

The Kaipara Pioneer

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

February 2014

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World War I memorial statue in Parakai Domain. Erected in 1922 and unveiled by Major J Gordon Coates. The sculptor of the statue was Captain W H Feldon, grandfather of John Pyatt. See story on page 3

Photo supplied by Dianne McLeod

NEW YEAR GREETINGS

By the time you are reading this the New Year will be nearly two months old! We start our yearly calendar of events with the Helensville Show so come and find us when you are there. The display this year tells the story of two dramatic events in district history; the 1863 Kaukapakapa murders, and the tragedy at Parakai in 1910. Also see the buttermakers stall and World War I Photographic display.

I picked up two local references in other magazines this month - Capt W H Feldon in the latest "Legacy" and Tom Shanks in a recent RNZFB "Outlook" - see stories on page 3.and page 6. *Wynne and Lynn*

SALES TABLE

2014 Calendars now **reduced to \$5.00** each with \$3.00 P&P.

Smart ballpoint pens \$6.00. Suede slip case \$1 extra No charge for P&P. The pens are inscribed "Helensville & District Historical Society".

Contact Lynn - phone 09 420 7881 (or e-mail) today with your order

THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS

The Museum was a hive of chatter on 11 December when the society volunteers gathered for the annual Thank You morning tea. President John welcomed everyone and expressed hearty thanks for all the time given to keep the society and museum alive. An inscribed pen was presented as a thank you to each volunteer. Lynn reported on the favourable comments she receives from visitors, on the museum and grounds.

CHRISTMAS PARADE

Photos by Dave Addison



Jen McCann
Margaret Truman
Robin Truman



Robin Truman



Judy Lloyd

IN SEARCH OF A SCULPTOR

“Legacy” magazine of the NZ Federation of Historical Societies has an article on War Memorials in South Auckland, where I noted the name W H Feldon as a sculptor. Something clicked, and in checking Men Came Voyaging I read (page 194) about Parakai - “ the soldiers’ memorial, sculptured by Mr Felton “(sic). I remembered John Pyatt saying that this was his grandfather. And so began a research project.....

William Henry Feldon (1872-1945) served an apprenticeship as a sculptor in Oxford, England and later worked at and taught sculpture, carving and modelling. He decided to come to New Zealand for a better life.

W H Feldon brought his wife and family from England as immigrants. on the “Ionic” early in 1910, but it is family lore that Feldon came ahead of them to look for work. He undertook carving on the new Government House, Wellington. By April 1910 Feldon is working on the new Town Hall in Auckland, and thereafter the family apparently lived in Auckland.

The Centotaph database lists Captain William Henry Feldon ,as serving as a regular soldier World War I 1914-18. He went overseas 1916-18, but also served with Sussex Artillery, Auckland Infantry and at the Internment Camp, Motuihe Island.

Family sources say that he was frustrated that much post-war memorial work was going to overseas artists, and New Zealand sculptors were being overlooked. He applied to many councils for work, and did get a variety of memorials, including Te Arawa Memorial, Rotorua, Matakana (both these featured King George V), Earl Jellicoe and Sir Joseph Ward, Invercargill, Auckland Children’s Hospital and Helensville District memorial. John Pyatt said that his father was the model for this statue!

Feldon suffered from an eye disease keratoconus, a gradual thinning and distorting of the cornea. While this can now be treated, it could not in his day, and his family recall how he had to use peripheral vision (looking sideways), which must have made his carving difficult (and dangerous). He died in 1945, aged 73 years.

Story by Wynne HaySmith with information from Betty Pyatt, Barbara Burstein (nee Pyatt), Dianne McLeod, Julia Rewi, John Pyatt’s notes, Papers Past and other sources from the Internet.

THOMPSON MURDERS 1863

Just before Christmas 1863 Mrs Matilda Thompson and her daughter Olivia (14) were murdered. The culprit was Ruarangi, a young Maori chief.

John and Matilda Thompson and their daughters had emigrated from Northern Ireland three years earlier. They had bought 360 acres of bush and scrub in Peak Road, Kaukapakapa. To earn some immediate income John worked as the local mailman. This meant he was away several days a week travelling to Auckland.

Ruarangi was a regular visitor to the Thompson home teaching the girls Maori, and buying sugar, etc from Mrs Thompson. One day he visited as usual and asked Mrs Thompson for 3/6 worth of sugar. While she was weighing it, he came up behind her and killed her with an axe!

Florinda (20), was holding the baby and standing beside her mother. She screamed out to Anna (11) and Olivia (14) to run to the neighbours. Ruarangi ran after them through the scrub and overtook Olivia and killed her. Anna escaped. Florinda carrying her baby sister, trudged through scrub and swamp the 5 miles to Smith's Mill arriving at 10pm.

The tragic news spread rapidly through the area. Bushmen abandoned their tools, released their bullocks, and dashed home. Fearful of a Maori uprising, they wanted to get their families to safety quickly.

Also seriously alarmed, the Authorities in Auckland hastily dispatched a Militia to Riverhead and on to Peak Road. Also Chief Paul of Orakei, who was afraid the murders would cause repercussion against Maori. He went immediately to the Governor and said he, himself would go to the Kaipara (Kaukapakpa – Helensville area) and bring in the culprit.

On Christmas Day about 250 Maori men, 8 chiefs and Government officials gathered (probably at the foot of Garfield Road). Florinda and Anna Thompson were asked to identify the culprit. Florinda accompanied by Chief Paul, pointed with her folded parasol and said "That is the man who killed my mother!" Ruarangi was easily identified as he had "Ruarangi" tattooed around his wrist and "Britannia with her wheel" on his arm. He was arrested, tried and hanged.



Anna Manning (nee Thompson), seated with daughters Anna Matilda (left) and Georgina tThmpson, (right)

Many Maori chiefs made speeches stating that they wanted to live in peace with the Pakeha and that this horrific crime was the evil work of one man – not the tribe.

Ruarangi had recently returned from the Wai-kato where some of his relatives were engaged in the Land Wars. His terrible mistake was in thinking that the Northern Tribes were ready to rebel.

In December 2013 the Thompson descendants held a reunion commemorating this tragedy and erected a headstone in the Kaukapakapa cemetery.

Story compiled by Isla Willis

Sources: 1863 to 1864 *Daily Southern Cross*, *The Colonist* *New Zealand Herald*

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE THOMPSON SURVIVORS ?

Florinda Thompson married a Scot named Andrew McGoech in 1886 they had 4 children and settled in Taranaki.. She died aged 47.

Elizabeth Letitia Thompson eloped with Charles Bull, a storekeeper, (from the ship) and had 12 children. She never lived in Kaukapakapa.

Anna Matilda Thompson married a German emigrant, Frederic William Manning in 1868 when she was 16 years old. They had 10 children. She lived to 92 years of age.

Georgina Thompson was the baby in 1863. She only lived 18 months, and died of dysentery.

* * * * *

PERIODIC DETENTION WORKING GROUP

From mid-February the Society will have the assistance of a group of PD workers on outside tasks around the grounds The group will have their own supervisor, and Ron Iles will be there to sort out the jobs. The first will be to distribute the piles of gravel that were given by Downers after recent roadworks. The path to the new Archives building is on the list. It will be great to have some young muscle to help reduce the long list of maintenance on the Museum Property. **story by Lynn Millar**

TOM'S KAYAKING ADVENTURE

Tom Shanks is the second son of the late Tom and Ella (nee Vercoe) Shanks. The family of five – one daughter and four sons, lived at Kaukapakapa. Tom attended Helensville District High School, then, like his sister, Ruth, and older brother John, trained at Auckland Teachers' College. His teaching career took him around New Zealand, but he has been a "mainlander" for many years now. His eyesight has gradually deteriorated and he is now officially classed as blind.

In the winter 2013 edition of "Outlook" the quarterly magazine of the Royal Foundation for the Blind (RNZFB) writer Amy Prebble had an article, featuring Tom Shanks, one of a party of ten who with a support crew of five, spent four days kayaking in the Abel Tasman National Park.

Tom remembered making a kayak when he was a teenager, so when he heard of the RNZFB course he jumped at the chance to join in. Although Tom, at 77 was quite a bit older than the other members of the group he managed really well in all respects, said RNZFB, Recreation Advisor Marina Hanger. The activities including camping in tents, cooking, a waterfall slide, tramping in beautiful bush, and kayaking of course in sheltered bays and the open sea. Tom enjoyed the experiences. "It all went to show that having a disability does not exclude you from fun and adventure at any age" he said.

* * * * *

EASTER 100 YEARS AGO

A century ago, before the common ownership of cars, railway excursions were a popular way of spending public holidays.

Note the trips offered for Easter 1914. A full day could be spent in Helensville on Easter Monday. Buses or trucks would take travellers



NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS.

EASTER HOLIDAYS, 1914.

SPECIAL EASTER EXCURSIONS.

On Thursday, 9th April a special Express train will leave Auckland for Rotorua at 10.40 p.m. This train will stop at Okoroire, Tirau, and Putaruru stations only. On same date a special train will leave Auckland for Hamilton at 11.5 p.m. connecting at Frankton with special Express train leaving Frankton for Rotorua at 5.10 a.m. on Good Friday.

On Monday, 13th April, a special Express train will leave Rotorua for Auckland at 9.30 p.m.

On Friday, 10th April, a special Express train will leave Frankton for Auckland at 3.30 a.m. A train leaving Rotorua for Frankton at 9.10 p.m. on Thursday, 9th April, and the 5 p.m. Goods train with car attached from Taumarunui on 9th April, will connect at Frankton with this train.

GOOD FRIDAY, 10th APRIL, 1914.

Only a limited time table will be observed on this date.

EXCURSION TO TE AROHA ON GOOD FRIDAY.

A special train will leave Auckland for Te Aroha at 6.45 a.m., returning leaving Te Aroha at 4.30 p.m.

EASTER MONDAY, 13th APRIL, 1914.

Trains will leave Auckland for Helensville at 6.52 a.m., 7.45 a.m. and 8.20 a.m., and 6.45 p.m. returning leaving Helensville for Auckland at 3.5 p.m., 4.15 p.m. and 5 p.m.

For further particulars see Posters, Handbills and Booklet.

BY ORDER

. HAPPY BIRTHDAYS HEC AND CLARE

Congratulations to our very good friends, Clare and Hec Aitkenhead who had a shared 80th birthday celebration in January.

Hec actually had his 80th last year, and Clare will be 80 in March, but January 2014 was chosen so that their eldest granddaughter, Courtney Addison could be present.

Hec and Clare now live at Peninsula Club, Whangaparaoa, but are still involved in Helensville activities, including the Helensville Museum. Hec and Clare are valued and long-standing members of the society, being generous with gifts and time on a variety of projects and duties.



Courtney Addison leaves for Denmark in early March to take up a PhD fellowship. In 2013 she completed her MA in medical anthropology, at Auckland University with a thesis on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Photo and story from Dave Addison, "Helensville News"

CONGRATULATIONS ON 60 YEARS

Best wishes to members Ralph and Kath Fotheringham on their 60th Wedding Anniversary. They were married in the Takapuna Methodist Church on 16 January 1954, and lived first at Dairy Flat.

Kath says that Ralph's first love has always been farming, and they have lived at "Greenacres" Kaukapakapa, Peak Road, and Kahikatea Flats, Waitoki where they had their first "retirement" home. They also farmed a property at South Head. They now live at Orewa, in their second "retirement" home. However Ralph still returns to help on his son's farm.

Ralph and Kath have 4 children, 12 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren, most of whom live in the Auckland area.

BETTY DOROTHY WISHART

1 November 1914 – 8 January 2014

Betty was born at Marton in the Manawatu, the youngest child of Harry and Kate Merson, and shortly after the family moved to Raetihi where she spent her formative years with brothers Mac and Jack and sister Mollie. Betty's father Harry owned a sawmill in Raetihi, which was destroyed in the great forest fire of March 1918.

After her father's death in 1920 the family moved to Auckland. Betty was a boarder at Wanganui Girls College. She worked at George Courts in Karangahape Road, where she joined in the staff sporting activities, especially marching, biking and swimming. Betty then trained as a nurse at New Plymouth Hospital. After qualifying in 1943 she moved to Whangarei to train as a midwife.

On January 8, 1945 she married Alex Wishart who was managing the Bell Block for the Lands and Survey Department, preparing the land for subdividing into rehabilitation farms for returned servicemen. Alex had been invalided home after being badly wounded at El Alamein. Alex and Betty were allocated one of the blocks of land adjacent to Old North Road, and developed an Angus cattle and Southdown sheep stud.

The Wishart and Merson families had been friends before the war and one of Betty's friends Joan, married her brother Mac who then settled in Helensville running an electrical business

Betty had two daughters, Sue and Patsy, and then aged 40 found she was pregnant with triplets. Things were not easy on the Bell Block in those days, with no electricity despite power pylons running through the farm. Alex applied to the Waitemata Electric Power Board stating his wife's condition and the power was connected straight away. Bob and Sandy arrived safely, but the third baby unfortunately did not survive.

Alex died suddenly in December 1956 and Betty was left with four children and the farm.



Fortunately there was a strong sense of community on the Bell Block farms and Betty received plenty of support. She remained on the farm until 1981, with Doc Roy managing the property for the last 20 years.

Betty was active in many local organisations including the school committee, calf club, Helensville A&P Association, St. John, the Historical Society and Scouts, where she was the secretary from 1967 to 1973. In the 1960s she supported pregnant unwed women for Motherhood of Man'. She was an enthusiastic member of the Motor Neurone Disease Assn, Birthright New Zealand, and the Women's Division of the RSA, where she was made a life member in 1998 and became their patron.

Betty was always busy with some type of handcraft; and was also an accomplished pianist . However her real love was spending time fishing. She joined the Auckland Lady Anglers Club in 1973 and rarely missed a trip out, especially on the Kaipara. She was happy fishing anywhere at any time. The guard of honour given to Betty at her funeral by the members of the Auckland Lady Anglers Club was a fitting tribute to a great lady and fisherwoman.

Betty is survived by her four children, nine grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

Thanks to Chris Clarke and "Helensville News" for story and photo .

Editor's note Betty's son Sandy was also was a supporter of the Historical Soc.

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Christmas Parade

Robin and Margaret Truman, Jennifer McCann, Judy Lloyd and Samantha and Lynn Millar represented the Society in the Helensville Santa Parade. Dressed in period costume, they made an effective group and walked the distance handing out the sweets and pamphlets. A good crowd turned out for the day. Thanks to the members for their participation in the event.

Samantha commented that the pioneer women must have been strong to wear those long and heavy dresses in the summer. Of course those early women had to cope with heavy dresses in all seasons in all their daily work!

Story by Lynn Millar

see pictures from Dave Addison on page

two

OFFICERS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PATRONS:

Doris Jenkins, Gay Hildreth, Barbara Waller, Roy Young .

ADMIN OFFICER: Lynn Millar

COMMITTEE: 2013-2014

President /Accessions	John Smith
Vice President/Treasurer	Glenyss Blackshaw
Minute Secretary/Publicity	Judy Lloyd
Archives/Library	Lesley Holt
Family History	Isla Willis
“Past Perfect” catalogues	Leigh Bosch
Heritage tours	Julie Colville
Hospitality	Rhonda Grace
Accessions/gardens	Jean Davidson
Newsletter/events	Wynne HaySmith
Media/events	Jennifer McCann

CAN YOU HELP? WE DO NEED YOU!

Once again we are appealing for help to keep the Museum open. We are short of people for Wednesday afternoon roster duty in particular. . If the thought of showing people around is a bit daunting, there are other jobs you may like to do! Volunteers are the life blood of the Society.

Please ring Lynn on 420 7881 or e-mail or write to the Museum.

RODNEY COMBINED MUSEUMS

The AGM and 6-monthly meeting of the RCM will be held at Albertland Museum (Wellsford) on Monday 24 February. Lynn and Wynne will be representing Helensville .(there are 7 societies/museums in Rodney).

GENEALOGY INFORMATION REQUEST

WALKER, Robert Henry, b 1872 Ireland, d 1931 NZ, m 1898 Pukekohe, to Elizabeth Jane EAST. Farmer known to live in Coatesville, Waimauku Kaukapakapa area from 1920s to 1940. Please contact Cath Glanville, Ph 03 489 0640 or e-mail baypropty@xtra.co.nz

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 12 3139 0003816 00 (include name and 'subs' and send your details via email to 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 2014-2015 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.

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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Name _____

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Alterations / additions to address

President	John Smith	420 8428
Vice President	Glenyss Blackshaw	420 8513
Secretary	Judy Lloyd	420 5276
Admin Officer	Lynn Millar	420 7881

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

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