

# BIRKENHEAD HERITAGE

— SOCIETY INC —

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday 8th February 2020 2-4pm**  
**- St Andrews Hall 172 Hinemoa Street -**  
**Topic: Birkenhead Library, Review of our**  
**Library's history, then share your stories.**  
Birkenhead Librarians are preparing an information pamphlet on the Library's past. This is our opportunity to add some personal stories and memories of our local Library.

**Saturday 14th March 2-4pm**  
**- St Andrews Hall 172 Hinemoa Street -**  
**A Brief History of Civic Sculptures and**  
**Memorials on the North Shore.**  
Our member Barbara Wesley will share her interest in researching well and little known sculptures, art works and War Memorials around the shore.

**Sunday Feb. 23th, March 8th and 22nd**  
**Farrington House Museum Open 2-4pm**  
**44 Mahara Ave., Birkenhead**

Our appreciation for sponsoring printing to  
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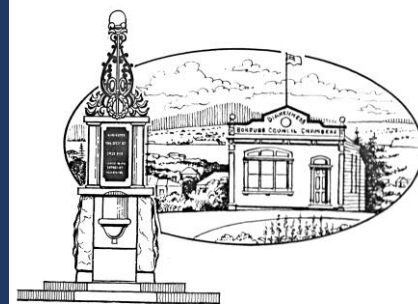
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January  
February  
2020

## Renovations at Farrington House



A big thank you from Birkenhead Heritage Society Inc.  
To Birkenhead Licensing Trust and  
Lion Foundation for making essential repairs to  
Farrington House Museum possible, and to  
Smith & Sons Birkenhead for completing the work.  
Preparation & painting - Wrights Property Services.



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## CONTACT US

President – Marcia Roberts 418 0397

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

End of Year - Christmas celebration of the Committee in December 2019.



Standing: Anne Farrington, Colleen Durham, Coral Malcolm, Jenny Goodwin, seated Stuart Durham and Erica Hannam.



Marcia Roberts, Colleen, Coral and Brian Potter, Jenny, and Maureen Andrews (past Secretary/Treasurer) with Stuart seated.



September Working Bee Farrington House : Marcia, Richard Tout, Ray Johansen (former President) Anne, Erica, Colleen & Brian.

Update: With Committee end of year celebrations completed, it was time to oversee repairs of Farrington House, then take a break and gather ideas for the new decade,

Repairs to the exterior of Farrington house began on the 9<sup>th</sup> December. After a search for recycled doors at a large warehouse of heritage windows, doors, boards and fittings in New Lynn it was decided a new door was necessary to replace the leaking side door. The new door has added features, a close match to the original.

The repairs included strengthening and replacing one of the front stairs supports, multiple deteriorating boards were repaired and noted defects corrected. Once preparation for painting commenced more damaged boards were revealed from below layers of paint - this is a work currently in progress.

### **EDITORIAL: Museums visited over the summer.**

While on holiday I can usually find a Museum to visit – camping near **Kawhia, West Waikato**, the local Museum was located beside the sea on the shores of a large tidal harbour. The Museum has two large timeline panels in the entrance which gave a clear indication of settlement by early Maori arriving by sea. Tradition refers to Kupe's Canoe resting here. Much later early Europeans also came by sea, over time clearing land for farming, calls for a local school, and committees formed to press for formed roads, and the needs of the community. Local papers were printed and their display tell of past events.

Several Marae remain in the district, a large local presence of Maori home for the holidays. On New Year's Day the annual whaleboats regatta, held since 1910, with 9 races in 2020. One is housed in the Museum, plus a display of fossils and geology specimens, collected by a local farming couple. (See Timeline photo p.4.)



## Editorial ctd.

The next Museum visited was South, in a Café at **Bluff**, with recent change of owners no indication inside – only the sign on the roof. I was directed to a corridor, and a back room displaying photos of the early sailing ships to visit Bluff – there being no other southern ports until Dunedin was developed. An A4 typed list gave a timeline of the relevant dates and events for Bluff. Photos grouped in decades gave a visual view of the changes as the port grew to accommodate a growing fishing fleet, their families, and Stewart Island ferries. In WWII defensive gun placements and defensive troops stationed on the hill above. Later the long jetty to the Aluminium Smelter was added, run out from the opposite shore.

A search for flax brought the first Europeans in 1813 aboard the “*Perseverance*” from Sydney.<sup>1</sup> They would have found the main Maori settlement on Ruapuke Island, lying 15km to the S.E. of Bluff, and 32 km N.E. of Oban on Stewart Island. There were 7 Maori pas, the base of the paramount chief of the South Island, Tuhawaiki, and a few smaller settlements along the Southland coast.

Ruapuke Island was named Bench Island (because of its flat appearance) by Captain Cook in 1770. Here in 1843 the Rev Johna Wohlers established a Mission, and a school.

The first settler at Bluff was James Spencer, a veteran of Waterloo (1815). He arrived in 1823 aboard the “*St Michael*” – returning to settle in 1924. He established a permanent home, the site was one N.Z.’s. earliest settlements, and the 1<sup>st</sup> to survive to become a town. Surveyed in 1856 by JT Thomson who named it Bluff Town. The Superintendent of the Province Captain Cargill, ordered a name change to Campbelltown – reverting in 1917 when Bluff was officially adopted.

1. Wikipedia, History of Ruapuke Island.

Then it was over glassy seas by ferry to **Oban**, Stewart Island, where we admired a new modern glass covered building under construction. Was it a new D.O.C. building, or perhaps Council Office? – But no, a new purpose built building for the Stewart Island Museum.



Oban Museum – to open 2020 (Photo M. Roberts))

Next day to the current Oban Museum – open 10 to 1.30, run by a small group of 8 volunteers. Here we learnt the new Museum near completion has been long in the planning – grants, including from the Ministry of Culture were sought. From the two current display rooms and an upstairs storage room, plus office – their new facility will have a humidity controlled room for documents, display areas and workrooms. It is in a prime location close to Cafes and the wharf. Again I noted there were folders displayed supporting different decades, and a timeline theme evident.



The current Oban Museum (Stewart Island brochure)

**Editorial Ctd.**



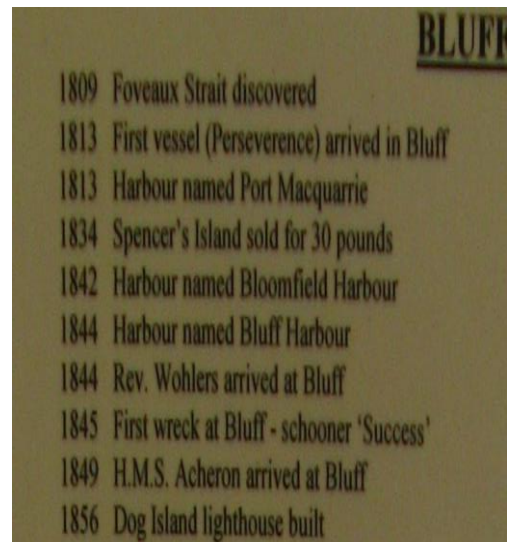
**Timelines assist sharing local history.**

Here are two examples, presenting new ideas for presenting our local history in Birkenhead.

Kawhia Timeline left (photo by S. Fitzpatrick 2019)

**BLUFF MILESTONES** below – the list began with – 1809 Foveaux Strait discovered.

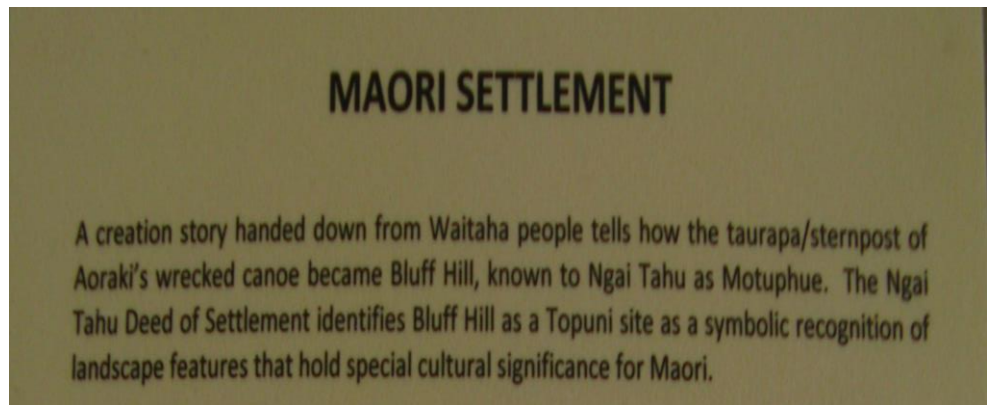
- 1813 First Vessel 'Perseverance' arrived in Bluff
- 1834 Harbour named Port Macquarie
- 1834 Spencer's Island sold for 30 pounds
- 1844 Harbour named Bluff Harbour
- 1844 Rev. Wohler arrived Bluff Harbour
- 1845 First wreck at Bluff – schooner 'Success'



The history of Bluff Maori is told as a story – dates as we know them not relevant .

**“Maori Settlement**

A creation story handed down from Waitaha people tells how the taurapa/sternpost of Aorakii's wrecked canoe became Bluff Hill, known to Ngai Tahu as Motuphue. The Ngai Tahu Deed of Settlement identifies Bluff Hill as a Topuni site as a symbolic recognition of landscape features that hold special cultural significance for Maori.”



Photos from Bluff Café Museum by M. Roberts 2020