

# Newsletter of the Helensville & District Historical Society (Inc)

October 2016

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## ***NOW AND THEN EXHIBITION SEE PAGE 10***



**5 Commercial Road  
2016**  
The Art Stop Café has taken over both  
the real estate and garden centre

**5 Commercial Road  
1992**  
There was a real estate and garden  
centre here and no front verandah



## ***FROM THE EDITORS***

*The year is racing by and life has been very busy at the Museum which has rather caught us out in the presentation of this letter. We have lost several good friends over recent months, and tributes are included. The resetting of the schoolhouse displays has taken much thought and effort and the new layout is creating interest. We have a busy couple of months for the end of the year and we hope you can come along and join in the coming events.*

Best wishes from Lynn Millar and Wynne HaySmith

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## ***COMING EVENTS***

*Mark these dates on your calendar—we would love to see you at these events*

**22-24 October—Art in the Ville** is here at the Museum on Labour Weekend. There will be all sorts of crafts, from woodcarving, quilting, spinning to knitting. The coffee guy will be here along with the Lions sausage sizzle. Entry to this is just a gold coin donation so come along and see what wonderful things the local artists are doing—maybe find some Christmas presents.

**29 October—Haunted House Tour**—this is being organised by Jen McCann, our youngest member on the committee. This event will be held on 29 October in the evening and is aimed at the younger generation. The admission fee is \$10 per person and is a R13 event as there will be quite a few scary things happening. The visitors will need to bring a torch to navigate their way around the museum with the tour guide. A lot of work has gone into this inaugural event.

**20 November—Classic Car Show.** This event is to be held in conjunction with the local Kaipara Classic Car Club and is probably our best annual open day, drawing a wide range of car fans and the general public. We are hoping for a great turnout of cars so come down and have a look at both the cars and the museum. Entry is a gold coin donation with all gate proceeds going to the renovation of the Waitoki Sunshine Block.

**3 December—Santa Festival**—this festival has lots of activities at the Museum during the day. I know it seems a long way off but it is only 8 weeks to the 3 December. The usual Santa Parade starts at 12pm from Oikoumene Forest yards and ending up at Swales Earthmovers yard. The afternoon activities are to be held at the Museum including a bouncy castle for children, entertainment, Santa photos in his classic car, and lots of other fun things to do. There will also be a Christmas tree decoration competition in the morning with the entries going to local families who would not have a tree otherwise. Get the kids together and make some decorations, come down in the morning to decorate the tree. There are some great prizes for the winners and it all goes to a good cause. If you belong to a group, you might like to enter a float in the parade as the more the merrier in this case. Ring Lynn at the office if you want to enter for more details and entry form. Come to Helensville for the parade and stay for the fun activities in the afternoon.

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## ***LIONS CLUB MEETING***

The Helensville Lions are coming to the Museum for their tea meeting on Monday 24 October. Their meeting will be followed by a tour of the Museum.

## ***NOTES FROM LYNN'S DESK***

It is only 10 weeks to Christmas now and several important events to fit in. The year has been a busy one this with lots of groups visiting the museum. We have had many favourable comments on the exhibits on the gardens and grounds.

**Volunteers Morning Tea**—this will be held on Wednesday 7 December at 10am for all those who have volunteered their time and effort to help keep the Museum open and welcoming. Come down for a fun morning of mutual appreciation, a good morning tea and a cuppa. Watch out for your invitation but all welcome.



*Jean Davidson and Gaye Collis*

**The gardens** are looking terrific and blossoming well. Thanks to the team.

**Our maintenance team** have also been hard at work, repainting the benches which are around the Museum and all the other work that they do. We have new member join this team and I would like to welcome Peter to the family.

Once again a big thank you goes out to the **PD team** who come every Saturday. This team do all the hard work around the place and without them the Museum would not look as good as it does. Thanks also to Ron Iles who supervises this team each week. Ron always has a long list of things to do for the team.

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## ***AUCKLAND REGION HISTORICAL DAY***

Our Society hosted the gathering this year on Saturday 27 August and welcomed about 40 people representing Societies and Museums from the Auckland and Waikato area including executive members of the NZ History Federation, who promoted this annual event. The morning session at the Father Sakey Centre was on recording and presenting pre-European history—a thoughtful and challenging illustrated presentation by our Vice President Leigh Bosch. She spoke of making contact with local iwi to have their support as is happening at the Helensville Museum. This talk was most informative and raised a number of questions from the audience.

We provided lunch of hot soup, rolls, cakes, fruit, etc. Then the group moved down to the Helensville Museum. The afternoon programme started with a presentation by Gordon Duncan—Discover NZ Tourism and Neil Curgenvan—NZ History Federation Secretary. They are proposing that all small historical societies use an APP for smart phones on exhibits. It will show where each Museum is, give a 360 degree view of the site along with inside some of the buildings. There will be stories to go with the items to add some more interest. Many questions were raised about the cost of such a program and we wait for more information.

Following afternoon tea Lynn presented a short introduction to Helensville history before the group had a tour of the Museum. We received many compliments even though this group were mostly from other Historical Societies who run their own Museums.

A great time was had by all who attended. We would like to thank all the Helensville volunteers who gave up their Saturday and did the catering. It was also a useful fund raiser for the Society.

Helensville lived up to its reputation for providing well organised events.

## ***VISITS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS***

Recently a group from the Birkenhead Historical Society visited Helensville Museum. The group went to the Railway Museum in the morning and then after some lunch at the local bakery came to our Museum. They were given lots of history on the area and a personalised tour. They were all impressed with what had been done within the complex and were keen to share some memories when they came across some item which reminded them of their past. There were many favourable comments with the best being “This is the best museum I have visited for some time. The collection is wonderful and they are displayed in an informative way.” These sorts of comments make the time spent at the Museum worth while.

There were several other groups which have visited over the past few months and the reaction is always the same. The gardens in particular are a favourite with all our visitors.

The local playgroup visited a couple of weeks ago and although the Mums were more interested in the displays, the children found that the farm machinery made great climbing frames and they spent quite while on these items. The playgroup has been invited back as the grounds are fenced off and make a great place for youngsters to run off some energy.

A group called “Haunted Auckland” have also been in to see if they could find any ghosts within the Museum. Although the final readings have yet to be taken, they seem to think that there is something going on in Hedley House. I have found things moved (which no-one admits to) and once something fell off the shelf while I was in there. Maybe we do have a ghost. How exciting it would be to be able to tell visitors that there is a ghost in the old building. Watch this space for more details.

If you are part of a group who is looking for somewhere to visit for a day trip—or know of some group looking—please pass along our details. Helensville makes a great day trip with a visit to the Helensville Museum, lunch in one of our many eateries in town and then a visit to the Railway Museum in the afternoon. We (and the Railway Museum) welcome groups and can give them a personal tour. We can also provide a historical house tour around Helensville with speaker Julie Colville—she has some really funny stories of the town and this tour is excellent for all ages.

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### ***MEMBERS NEWS***

Brian Blackshaw has been in hospital again but is now back home and on the road to recovery. Ron Crean has also been in hospital with his knee surgery. He has had a few problems but is now recovering nicely.

Leigh and Frank Bosch have welcomed a new grandson. Congratulations to the family.

Congratulations to Jen McCann on her recent promotion at work. Keep up the good work.

Billie Jones who volunteers in the Museum gardens has also had some surgery. Get well soon Billie we miss your smiling face on Wednesdays.

## ***FAREWELL TO FRIENDS***

### ***DORIS JENKINS (BECROFT) 1919 – 2016***



Doris Alice Becroft, third child of Henry Bertram Becroft and Mary Mabel Dormer was born in Helensville on 13 June 1919 and was a proud citizen of the town until ill health caused her move to a rest home in Orewa in 2009. Even then Doris still considered Helensville her home.

Doris was of pioneer Kaipara families. Her father's family came to New Zealand, on the *Matilda Wattenbach* with the Albertland settlement in 1863. Her mother's family, the Dormers, farmed at Kaukapakapa.

Doris's only sister, Gladys died of polio in 1916, before Doris was born. Her brother Ken was four years her senior, and throughout her life she looked up to him and was proud of his achievements. During World War 2 he had a distinguished career in RNZAF in

England and was awarded the double honour of DFC and BAR. On his return to NZ Ken and his wife Rose lived in Wellington. Ken died in 1968 and Rose in 1987.

Henry Bertram (Bert) Becroft (born 1885) was a builder, like his father (Alfred Becroft and Sons) but was also the Helensville undertaker and a keen photographer. His collection of glass plate negatives covering local events, places and people, was presented by Doris to the Society and is an invaluable historical resource.

Doris attended Helensville Primary and High School then went on to Auckland Business College. She did not complete this course as she was offered a job in Helensville with the solicitor Dick Snedden (partner of A G Lowe). After World War 2 John Pyatt joined as a partner. Doris continued with this firm for 44 years. She was a quiet and quite shy person, but an efficient and dedicated worker. Although quite a diffident personality she enjoyed company and social occasions and was a gracious hostess.

When her parents married in 1912, they built a house in Porter Crescent. Doris lived with her parents and cared for them as well as holding a full time position in the lawyers' office. Her mother died in 1958, and her father lived on until 1970.

Although working full-time and caring for her parents, Doris had a range of community and social interests. During World War 2 she did nursing training,. She was a member of the Women's Section of the RSA; was Treasurer of the Indoor Bowling Club and a dedicated member of the Country Women's Institute, both locally and in the Auckland West Federation and the National organisation, attending conferences in New Zealand and overseas. She had joined the CWI on 6 April 1954, and remained a member until her death. Doris was a dedicated member of the Tutuanekai Rebekah (Women's branch of Oddfellows) Lodge. She held a variety of offices and travelled her District and National meetings.

Her other particular interest was the Helensville & District Historical Society. Doris was a

foundation member, (1967) and her father, Bert was the first Patron. Doris played a very concerned and active role in the Society. She was minute secretary for nearly 20 years.. She kept efficient and careful minutes, organised twice yearly bus trips for members, and kept a record of all the accessions and exhibits. She was responsible for the setting up of many of the procedures and recording used in the running of the Museum and the society, which are continued today. In recognition of her service, Doris was made a Patron of the Society.

She loved travel and went to local and overseas conferences of the Women's Institute, including America, Holland, Ireland and Rarotonga. Locally she enjoyed bus trips with Graham Lupton's tours, and Historical Society, local, Regional and National trips and conferences. She was a keen photographer and kept records of these many trips.

Doris's friendship with Harold Jenkins dates back over many years through his wife's family – the Carters. After Harold was widowed he escorted Doris on a number of occasions on Historical Society trips, and also to concerts and recitals, as Harold was a keen musician. Probably the happiest years of Doris's life were the ten years she was married to Harold – 1998 (at the age of 79) to 2009. They both enjoyed travelling and crossed Australia on the Indian Pacific train journey for their honeymoon. Shortly after Harold's death in April 2009 she had a fall at home which led to her move to Crossley Court in Orewa; but she always pined to return to Helensville. Her marriage to Harold brought her into the Jenkins family, and the valued friendship with her step-daughter Jenny, husband John and son Thomas.

Through her parent's families Doris was related to the Becrofts, Ballans, Vercoe, Shanks Dormer, Golden and Goad families. Doris had a great sense of family, and kept in touch with many cousins.

The Becroft home at 20 Porter Crescent was a treasure trove of family and district history and when the house had to be sold, Doris made over a wide variety of article and historical records to the Historical Society.

Doris died at Orewa on 30 July 2016, aged 97years.

*Wynne HaySmith*

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***JOAN HIGHAM***

Joan and Les Higham were married and settled on the Higham land at South Head before the returned soldiers' farms were opened up after World War 2. They were very active in the strong community which extended at South Head in the 1950s with the new settlers. Joan was a foundation member of the South Head branch of the WDF (Women's Division of Federated Farmers) and played the organ for the monthly church services. Like many of the other farmer's wives, Joan played an active part on the farm, and built up a productive and beautiful garden, winning many prizes in local competitions.

The Higham property reached right to the beach on the harbour shore and the family hosted many camps and day excursions for church and community groups – particularly for families and children. The family remain active on the farm. Joan and Les were involved in the wider church community in Helensville. They were long-standing members of the Historical Society, and were supporters of the regular historical bus tours and volunteers at Museum events.

After Les died Joan remained at South Head but later moved to Craigweil where she passed away in June 2016.

## ***GAY KEANE 1937—2016***



Gay Yvonne Scott was born in her grandmother's house in Puriri St, Helensville on 30 April 1937 to Victor (Dick) Scott and Florence (Flo) (nee Paenganui). Gay was the oldest of 4 children. They lived in various places in the district with Gay starting school at Brighams Creek. The family soon returned to Helensville where Gay lived for most of her life. She worked in Gandell's Bookshop for a while for 10/- a week. Most of her money went to the family for board and what was left was spent on a piece of material so that her mum could sew her a new blouse or skirt for the dances she loved.

The first concert Gay ever saw was a Victory concert after the war in which she also performed, both singing and dancing. She loved music and dancing - especially rock and roll. She marched for the local marching team the Kaiparettas. Gay spent a lot of time, growing up, with her cousin June O'Keefe (now Cowper) and at Reweti with her aunt Miriama Nathan. This gave her a good grounding in the taha Maori – the Maori side.

Gay married Reg Keane on 18 July 1957 and they had 6 children together. Gay was involved in a number of local organisations notably the Maori Women's Welfare League and Playcentre. Throughout the years she was heavily involved in school activities with her children. She sewed most of their clothes including inventive costumes for the local Fancy Dress balls. Parakai School Calf Club days saw her busy helping her children with baking, flower arranging, wildflower collections and crafts.

Gay and Reg separated in 1987 and Gay moved away for a short while before returning to live in the family home in Parakai with the children. Gay later lived in the kaumatua units at Reweti marae, from there moving to Rimu Street in Helensville where facilities were closer. After prolonged illness Gay moved to Craigweil House which she absolutely loved. Gay thrived on the company and enjoyed the loving family atmosphere. The family cannot thank Craigweil enough for the love and care they gave Gay. Gay passed away on 14 June 2016.

*Contributed by daughter Leigh Bosch.*

## ***ANNIE JEAN NARBHEY 1910 - 2016***



Helensville's oldest resident, 106-year-old Jean Narbey, passed away on Sunday, 4 September 2016. She had lived in Helensville all her life, apart from eight years spent working in Auckland.

Jean was born the fifth of seven children on May 18, 1910 in Auckland to Walter (Wattie) and Annie Ellett, who had moved to Helensville from Mangere in 1902. Over the years her family bought farmland at Parakai, Wharepapa and Inland Road. By the time Jean was born, the family had moved to live in Puriri Street in Helensville.

Jean had a happy childhood, describing it as free and easy. She enjoyed Helensville Primary School, and her close circle of school friends included headmaster A J 'Toby' Hill's daughter Jean, Lorna Smith and Rita Bradly. Jean's older brother Gordon and sisters Eva and Mona went to boarding school in Auckland, but when it was her turn Helensville High School had been opened, so she stayed in Helensville.

From a young age Jean was interested in dressmaking. Her mother arranged a job for her with local seamstress Miss Simcock. Unbeknown to Jean, her mother was giving Miss Simcock the money to pay her wages each week just so she could have a job. Aged 23, Jean moved to Auckland to live with her Aunt Emma at Mangere Bridge while working for her cousin Flora MacKenzie at Ninette Gowns in Queen Street. She worked there for four years before setting up her own dressmaker's shop in Remuera with business partner Mrs Le Pine.

With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 Jean moved back to Puriri Street and worked as a dressmaker from home. She made many wedding gowns and bridesmaid dresses, including those of her sisters Eva and Mary. However when it came to her own wedding in 1942 to Hector Narbey it was wartime and fabric was scarce, so she wore a simple smart suit for the occasion.

The family farm in Mangakura Road was Jean and Hector's home for 55 years, and where their four children Rhonda, Wallace, Harris and Murray, were born. Hector died in 1969, and the family has now grown to 11 grandchildren and 23 great grandchildren. More than 130 people attended Jean's 105th birthday party in 2015.

During her time on the farm Jean cared for her mother Annie to the age of 96 and her brother-in-law Jimmy until he was 75. After their passing she was able to realise a long-time dream to travel, visiting Australia, England, Hong Kong and Norfolk Island.

Jean had a long association with many local community organisations, including the Plunket Society, Women's Institute, Helensville A&P Association, Helensville Spinning Group, Helensville Croquet Club, Helensville Tennis Club, Helensville Bowling Club, St Matthews Church, Helensville & District Historical Society and the Helensville Floral Art Group. She was sport mad and would watch almost anything except soccer and league. Tennis anywhere in the world was her favourite, watching it no matter the time of the day. She played bowls at Helensville Bowling Club until her late 80s, and was still driving her car up to age of 94.

In 1996 she moved into a unit in Gerald Stokes Avenue which backed onto her childhood Puriri Street property, staying there until moving to Craigweil House at Parakai 16 months ago.

As a society we farewell Jean as a long term member, a useful source of information and volunteer worker. We will miss her cheery company and interest in people and send condolences to her family.

*Thanks to the Narbey family and Helensville News for article and photo.*

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***VERA SOUTAR 1945 - 2016***

Vera Soutar, who had served the Historical Society as Secretary and also as bus driver, over several years, died on 8 June, after a short illness and was there was a farewell service at Orewa. Vera was born on 3 August 1945 in Helensville, the 4<sup>th</sup> daughter and youngest child of Thomas and Edith Scott and lived all her life in the town. She attended Helensville Primary and Kaipara College. As a girl Vera was keen on sport, and her favourite choices were marching and netball; a life long interest.

At aged 15 Vera met Kaipara Dairy Company driver Stan Soutar and with his encouragement she gained her driver's licence and later her HT licence. Stan and Vera were married in 1969, and settled in Downer Street, where she lived for the rest of her life. Vera had a variety of jobs before taking up driving buses for McLeod Motors. As well she had other part-time jobs. Vera later transferred her bus duties to Ritchies and worked for them until quite recently. A number of Ritchies drivers attended her funeral and formed a guard of honour with their buses.

Vera had a great compassion for animals and people, as evidenced by her large family of cats, dogs and over the years, several horses. She was a volunteer for Victim Support, and helped numbers of people in crisis situations. Vera was keen on handicrafts, including pottery and ceramics.

After Stan's retirement Vera and Stan were able to travel, and had many trips to Australia. Stan died in 1990. By then her oldest sister Thelma Dayberg had moved to Downer Street, and the two had a strong friendship which was a great support when they were both widows. Although Vera had suffered indifferent health in recent years her last illness was somewhat unexpected, and her death saddened her family and friends.

*Contributed by Wynne Haysmith.*

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***FURTHER FAREWELLS***

***.EVA HAWLEY***

As we go to press, we hear of the death of Eva Hawley, in her 90th year, at Craigweil, Parakai. Eva was a longstanding member of the Society and regular volunteer and supporter of Museum activities for many years. Her son in law, Noel Smith is a neighbour and reliable guardian of the Museum. We extend our sympathy to the Hawley family.

# OFFICERS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**PATRONS:** Barbara Waller and Eric Perrett

**ADMIN OFFICER:** Lynn Millar

## COMMITTEE: 2015-2016

President /Accessions	John Smith
Vice President/Financial	Leigh Bosch
Minute Secretary/Publicity	Judy Lloyd
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Family History/Tributes	Isla Willis
“Past Perfect” catalogues	Leigh Bosch
Heritage tours	Julie Colville
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Gardens/Accessions	Jean Davidson
Newsletter/Events	Wynne HaySmith
Media/Events	Jennifer McCann
Accessions	Janet Cridland
Financial Committee	John Smith, Leigh Bosch Wynne HaySmith, Lynn Millar

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## ***THANKS SO MUCH***

We are always appreciative of the generosity of members and friends for their contributions to the Museum and the Society. Memory being what it is, we sometimes slip up on mentioning these donations. Please forgive us if this has happened to your family.

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## ***HERITAGE WEEK EXHIBITION***

The Society’s contribution to the Auckland Heritage Week celebrations was a photo exhibition THEN AND NOW. Lynn prepared photos comparing 1992 and 2016 views around the town. The exhibition was displayed in the Courthouse. We plan to update this review and make a booklet. A street survey as to what businesses are in the commercial district will be carried out to provide the next stage in Helensville history.

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## ***NEW SIGNS***

Have you seen the new signs out on the road for the Museum? In the last newsletter we told you that they were going up and now they are. They look terrific and really stand out ensuring that visitors see where we are.

## Would you like to join the Society?

Please include your full name (s), postal address and phone number on the back of the form below. Include any special interests you have and whether you are willing to help as an attendant, a worker and/or committee member.

Post to the address below with your cheque, or make a payment to the Society via **Account number 38-9017-0078008-00** (include name and 'subs' and send your details via email to [helensvillemuseum@xtra.co.nz](mailto:helensvillemuseum@xtra.co.nz))

As a member you will receive our quarterly newsletter, which will keep you updated on news, projects and activities and gain free entry to the Museum (except for special functions).

Cut out the form below and check that your address on the back is correct. To pay electronically, see above

### **MEMBERSHIP : now due for the 2016-2017 year**

**If you receive the newsletter by email and you are not sure if you have paid, check with the office by email.** If you **now** have email please include it so that we can send the newsletter that way. This helps to reduce our costs and enables more projects to undertaken.

Helensville & District Historical Society Inc  
Box 133,  
Helensville 0840



**Subscription** Single: \$15 or Family \$20

Corporate rate \$30 (circle one)

Research Donation \$..... Garden Donation \$.....

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Alterations/additions to address  
\_\_\_\_\_

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<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Leigh Bosch</b>	<b>420 6146</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Judy Lloyd</b>	<b>420 5276</b>
<b>Admin Officer</b>	<b>Lynn Millar</b>	<b>420 7881</b>

*Our Mission Statement*

*To promote, understand & preserve the history & heritage of the District & its intrinsic values. Our past is our future.*

Helensville & District Historical Society Inc

*and* Helensville Museum

P O Box 133, Helensville 0840

Ph (09) 420 7881

[www.helensvillemuseum.org.nz](http://www.helensvillemuseum.org.nz)

[helensvillemuseum@xtra.co.nz](mailto:helensvillemuseum@xtra.co.nz)

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