of the doors of the smaller halls.

The present Port Albert Hall was opened in **1915**, after being built by the Witheford Brothers. It replaced the first hall, which stood at the Port Albert crossroads but was destroyed in a spectacular fire.

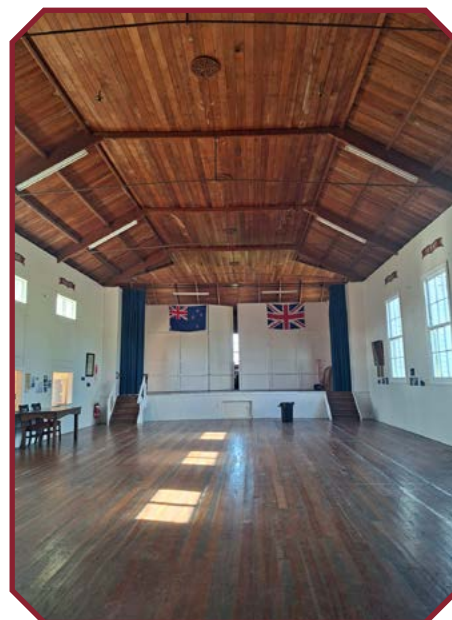
There is something rather special about looking closely at this old building. You can see the workmanship in every board — from the beautiful timber floors and walls to that magnificent ceiling. It really is quite spectacular.

Make sure you look up next time you walk through the doors!

And speaking of looking up, here is a little story from a few years ago.

My husband is the local electrician and, during one of our working bees, out came his longest extension ladder. Up he went into the tiny, tiny manhole just above the entrance. We soon discovered that we weren't the only ones who considered the hall a home. Out came hay and debris from a huge swallow's nest!

Home



These beautiful little birds had clearly been making themselves comfortable in the hall for many years. Judging by the size of the nest, it may well have been built up over decades. They certainly seemed to think they had found the perfect home!

But back to our Grand Old Lady!

As you can see when you drive past, the Port Albert Hall is now badly in need of some attention. The roof needs replacing and the building is certainly ready for a good wash. We also need to upgrade the toilets so that they are suitable and accessible for everyone.



Over the past two years, we have run **The Settlers' Market**, and through stallholder fees and the wonderful efforts of Jen's Kitchen, we have managed to raise a worthwhile amount towards this work. Every dollar helps, but we are now facing the big one — **a complete roof replacement**.

I am sure you can imagine what that sort of work costs, and I can tell you that when the committee saw the quote, there were certainly a few very watery eyes!

But it has to be done. We want Port Albert Hall to stand proudly alongside her sister halls throughout the district — restored, cared for and looking as sparkling and welcoming as she deserves.

We are currently seeking outside funding to help make this major work possible, but if you are able to help in any way, whether through funding, donations, materials, skills or volunteering, your support would be very much appreciated.

<https://www.facebook.com/hallportalbert/>

Our Grand Old Lady has stood proudly for more than a century. With a little help from her community, we hope she will continue to do so for generations to come, hosting their celebrations like weddings, 21st, children's birthdays and those important events like funerals and farewells and then those social occasions like community fundraisers, visiting comedians and dances.

**Donations can also be made to
Port Albert Hall**

ASB - 12 3094 0120399 00 (Show your name as reference)



Celebrating Rhona's 103rd Birthday

It doesn't seem that long ago that I wrote in our newsletter about our wonderful Rhona Olesen turning 100. You may remember her amazing centenary celebration at the Wellsford Community Centre, surrounded by family, friends and members of the community.

Well, three years later, the celebrations have come around again! This time, family and friends gathered at Port Albert Church to mark the very special occasion of Rhona's 103rd birthday and a week later on her actual birthday (16th August) family and friends gathered once again to spare this special day with Rhona.

Rhona is an absolute joy to be around, and her wonderful storytelling is a delight for anyone lucky enough to have the opportunity to sit and listen to her. She has such a wealth of memories and stories to share, and we are very fortunate to have her as part of our community.



Rhona's daughter Dawn sharing memories about her mum

Rhona is also surrounded by an amazing and supportive family who are always so welcoming and happy to share their Mum's remarkable achievements with the wider community. It was lovely to see everyone come together once again to celebrate this incredible milestone.

Happy 103rd birthday, Rhona! We hope you had a wonderful day filled with love, laughter, family and plenty of happy memories. What an achievement!



Rhona - Blowing out the candles

Albertland Heritage Museum Receives Some Very Special Visitors...

In our quieter months, we don't really expect to receive many visitors, so imagine our surprise when, this month, not one but two groups booked to visit us on consecutive days!



Our first visitors were the children and teachers from Tapora School – small in numbers but certainly big on manners, enthusiasm and listening skills. We always enjoy welcoming this school to the museum and helping the children learn more about their own local area and its history.

Arriving at 9.30am, the children assembled outside the library and were called in by the sound of the original Tapora School bell, now proudly housed at the museum. They were shown the painted mural on the side of the building, featuring the Ōkahukura Peninsula, before listening as our Chairperson, Clare, gave them a fascinating insight into this area of land to the west of Wellsford.



Inside the museum, the children listened to a podcast interview Clare recorded with Peter Marsh, who has many wonderful memories of growing up in the Tāpora district. Peter once rode his horses throughout the area and could even remember when there was a gate that provided access to parts of the district. It is a fascinating story, and one which is documented in the book *The Story of Tāpora*, available for purchase from the museum.



Next, Rachelle shared stories about her grandfathers and great-grandfathers and the wonderful collection of journals, maps, letters and other historical material that she is currently cataloguing. It was lovely to see the children taking such an interest in these stories and treasures from their own area.



Of course, no museum visit would be complete without a little hands-on activity! The children searched for hidden pieces of kauri gum before taking their finds to the Seaview Gum Station to be weighed. Their efforts earned them Albertland dollars, which they could then spend on some special keepsakes before heading back to school.

It was a lovely morning, and we thank the children and teachers of Tāpora School for coming to visit us once again. We always enjoy sharing their local history with them.



The following day brought another very special group of visitors, with 34 members of the CNSST Foundation from Auckland arriving to learn more about the Albertland story.

We had eight of our wonderful volunteers on duty, all contributing in different ways to share the history of the Albertland settlement and bring our stories and collections to life. It was a very rewarding visit, as the group showed genuine interest and enthusiasm as they explored the museum and learned about the early settlers who came to this district.

Thank you to everyone who came to visit us. We loved having you!

Celebrating One of the Museum's Special Treasures – Barbara Lane

It has been a heartwarming journey watching our own wonderful volunteer, Barbara Lane, take on the Blood Cancer NZ Sky Tower Step-Up Challenge on 2nd August 2026.

We all knew that Barbara had experienced her own battle with cancer 13 years ago, so this challenge was very close to her heart. She wanted to do something to support others who are facing their own incredible cancer journey.

For the past four and a half years, Barbara has also been a member of Wellsford's own Mad Mel Movement CrossFit gym, and it was the training, encouragement and support she received there that helped prepare her for this amazing challenge.

On the day of the climb, Barbara was still recovering from a cough following a recent virus, but that certainly wasn't going to stop her! She registered alongside around 600 other climbers and took on the challenge, climbing the 51 floors and 1,103 steps of Auckland's Sky Tower.

What an incredible achievement! We are immensely proud of Barbara and the determination she showed in completing this challenge, particularly while she was still recovering from illness.

Barbara has been overwhelmed by the support and donations she received for this very worthy cause and has shared a wonderful update about her experience with those who supported her. If you haven't received a copy and would like to read about Barbara's amazing climb, please email us at albertlandmuseum@gmail.com and we will be happy to send it to you.

You can also read the Mahurangi Matters feature, "Barbara's battle reaches new heights", which tells more of Barbara's inspiring story.



<https://www.localmatters.co.nz/health/barbaras-battle-reaches-new-heights/>

And, having overheard Barbara mention that she is now looking for her next challenge, we thought we should put the call out! If anyone has an idea that might test Barbara's determination and adventurous spirit, please let us know — we'll be only too happy to pass your suggestions on!

Barbara truly is one of the Museum's special treasures, and we are very lucky to have her as part of our Museum family.