

THE BIRKENHEAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Incorporated 1979)

PO Box 34419 Birkenhead

Auckland 0746



NEWSLETTER

April/May 2012

From the President

With the summer that wasn't fast drawing to a close its time to think about the next activities. So in this Newsletter we are advising of a tour of the Zion Hill Methodist Church, Anzac Day arrangements and the Annual General Meeting. We are also providing a general update and drawing your attention to a several things

General Update:

Huia Trip – By all accounts the Huia Trip was enjoyed by all who travelled. Betty Durham did the commentary on this occasion as I had family business to attend to and she did an excellent job.

Museum – Inside the museum Ray Johanson and Tom Cotter have been rearranging displays, cataloguing our stock of books and having a general tidy up. We have recently engaged a carpenter to carry out some overdue repairs outside so those with an eye for detail will spot that the ramp has a new handrail, a new window has been installed at the back, the cracked toilet window has been replaced, and several other jobs completed. These repairs were funded by a grant from the Birkenhead Trust for which we are very grateful.

Museum Donations – We have recently received several donated items to add to our collection and we thank the donors:

- Barbers scissors and combs, donated by Percy Allison
- Valve Radio and hand operated sewing machine donated from the estate of the late Mrs Jean McKenzie

Mt Albert Historical Society – We recently hosted a visit to Birkenhead, and the Museum, by the Mt Albert Historical Society. Some will recall how Richie Afford, of Mt Albert, hosted us on a tour of Mt Albert during our Alberton Trip. Therefore the visit of MAHS was a way of "returning the favour", Birkenhead style.

Subscriptions – we have attached a reminder to this news letter where our records show that subscriptions for the 2011/2012 year have not been paid. We ask your attention to this please as our bills don't go away, and we will be into a new subscription year after the AGM.

Annual General Meeting – this newsletter includes details of the AGM and we really would like you to attend, review the reports of the Society over the last year and participate in the elections and discussion. AGM's are an important time to have your say.

1. Subscriptions

"That subscriptions for the coming year remain unchanged"

2. Auditor

"That the society accounts do not require an audit for the coming year".

Straight after the AGM our Guest Speaker, Lisa Truttman, will be speaking on the history of Partington's Windmill. We will also have a Heritage Officer from the Auckland Council attending as our guest.

The Postie

I wonder if you would be interested in the life of a Postie 50 years ago – and only a part time one at that? It all came about when no one could be found to do lower Birkenhead. I must have been mad or very young but I volunteered. I was a very new resident of the suburb and knew nothing of the world below Highbury. I soon learned of all the back streets the hard way. First I had to help to sort the mail. There is truth in the saying “The mail must go through.” Through, I must say, rain, hail and slush. What would you do with a letter addressed to “Elsie and Frank, Balmain Road”? With a little bit of help from each other, someone came up with a surname. In those far off days people were addressed by Mr, Mrs, Miss and even Master. The above letter was of course delivered correctly. Many letters came with only Mum or Dad, Birkenhead on them, but the detectives – mainly the older ones – would scan the stamp and post mark and remember so and so’s son or daughter was on holiday – another happy mum. Very few letters found their way to the Dead Letter Office.

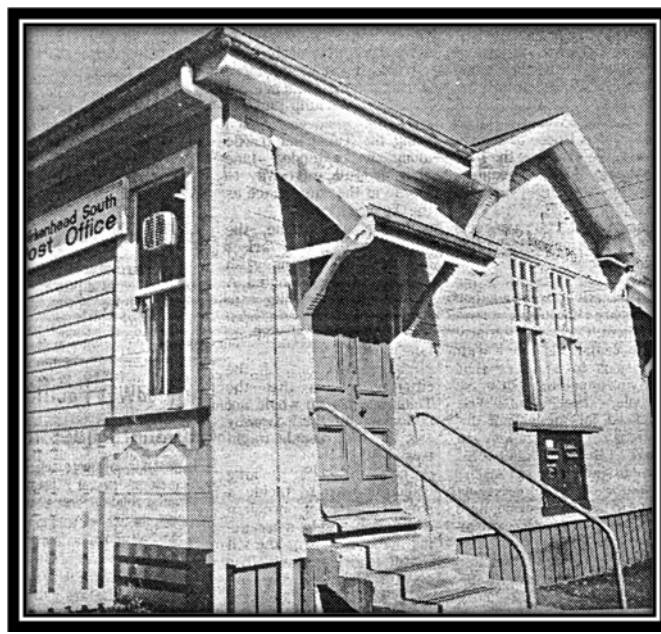
It was my job, of course, to show prospective posties the run. This was in the days before equal pay. One particular applicant turned up and off we went down Hinemoa Street and up the other side with me carrying the heavy bag! Arriving at Arawa Street he refused to go any further, so I went down and up the street while he sat on the brick fence at the top. He did not get the job. On one occasion – remembering that I did not know anyone – who married who or whose parents were which or what branch of the family, I managed to deliver the wrong letter to Palmerston Road. Waiting at the gate the next morning was one very irate lady waving the wretched thing in my face. How was I to know that she hadn’t spoken to her sister-in-law for 7 years. I certainly learned the hard way, though for years I thought of her as the Wrong Letter Lady.

We all carried a whistle which we blew. We wouldn’t dream of just popping in the letters or parcel without letting the recipients know. On thinking back, there must have been very few days I can’t remember ever being hassled. Oh well, so much for a postman’s life.

Years later I sat behind two ladies with the same name from Beach Haven in the bus, and heard them commenting on the stupid Postman who kept delivering their letters to the wrong address. All the bus could hear. I tapped one of them on the shoulder and told them they were talking about my husband and if they had the right house number and street on the envelope they would get delivered. All quiet in the bus until someone let out a loud laugh. Why do folk talk so loud in buses?

I haven’t been a Postie since and don’t wish to be, so have a cheery word to your Post girl or man. Don’t complain if you don’t get letters addressed to streets miles away. Remember the days of the personal touch are long past.

Kaye Bland 1993



Birkenhead South Post office
1984

TRIP TO HUIA



Driving through Titirangi



Walking to Huia Lookout



Huia Lookout



Huia Museum



COMING EVENTS

14 April, 2pm at Zion Hill Methodist Church (NB.not St Andrews)

Coral Malcolm will be providing a talk on the history of this landmark Church, and a tour. The Church was established on this site before the first Birkenhead Borough Council was formed, indeed their first meeting was held in the Church. Coral knows the history in detail so this event is a 'must do'.

25 April, 10am at Birkenhead War Memorial Park – Anzac Day Service

The Society will lay a wreath and open the Museum after the service. So please join us.

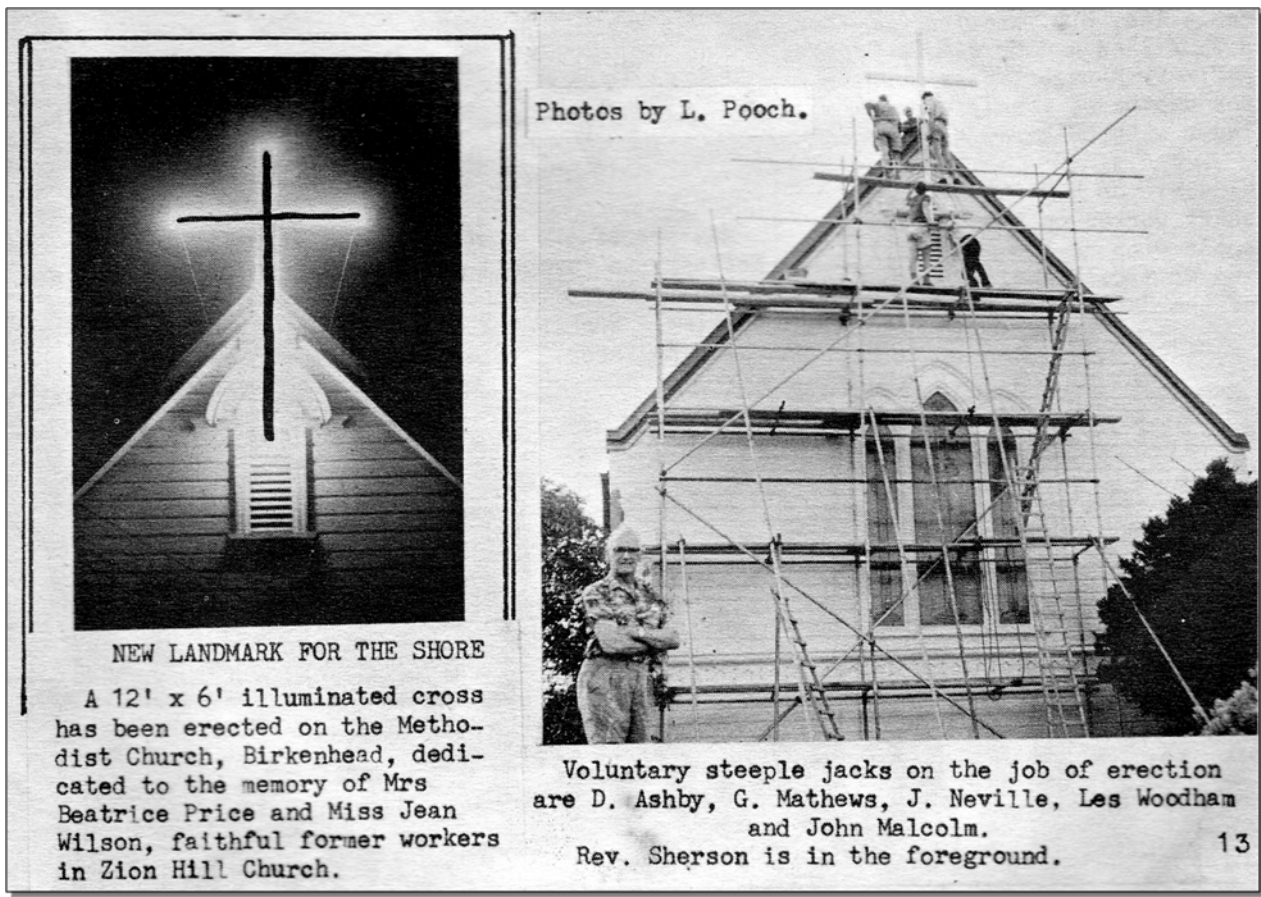
19 May, 2pm at St Andrews Church, Hinemoa Street – Annual General Meeting, followed by:

“The Story of Partington’s Windmill by Lisa Truttman”

Partington’s Windmill was built on the Symonds St ridge in 1850 and demolished in 1950. The mill was a landmark and literally ‘watched’ Auckland grow from a small town into a major city. Another ‘must do’ talk.

16 June, 2pm at St Andrews, Hinemoa Street – Stories Day.

Its time to sharpen pencils and compose your stories for your story is part of our history. Looking forward to catching up you at these events.



NEW LANDMARK FOR THE SHORE

A 12' x 6' illuminated cross has been erected on the Methodist Church, Birkenhead, dedicated to the memory of Mrs Beatrice Price and Miss Jean Wilson, faithful former workers in Zion Hill Church.

Photos by L. Pooch.

Voluntary steeple jacks on the job of erection are D. Ashby, G. Mathews, J. Neville, Les Woodham and John Malcolm. Rev. Sherson is in the foreground.

13

North Shore Photo News May 1964