

# BIRKENHEAD HERITAGE

— SOCIETY INC —

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2-4pm**

**St Andrews Hall, 172 Hinemoa Street**

### Annual General Meeting

“Fourteen days notice of the A.G.M and the business of the meeting, for our members.”

The AGM reports, update on Farrington House Museum, and election of committee.

**Followed by viewing of a donated collection of photos taken before and during construction of the Harbour Bridge, Brian Potter will provide commentary.**

We look forward to welcoming our members and visitors with a special afternoon tea.

No door entry, raffle tickets will be sold.

New nominations to join the Committee welcome President and Vice Presidents phone numbers below.

**Annual Subscription are now due**  
\$25 (single) \$35 (family) Details last page.

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**Trish Love** [trishlove@premium.co.nz](mailto:trishlove@premium.co.nz)

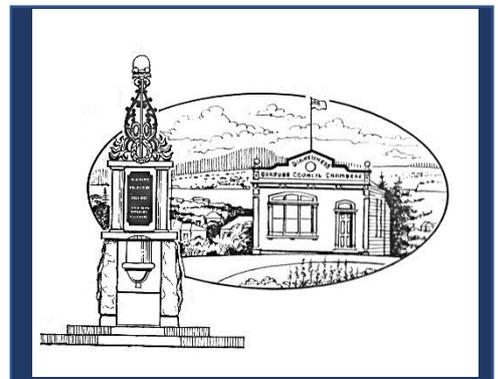
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July -  
August  
2020

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2-4pm**

**St Andrews Hall, 172 Hinemoa Street**

**Guest Speaker: Jocelyn Windsor will share her knowledge of the ancient art of bookmaking.**

Jocelyn will show her tools and techniques, and explain how different books were put together. A unique opportunity to learn about an ancient craft, practiced by bookbinders and their apprentices over many centuries.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2-4pm**

**St Andrews Hall 172 Hinemoa Street**

**Guest Speaker: President of the Toroa Preservation Society, Robert Brown will share the story of “The Restoration of the Toroa” harbour ferry.**

**Farrington House Museum will re-open on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, 2-4pm from the 12 July 44 Mahara Ave. Birkenhead**

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## CONTACT US

President – Marcia Roberts 418 0397

Vice President – Brian Potter 483 3400  
Vice President – Colleen Durham 483 4001

## Civic Sculptures on the Shore

Part Two; Continuing the topic given to Birkenhead Heritage Society on 14<sup>th</sup> March, by our member, Barbara Wesley.

### Commissioned Works

By the 1960s local Councils were interested in obtaining new modern sculptures that would enhance their buildings and underline their identity on the North Shore, which was rapidly expanding after the opening of the harbor bridge in 1959.

The most significant of these works on the Shore were those obtained by commissions, either by Councils, or other interested parties.



**Sculptural Court** 1971 by Lyndon Smith

A public competition called for applications in 1968. Three artists applied – Allen, Duff and Smith. Won by Lyndon Smith and commissioned by Northcote Borough Council to build in the Northcote Shopping Centre Sculptural Court at a cost of \$4000.

The Sculpture comprised of 4 distinct elements – wall, fountain, disc and granite Form. Minor modifications occurred over the next 10 years. The small fountain removed in 1983, and made into a garden. Major modifications took place in 1998 when the shopping centre was redesigned.

The artist was not consulted – some parts discarded others moved and re-sited. Now incomplete and bearing no relation to the original concept. The Granite *Form* only part of the Court that is left.

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A second significant commission was the **Cascade of Golden Fragments** 1973 – below.



Molly Macalister was commissioned by 6 North Shore Councils to design a sculpture for North Shore crematorium in 1973, in keeping with the modern new building. (Similar form to prize-winning bronze and wire abstract by Macalister in BP House, Wellington)

**Cascade of golden fragments** reflects light from high window above. (Physical form to Ecclesiastes 12: 5-6)

Taken down for cleaning in 1997 and left in storage. Caused much controversy in Council. Reinstated after acrimonious debate. Now has bronze plaque nearby to lead public into awareness of meaning.

Removed again when the Chapel area was redecorated. Present whereabouts unknown but possibly in storage.

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**Civic Sculptures on the North Shore**

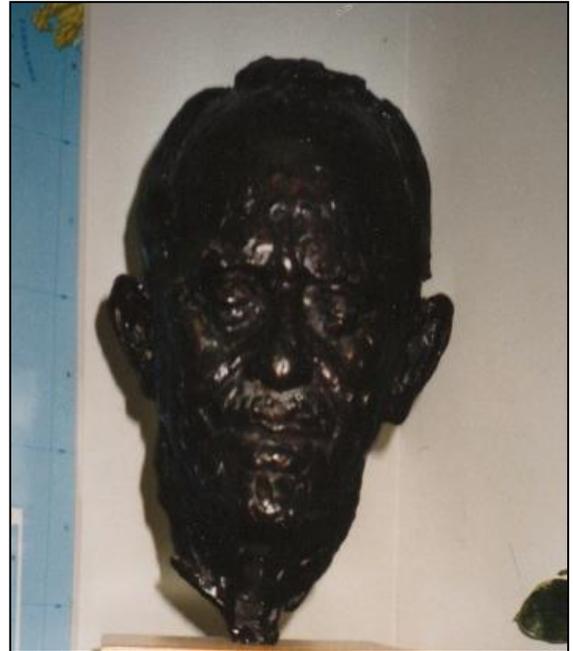
**Gifts**

The Councils also obtained sculptures - by accepting gifts. During the 1970s – 1990s sculpture became more available to purchase and donate by various organizations, as they could raise the required money themselves for these smaller items.

**Frank Sargeson** (Bust) 1970 by **Anthony Stones** - opposite.

The sculptured head was donated to Takapuna Library by friends after Council decided NOT to buy the piece. Mrs. N. Free, a Takapuna resident then initiated a phone appeal asking for donations. After raising the \$300 she asked the Council to make the balance available so that as a matter of civic pride, Mr Sargeson – well known local author and poet would be recognized now and in the future.

The sculpture, roughly modeled in bronze was a new style, hard to accept by the general public in NZ. (Stones was from England).



Both Anthony Stones, (sculptor), as well as Frank Sargeson (subject) were present at the unveiling showing that modern sculptures need not just be memorials to the deceased

Unveiled by Mayor Thomas in March 1971 when he noted

**“It is things less tangible than pipes, drains and sewers, like art, which give a city a soul.”**

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**Alison Duff** - brass & copper stylistic bird – imagery of flight and movement

Innovative in 1970s, expressing the artist’s interest in native birds and use of non-traditional materials readily seen. Her interest, and knowledge of metal and welding, was learnt at Northcote College. Donated by **Friends of the Library** to create interest in local sculpture, and artists.



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## Civic Sculptures on the North Shore

### Sails - Takapuna



### Marte Szirmay – 1983

Privately commissioned by Hawkins Developers when building the new shops and restaurants in Takapuna - but in the public arena between two large new buildings.

**Szirmay** benefited from the growth in corporate sponsorship in the 1970s and 1980s when modern sculpture was increasingly commissioned for new buildings before the stock market crash in 1987.

Art patronage became a sign of affluence and good taste in the corporate world. Many gained extra floor space at the planning stage by spending a percentage of the total cost on art work.

Szirmay's work shows her own sense of spirituality as she saw circles and spirals affirming life and the process of growth.

### Words – Birkenhead 2010

**Jeff Thomson** – born 1957. Lives and works in Helensville. Graduated from Elam School of Art in 1981, specializing in sculpture by 1986. Best known for his corrugated iron sculptures throughout NZ, and overseas.

The North Shore Library Foundation sponsored three sculptures to be placed in the Reserve outside the new Birkenhead library. **WORDS** on the sculptural reading wall have multiple word associations with Birkenhead, eg Chelsea, fantail, strawberries, wharf, harbour, refinery, bush, lights, be kind, etc. Sculpture is 16 mm thick steel which is galvanized and painted.

The Library and Civic Centre, with sculpture, opened to the public by Mayor Andrew Williams JP as the last public act by a North Shore Mayor in Chains of Office on 13 March 2010.



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## Editorial – COVID 19 experience!

Worldwide and here in New Zealand we have all been experiencing the outbreak and management of a Pandemic, a mutation of the influenza virus. History has recorded previous virulent strains. The current strain COVID 19 differs from H1N1 the 1918 influenza. Population spread and knowledge of viruses has changed significantly since that time, but research and trials for a vaccine continue.

*In 1918 vaccines were being produced against polio and yellow fever, they had not yet discovered that a virus, and not a bacillus or bacteria caused influenza. Troops massed together because of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, both in camps ready to be transported to Europe, and those at the front. The virus hastened the end of that war as men on both sides were falling ill, and returning home the virus was spread around the World. Infecting ports along the shipping routes, it was carried to other places by the network of railways, into cities and remote places. Lessons learnt – isolation stopped transmission.*

**In Birkenhead** in 2020 – as the result of cases and death tolls rising overseas during February, the World Health Organisation recognised this as a Pandemic. Locally people began to stockpile food. In March queues appeared outside supermarkets. Bottles of hand sanitiser, toilet paper along with bread, flour and many food items were depleted from shelves. More queues observed for petrol. Then suddenly the streets were empty, so quiet, tuis singing, a kaka sighted in Chatswood, Kauri Park and Rangatira Reserve. On T.V. our Prime Minister and Government officials reported on the reality..

The first announcement of a new virulent virus in China came at the end of December, 2019. **February 28<sup>th</sup> N.Z's 1<sup>st</sup> case reported.** I started taking notes on 16<sup>th</sup> March – Worldwide 163,00 cases and 6,000 deaths. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of March to 17<sup>th</sup> N.Z. cases few, but, suddenly climbed. **March 18<sup>th</sup>** Northland 1, Auckland 4, Rotorua 1, Taranaki and Christchurch 2, Dunedin and Invercargill 1 each, soon there were **20**, all associated or contacts with overseas travel. Australia at that time, over 500 cases, London reported now a ghost town as people stayed home. Italy, Spain and Iran the highest cases, figures from China unknown. **March 19<sup>th</sup> our borders were closed.** With international flights ceasing there was a rush for seats on planes, visitors returning to their home countries; and kiwis returning to isolation for 2 weeks. **March 23<sup>rd</sup> Alert 3:** Schools to close the next day. Queues at supermarkets, soon to be 2 metres apart.

Over 70 year olds advised - stay home. Hospital Intensive Care Units prepared, we learnt about stocks of P.P.E. – Personal Protection Equipment. **March 26<sup>th</sup> Day 1 of Alert 4. N.Z. Cases 283.** Retail shops, theatres, sports all closed, church services too, no Easter or ANZAC Day gatherings. ‘Stay in home bubble’. Only essential workers to continue working. 1pm Daily TV updates by our Prime Minister and appropriate leaders gave us the latest cases, numbers swabbed, laboratory test results achieved to identify new possible cases, 29,000 tests done by **April 3<sup>rd</sup>** in 14 days. Food banks were essential for so many families at home.

**In Birkenhead and elsewhere** people out walking, keeping their distance from others, endless fine days, very few vehicles moving on the roads.. Our neighbour brought us bread, milk and flour at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> week, many acts of kindness. Some more local tracks amongst the native bush closed by Council. Buses ran on schedule, no passengers seen. Throughout N.Z. cafes, hotels, restaurants, tourist activities, businesses closed/staff laid off. Phones and screens were the way families and friends communicated., and checked on others.

All local shops closed, queues outside supermarkets. The pharmacy open reduced hours. Children at home, many learning on-line, large numbers of employees and parents working from home. No ferries, no takeaways, no rubbish around Highbury. No non-urgent hospital or waiting list admissions. One local couple were isolated at home, back from a cruise that docked in Australia. By the 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> day at home one then the other suffered from Covid 19, with fever, headaches and coughing – receiving daily follow up calls from the COVID 19 team. By **April 28<sup>th</sup> Level 3 began.,** they were cleared, free of the virus.

**May 4<sup>th</sup> NO N.Z. NEW CASES,** official numbers to WHO 1137. Our actual and possible cases 1487, 16 clusters, 20 deaths + 2 two more later confirmed. Worldwide cases May 4<sup>th</sup> 3,6595,200 cases. **May 25<sup>th</sup> Level 2, June 8<sup>th</sup> midnight Level 1** was reached.in N.Z. Worldwide numbers continue to rise.

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Local changes in our area.

Something old: On 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 “New Zealand Post has been planning for a year to close down 79 of their post shops and replace them with franchise operations across the country.”

I missed that announcement so very surprised to find our local Post Office closed, so were others when I went for stamps earlier this year. The local franchise now at Paper Plus in the Mall.

Something new: On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 6pm a new Night Market opened on the lower 2 floors under Birkenhead Mall. Hinemoa Street parking and the Mall car parks were full. The food stalls were busy and the area crowded with families. (The Glenfield Market has closed, and now moved here.)



The Night Market at Birkenhead.

Something restored: Once again vehicles can park behind the shops on the South side of Mokoia road, the large slip repaired. There are two entry points, but exit only onto Rawene Rd.

Something extra: During COVID 19 lock down at Alert 4, all Libraries and Museums were closed. **Birkenhead Library** offer a Home delivery service – for people who are over 70, vulnerable or house bound, and in addition not comfortable visiting the Library at Alert Level 2. If this service may assist you or someone you know please contact the Library. This message was sent requesting to share with our Members.

**Annual subscription \$35 (family)  
\$25 (single), \$5 (junior) due May – delayed  
by COVID 19 –when meetings cancelled.**

You may pay by cash or cheque at the AGM or Post to Birkenhead Heritage Society Inc, P.O. Box 34419, Birkenhead, 0746.

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