



## THE BIRKENHEAD HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



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### December 2014 Newsletter

#### From the President

Merry Christmas everyone. It's that time of year again. Time to catch up with old friends, wonder what to buy for presents, and what others may send your way. An event in our heritage being celebrated this year is the bicentenary of the preaching of the Christmas message, on Christmas Day 1814, by the Reverend Samuel Marsden at Oihi in the Bay of Islands. The arrival of Samuel Marsden is well documented; he was invited by the Maori chief Ruatara and there is no doubt about the significance of the service that took place that day. It is perhaps surprising that we have little information on exactly what was said beyond the opening words "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy". Nevertheless the event was followed by the settlement of missionaries at Oihi where they remained until the move to Paihia and Kerikeri.

So we wish you all the best for Christmas and New Year and look forward to seeing you all again in 2015.

#### What have we been doing?

**Heritage Festival:** Each year BHS contributes activities to the Heritage Festival run by the Auckland Council. This year we participated in four events:

1. "From Birkenhead to the Battlefield" talk at the Birkenhead Library. This talk, based on research by Brian Potter, focussed on the soldiers of Birkenhead who did not return home; some 54. The audience of 29 learned where Birkenheads' soldiers went, and the battles they took part in. For a selection of these soldiers Brian told us more of their stories, their addresses, occupations, last days, and where they are buried. Brian reports that he has been able to understand the story behind all but one of Birkenhead's WW1 war dead. The possibility of repeating the presentation to a wider BHS audience has been discussed.

2. We opened the Museum for extended hours on two consecutive weekends.. The Heritage Festival gives us the opportunity to attract many more visitors through the door to see the fine work we do.

3. Colleen Durham and Marcia Roberts were guides on several historical walking tours of the shopping centre.

4. Colleen Durham organised an exhibition of heritage items at the Birkenhead Library.

**Christmas Party:** Twenty-five members turned out on a not ideal weather day to celebrate our annual member Christmas Party. The highlight was the show songs sung by opera singer TiaLozano. The raffles of a First World War book and a Christmas Hamper were won by Anne Warman and Julia Potter respectively.

**Auckland Council Heritage Department:** We have been donated copies of two key studies of Birkenhead and Northcote Heritage from the former North Shore City Council:

- Northcote and Birkenhead Heritage and Character Studies (2005)
- North Shore Thematic Heritage Review (2011)

At the same time we also obtained digital copies of the reports and have installed them as part of a growing “digital library” stored on our Museum computers.

### **From the Committee**

Our November meeting was held at the museum to specially meet two people from the Heritage Department of Auckland Council (David Bade and Raewyn Sendles) who were seeking feedback on how the Council could assist people involved in heritage . We believe that, as a group of volunteers, that operate in support of heritage objectives we have an important story to tell and we wanted to tell it with the Museum as a background. Our main message was in seeking assistance with running costs and maintenance. We are hopeful that we were able to influence the policy that will be the outcome of the Council’s work in this area.

### **Coming Event**

Our February event will be a trip that we had to delay this year due to inclement weather, and that is to visit the Northern Waikato battlefields of the Land Wars. In this trip we will visit the sites of the battles of Meremere and Rangiriri, as well as the engagement at Martyns Farm and the Queens Redoubt. We invite you to bring your friends and families for an interesting day out. Details are:

**Date:** Saturday 21 February 2015

**Time:** Pickups start on the Birkdale circuit at 9am.

**Cost:** \$ 30 per Person

**Bookings:** Mavis Throll, phone 483-7230

Please bring your lunch.

## Our Photos

We include a photo from our collection in each newsletter. This one is of the decorations erected at Highbury Corner to welcome the coming of peace in 1918. In view of the present focus on WW1 and the Christmas message of peace it seems particularly appropriate. The sign is across Mokoia Road from the shops on the right to the Rawene Road corner. Mr Shepherds house has a commanding view on the hill about where the Dental Surgery is today.

