

The Albertland Gazette



Patron:
Mr Richard Te Haara



Harold Marsh
and Guy
Witheford
building the
new Marsh
home 1909

September 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:

A big thank you to my co-editor, Rob Lennon, for being very patient while waiting for the stories for this month's newsletter!

My annual stint of calf-rearing always really hits home in September and early October. The large numbers of calves certainly take their toll on the number of free hours in any given day — especially when you take out the hours I need for sleeping!

Just when I am finally adjusting to the seasonal workload, along comes Daylight Saving and sets me back for quite some time. I'm sure my body will eventually catch up, and I know the extra daylight will be worth it in the long run.

So, what about you? How are you all coping with the arrival of spring and the changes to our routines that come with putting the clocks forward an hour? How is that garden looking? Have you planted your potatoes yet? There are definitely promises of good things to come.

The museum has also been busy, with our AGM now behind us and just a few small changes to our team. We have also been working on a new exhibition about the 1960s — a decade when so much changed and helped shape the world we know today.

But while doing the research for this exhibition, I've been struck by just how often we seem to repeat the same old mistakes. Perhaps history really does have a habit of coming back to visit us!

For now, though, I'm looking forward to brighter days ahead, having a little more energy, and hopefully finding a few more hours in the day! Most of all, I'm looking forward to seeing all our wonderful supporters at the museum and sharing our new 1960s exhibition with you. We hope you'll come along and take a trip back to a decade when the world was certainly changing — and changing fast!

Warm regards,
Rose and Rob

Bert Partington - Hairdresser, Tobacconist ***Shepherd Bros - Our Calendar Story this Month***



Bert and Bill Partington

Unfortunately, this month there isn't a great deal of information about either of our shop owners, but we do know a little about William Albert Partington, known to everyone as Bert. Bert was a farmer in the district, but in 1935 he also opened his own hairdressing business in Wellsford.

Sadly, Bert's shop was one of the businesses caught up in the great Wellsford fire on 13 December 1955, which destroyed a large part of the town. Rather than let the fire put him out of business, Bert simply found another place to

work. He relocated his hairdressing business into the basement of Culpan's building and continued serving his customers from there. Eventually, Bert's son, Bill, took over the business and continued the family connection with hairdressing in Wellsford.

TRADE-IN YOUR OLD ELECTRIC SHAVER
FOR A NEW
"DIPLOMAT" PHILISHAVE
at
W. S. (Bill) PARTINGTON
Hairdresser and Tobacconist
INSPECT OUR SELECTION
OF GIFTS FOR MEN
NOW OPEN TILL 5.30 P.M. DAILY
PHONE 235

Paint with a Pedigree

BERGER'S
Keeps on Keeping on

"Its all in the Quality"

Shepherd Bros.
WELLSFORD

for
PAINTS HARDWARE
TOOLS, Etc. KITCHENWARE

Phone 74

Shepherd Bros,

Robert (Bob) and Harold

While these Shepherd brothers may look like a couple of local characters in our picture, we do know they ran a successful little business in Wellsford from 1938, selling hardware and acting as agents for McCormick-Deering tractors.

Their premises were part of what was once known as the M.D.S. properties, an investment owned by Messrs Gorbey, Sellars and Whitmore.

Robert Gordon Shepherd, known as Bob, married Edna May Paton in 1941. Edna had

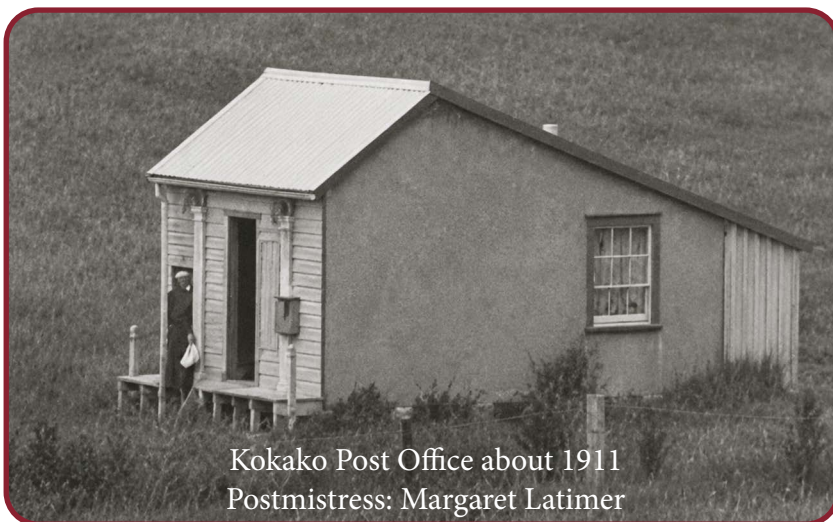


been the owner of the Rodney (Private) Hotel in 1940. She sold the hotel in 1946 to W. W. Duck, and Bob and Edna went on to build a home in Davies Road.

There is even less information about Harold Stephenson Shepherd, so we would love to hear from anyone who can tell us more about him or his brother Bob and their hardware business.

Their parents were Herbert Shepherd and Emily Wright.

Maybe you can fill us in with more details about Bert Partington or the Shepherd Bros? We would love to know more!



Kokako Post Office about 1911
Postmistress: Margaret Latimer

Kokako Post Office Story

However I must tell you before its too late, Winnie Leah Vickery was not the Post Mistress, it was her grandmother - Margaret Latimer - wife of William Latimer. They lived there until William died and then she moved south to Hawera to live with her youngest daughter, Janet Page. Winnie Leah Vickery was the operator of the telephone system which was managed from her home just a little closer to Wellsford - the old house has now been moved.

In Memory of Barry Vincent Shepherd

16 October 1932 – 24 August 2026

The Wellsford community recently farewelled a much-loved local character, Barry Vincent Shepherd, who died on 24 August 2026, aged 93. Barry was the last of the twelve children of Len and Dorothy Shepherd, both descendants of the original Albertland settlers, and with his passing the last of that generation of the Shepherd family was gone.

It was lovely to be able to attend Barry's funeral and listen to the stories that his friends and family told, of the days of growing up in Port Albert where he attended Port Albert School before it amalgamated with Wellsford. From all accounts he was a bright student with a great love of reading, learning and history and I could account to this from the many knowledgeable conversations I myself had with this very wise man. He left school at 16 and worked on the family farm before landing a job with his brother Ott installing power lines in the Tomarata district. He became

known for his ability with a spade and shovel – a skill that stayed with him throughout his life and was useful on more than one occasion even in more recent years where he would clear gorse from around the Port Albert Church where he worshipped, spending hours digging and burning the gorse and waiting on the roadside to nearly dark to make sure the embers were well and truly out.



When Barry was called up for compulsory military training, they soon discovered that he was a good shot, although he later joked to his grandson that if a real war had broken out, he would have deliberately failed his shooting test so he wouldn't end up as a sniper! That was most certainly an unenviable job during warfare.

His working life included time at Mt Brame Quarry, where he gained his blasting ticket, and many years working for the local council. Barry was an extremely conscientious worker and took great pride in doing a job properly. His idea of "going the extra mile" could sometimes mean going quite literally into the next paddock – on one occasion, while taking a break from repairing a culvert, he noticed

some thistles and proceeded to grub the whole paddock! Such a great story.

Barry married Lola Powell in 1967, and together they had two children Dorothy and Vincent. Their family

home in Hazelmere Crescent became Barry's home for the rest of his life. Following Lola's death in 1987, Barry became a solo father and continued to make sure his home was a welcoming place for family and friends.

He was generous to a fault and was always willing to help others with his door always open to someone in need, and over the years he provided a home and support to many people.

Barry was known by everyone who loved him as being a little unique with no time for appearances or material possessions and was quite happy in his old clothes, gumboots, beret and famously mismatched socks. If he saw something that needed fixing, he simply fixed it – whether anyone had asked him to or not.

He was also a man of strong Christian faith something he would share with his fellow congregation at the monthly service of the Port Albert Church where he would take the opening and closing prayers and often tell a great story or two to a captive audience. He will certainly be missed at this small, monthly gathering. He enjoyed telling stories about his large family and his younger years, just as much as we all

loved to listen. His love of hymns was obvious and we also discovered that a favourite that he liked to sing along to was 'Mocking Bird Hill' which he enjoyed singing immensely. He will be remembered with great affection not only by his family and close friends but all of us who knew him one way or another as part of living in a small but close community.

Our sympathies go to his children Dorothy and Vincent, and their families.

Barry Shepherd was a true Wellsford character – a man of faith, strong opinions, hard work, generosity, humour and individuality.

Rest in peace, Barry. Your work here is done.



Happy Birthday wishes for September

September is certainly a busy month for birthday celebrations, and we'd like to take the opportunity to wish some of our wonderful museum volunteers, supporters and friends a very happy birthday!

A special birthday shout-out goes to Peter Marsh, Peter Berg, Roger Farr, Terry Blakemore and Jacob Blakemore. And last month, at the Port Albert Church service, we celebrated Tania's special birthday with a lovely cake made by Jenny — a very fitting way to mark the occasion!

And, of course, a very Happy Birthday to everyone else celebrating during September!

So, from all of us at the museum, Happy Birthday to you all — we hope you have a wonderful day!



The Albertlanders' Journey North – Finding Their Way to Port Albert

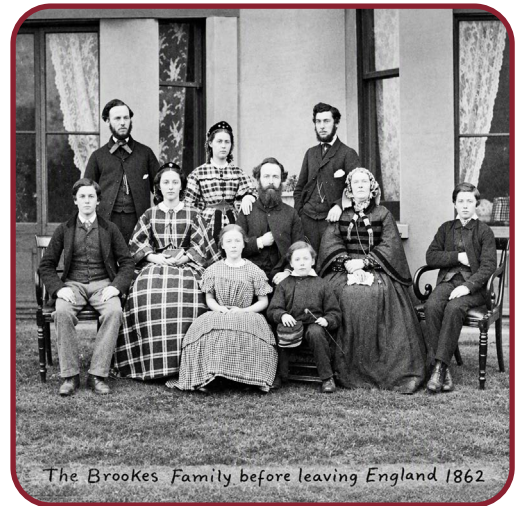
Continuing on from our story last month, when the Albertland party arrived in Auckland and received a warm welcome, we now follow their journey north to their new settlement.

A Journey Through the Wilderness

George Hovey Brookes and his fourteen-year-old brother joined a party travelling to Albertland by way of Riverhead and the Kaipara.

At Helensville they encountered John McLeod, who had arrived from Nova Scotia in 1862, founded Helensville, naming it after his wife, Helen. When the Albertlanders arrived, the McLeod family was still living aboard the schooner that had brought them from overseas. They had purchased a large tract of land and established sawmills, with machinery brought all the way from Nova Scotia.

At Helensville, the party secured a cutter from Captain Charles



The Brookes Family before leaving England 1862

2004-2-2007-1180 - H W Marsh

This photo has been AI improved

Bonner, with Captain Nelson in charge. The Brookes brothers were joined by Mr and Mrs E. Marcroft, Mr and Mrs Buckton and their children, and Mrs Henry Marcroft and her children. Instead of taking them up the Oruawharo River, the cutter travelled up a creek inside Motu Remu, giving access to the



Te Wheau where first settlers landed in 1863 (Photo taken 06/07/1925)

2004-2-2007-018 - H W Marsh. This photo has been AI improved

southern end of the Albertland block. They landed at Te Wheau, now known as Stable's Landing, where Mr Marcroft had to burn the fern to make room for their boxes and belongings.

The eldest Brookes brother, Edwin Stanley, had stayed in Auckland to work as a surveyor's assistant. When he eventually travelled north via Mangawhai, he shared a little cutter with about thirty other passengers. He described it as "about the size of a small fishing smack". It was hardly luxury travel!

The newly arrived party had barely settled into their makeshift camp when Mr Henry Marcroft rode in with Māori guides. Imagine his surprise when he discovered his wife and children among the newcomers! He had set out from Helensville, hoping to reach Port Albert quickly and open his store, but had mistaken their tents for the settlement itself.

The following day, Edwin Stanley Brookes also appeared. He was supposed to be surveying some twenty-five miles further east towards Mangawhai, but had spotted the tents from a hill about ten miles away. Like Marcroft, he thought, "They must be Port Albert".

It seems the early Albertlanders had plenty to learn about the geography of their new home!

After a day or two, Mr Henry Marcroft, Mr E. Marcroft, Mr Buckton and George H. Brookes set off to find the elusive township, leaving the women and children behind.

There were no roads, only narrow surveyors' lines cut through the bush. The men struggled over hills, through gullies, fern, forest, bog and swamp in search of Port Albert.

Young George had put on his best suit and kid leather gloves to make a respectable impression. A wade through a muddy mangrove flat soon put paid to that idea!

Eventually, they found their destination, but it was hardly the bustling township they had imagined. Port Albert consisted of "a few tents on a sandy spit running out into the broad Oruawharo River".

As George wrote, "Imagine our Surprise!"

Finding the township was one thing. Finding his way back to Te Wheau was quite another adventure!

Many early settlers lived in whares built in the Māori fashion. Even the Wesleyan minister, the Reverend W. Gittos, lived in one, although his had the luxury of a boarded floor.

With no roads, almost everything had to be carried in a pikau, or Māori-style rucksack. One of the Brookes brothers thought nothing of carrying forty pounds over hills and through swamps and bogs.

By January 1863, the Brookes family had settled on their land. In a letter the following month, one brother made this telling observation:

“One thing I have thought singular, that out of the Nottingham party of 52, which was the biggest party of all, my two brothers and I are the only ones upon the land at the present time.”

The brothers were determined to make New Zealand their home, and in 1863 their parents decided to follow them from England.

When Supplies Ran Short

Life did not become easier overnight. After two or three years, the settlers faced a serious shortage of provisions, which Mrs Judson described as almost amounting to a famine.

The settlement depended on monthly supplies arriving by small cutter, either from Onehunga or around the North Cape. The journey could take two or three weeks.

One winter, the expected vessel failed to arrive. With no telegraph and infrequent mail, the settlers had no way of knowing what had happened.



Painting by George Dilly of the tents at Port Albert

This photo has been AI improved

Their vegetables soon ran out, while meal, tea, sugar and other essentials dwindled until they could not be bought for love or money. Mrs Judson recalled desperate attempts to make something resembling bread without flour. Turnips, pumpkins and maize became staple foods.

It was a far cry from the life they had left behind, but the settlers who persevered slowly began to make progress.

Progress at Last

By the beginning of their fourth year, those who had remained were seeing the results of their hard work. Roads were still virtually non-existent, and travelling to Auckland remained a major undertaking involving river, sea and overland journeys, often with fourteen miles on foot.

Horses were scarce and traps even scarcer, so a lift from a fellow traveller was a lucky break!

Within the settlement, however, things were improving. A small newspaper, The Albertland Gazette, had been published during the first year, although it did not last long after its editor left the district.

The mail service had become weekly, and a reading room had opened in the township, providing newspapers from Auckland and elsewhere. These were important steps forward for a community that had begun with so little.

George Hovey Brookes was a keen cricketer and a respected bowler. After leaving Albertland, he settled in Auckland and worked for Auckland Council until 1911. He also served for several years on Devonport Borough Council.

Edwin Stanley Brookes Jnr became a well-known surveyor, working for the Government and surveying much of Taranaki. He later wrote a book about his experiences in the early days of that province.

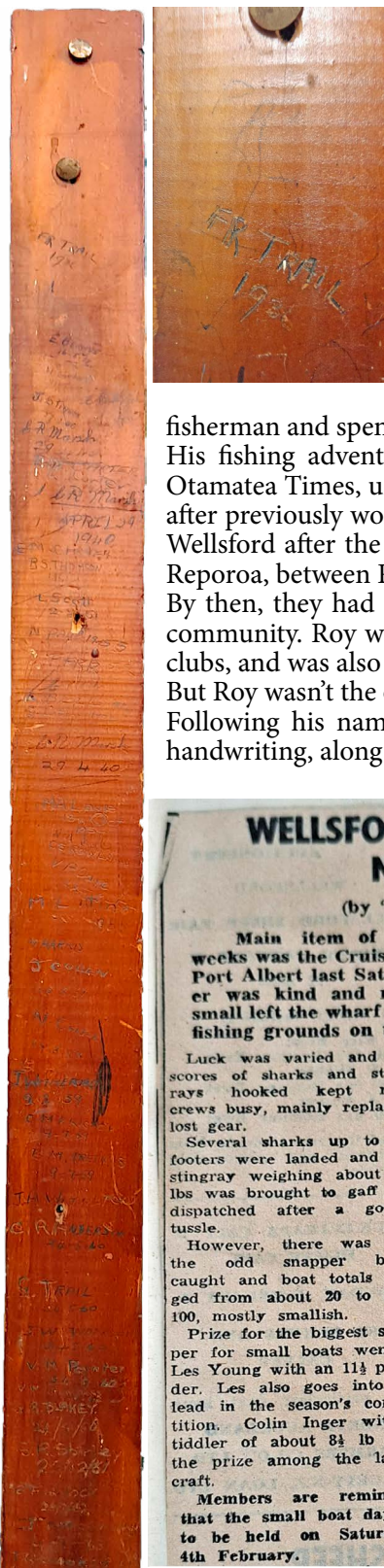
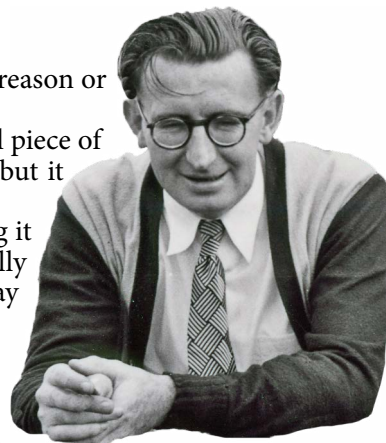
Sadly, their brother C. H. Brookes drowned in the Oruawharo River in 1868. He was greatly mourned by the settlers, who had come to love his frank and sunny nature.

The Reverend Samuel Edger also experienced his share of setbacks. In 1865, he went to Auckland to take temporary

These accounts were taken from Papers Past, The Albertlanders, Auckland Star, Volume LVI, Issue 204, 29 August 1925
Page 27.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of items in our museum, each donated for one reason or another, with the hope that we can preserve a little bit of history and tell its story.

Following his name on our piece of wood are a further 76 names, each carved in the person's own handwriting, along with the date they were employed at the Post Office.



Members are reminded that the small boat day is to be held on Saturday, 4th February.

Sometimes, the most ordinary-looking things in a museum have the best stories to tell.

The House that Harold Built

>Picture of the house being built at the top of this newsletter<

A story written by Lyn Johnston on 27th October 2016 about the building of her grandfather's house in Marsh Road.

When I consider the rigmarole involved in building a house these days, I think of how simple it was in my grandfather's day. Hard work certainly, but no red tape.

In 1909, Harold Marsh proposed marriage to Grace Moffatt. He lived in a house his father built in the 1860s and perhaps it was getting a little rundown, so he decided to build a new one to start married life. Our family is fortunate to have not only his diaries and photographs to give details of the build but also invoices for building materials.

The couple chose a flat site adjacent to the 'old house' with a lovely view of the Oruawharo River. In June, Harold went down into his little patch of bush and cut trees to become house blocks. He went to Port Albert and arranged with Mr Bennett to supply the galvanised iron, spouting, ridging, paint etc. and to deliver it. The following Monday, Bennett's launch came down the river with most of the timber, weatherboards, lining etc. The diary notes the weather was so rough Mr Bennett had to throw nearly all the load overboard to land it. Harold then had to get everything ashore. The whole next day was spent cleaning and stacking it, ready to haul a half-mile or so from the beach to house site using a horse and sledge – thirteen loads.

In late July, Bennett's launch delivered corrugated iron, sash weights, nails, scrim etc. and joinery from O'Brian's of Wairoa. These supplies too had to be hauled up through the paddocks. While all this was going on Harold was still working his farm, gum digging and travelling the district taking photos, not to mention continuing to court Grace. He spent hours painting weatherboards before starting to build.

On 30th August, Harold wrote 'Guy Witheford came along in the forenoon and we commenced to build the new house and put in the blocks under the East and South walls. Took a photo laying the foundation block.' Guy and his father, Walter Witheford were accomplished builders in the district.

9th of September saw the framework begun. Six days later Walter and Guy had the fascia and front and west side weatherboards up. The following day Walter arrived early and finished attaching the spouting. Guy and Harold completed weatherboarding the eastern side and put all the iron on the roof. Harold remarked that they didn't "knock off" until 5.30, and then he went to visit his fiancée.

The exterior was completed by Saturday 18th and the men began internal flooring and lining. By the end of the month ceilings were up and scrim attached to walls ready for papering. Windows were installed and a porch built. Not everything was brand new – internal doors from the old house were used in the new one – it's always amused family and friends to see how many hinge holes there are in some of these doors. Ceiling battens were reused. So too was the chimney, taken down brick by brick, cleaned and re-erected by John Moffatt, Grace's father.

A diary entry says that Mr Moffatt continued the chimney on 27th October then Harold took him home in the punt and went for a moonlight stroll with Grace.

By December the house was nearly complete with only finishing touches needed. Harold handmade dining room cabinets and fitted them. Concrete fireplace arches and hearths were his own work. Wallpaper and dado were put up and joinery painted.

The house was ready when Harold and Grace were married in February 1910. Twelve months later a lean-to was attached which contained a small bedroom, scullery, pantry, and, most important, a photographic den. A veranda was added on two sides.

105 years later the Den is now a bathroom/toilet and the kitchen modernised. The house has been re-roofed, re-blocked and re-painted over the years but the basic structure remains the same, an honest country farmhouse overlooking the river.

PIC OF THE MONTH

A Snapshot of Local History - Inside photo of Rex Jackson's IGA Shop - Don Worsnop Photo



What's On

5th October 2026 – Come along and see our new display 'The Sixties: Breaking News!' this display will take you back in time and you will discover how influential this decade was in shaping the world as we know it today. Museum opening hours are **Wednesday – Saturday 11 – 3 pm and Sunday 1 – 3 pm.**

10th October – Shape Note/Sacred Harp Singling 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.

11th October 2026 – Port Albert Community Church Service – 1.30pm at Church Hill Road, Port Albert. Please bring a plate.

Friday Night Dinners at the Wellsford RSA (1 Olympus Road Wellsford). Starts at 5.30 pm and dinner can be ordered after 'The Ode'. Weekly specials and salad bar available. See Facebook page for options and prices.

Our Annual General Meeting



Earlier this month we held our Annual General Meeting at the Wellsford RSA on Sunday, 13th September. We had a good turnout of supporters who came along to hear our reports on the past year, help choose our committee for the coming year and join us for afternoon tea.

Both Pat Bennett and Jenny Driskel have stepped back from their roles on our committee, so we thank them both for all their hard work, time and dedication to their roles.

They have both made a wonderful contribution to the museum, and we are very grateful for everything they have done. Great news though, both of these amazing ladies will remain as volunteers.

Jenny has also decided not to continue as Co-Curator for the coming year.

Joining our team is Rachelle Casci who has volunteered for the past two years. We welcome Rachelle's fresh perspective on the running of the museum.

Our committee for the coming year will still be led by Clare Joensen as Chairperson, with Peter Berg as her Deputy. Rob Lennon will continue to look after our finances, and I will continue in my role as Museum Secretary.

Joining us on the committee are many familiar faces – Peter Marsh, Grahame Henderson, Peter Buckton, Sean and Grace Harris, Sandra Berry, Mikayla Journée and our newest member, Rachelle Casci.

Our guest speaker this year was our own committee member, Sean Harris, who gave us a very interesting talk about Kaipara boats. Boats played such an important part in the early history of the Kaipara and our local communities, and Sean certainly brought some of that history to life for us.

There was far too much interesting information to fit into this little report, so next month I'll give you a more in-depth look at Sean's talk and some of the fascinating stories behind these boats.

A big thank you to Sean for giving us such an enjoyable and informative talk.



Quotation for August

While these aren't exactly famous quotations from great philosophers or wise old sages, I couldn't resist sharing a couple I found on the internet. They pretty much sum up my own feelings about Daylight Saving — especially at this time of year when I'm already wondering where all my hours have disappeared to!

Yay for daylight savings time! My car clock is finally right again.

The day after springing forward should be a national holiday for parents.

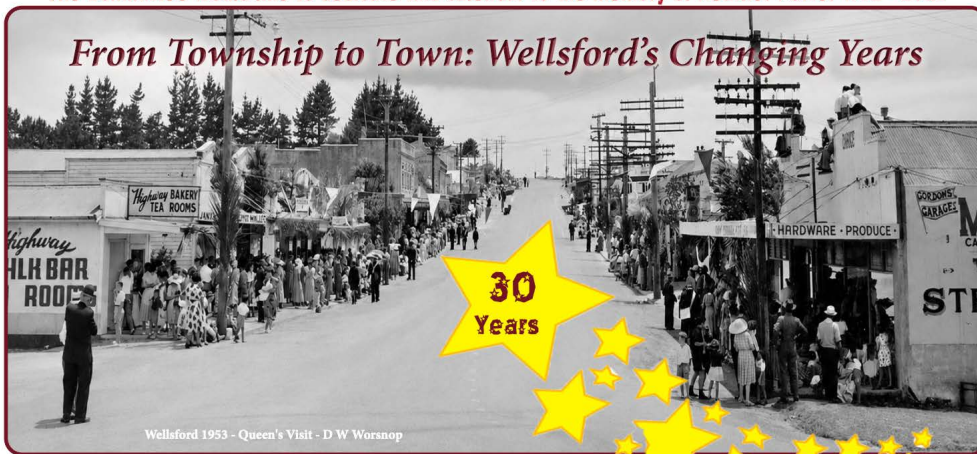
The days just got longer, and I just got a little less motivated to get out of bed.

2027 Calendar



"This special edition celebrates 30 years of the Albertland Heritage Museum Calendar, honouring three decades of preserving and sharing the rich history and stories of Albertland and Districts."

The Committee would like to dedicate this calendar to the memory of Heather Power 1932 - 2025



Highway Tearooms - Queen's Visit - Main Street 1953

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

The 2027 Albertland Heritage Museum Calendar 'Township to Town, Wellsford's Changing Years' is now available for purchase.

Cost: \$25.00 at the Museum

Cost Posted:
\$35.00

The calendar is also available through our website

<https://albertlandmuseum.co.nz/product/2027-calendar/>

ALBERTLAND HERITAGE MUSEUM
PRESENTS OUR NEW EXHIBITION

The Sixties:

BREAKING NEWS

The Daily News
MAN WALKS ON MOON
A giant leap for mankind

PEACE NOT WAR

**Big events.
New ideas.
A changing world.**

NZ 1963

From world-changing moments to local life,
discover how the 1960s shaped our world
— and our community.

ALBERTLAND
HERITAGE MUSEUM

OPEN NOW
Library Plaza, 15 Port Albert Road, Wellsford
Wed – Sat 11am – 3pm | Sun 1pm – 3pm
Step back in time ... and see what was making headlines!