

THE BIRKENHEAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Incorporated 1979)

PO Box 34419

Birkenhead

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# AUGUST/SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE PEN OF THE PRESIDENT.

We are making good progress with upgrading our records of exhibits we have to display at the Museum. Repairs to the alarm system have been carried out by Hawke Security, along with some electrical repairs done by John Malcolm.

Some displays have been moved around to make more room and we were fortunate to have some of the Samoan members of the Catholic Church in Beach Haven to assist us with this.

Since the last newsletter, three groups have visited the Museum - by special arrangement during the week. If you know of any groups that may be interested in visiting, please contact one of the Committee, we are always happy to accommodate them.

We will have a display of photographs at the Birkenhead Library for the Heritage Festival during September and October, I do hope you will take the time to view them.

The bus trip to Dargaville was a great success, with 27 passengers on board including members from North Shore and Glenfield Historical Societies. John Craven's generous quotation for the bus was very much appreciated and this assisted us to keep the price down.

I would like to remind you all that on any of our trips we do not supply meals, however we always fit in a morning tea break and will stop for you to purchase food if required.

**See back page for details of the next trip in August, this will be the last one for the year so book your seat early.**

I recently visited the North Shore Vintage Car Club with Thomas Cotter and John Malcolm to have a look at a Fire Engine and other vehicles their members are restoring. This proved to be a very interesting and informative visit.

Ray Johanson



Story from our recent stories day

## THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN

The circus came to Birkenhead several times in the late 1940s and the only flat land big enough for the big top, caravans, animal cages and pens etc. Was our main front paddock which is where the 1<sup>st</sup> field is now in the War Memorial Park. Later on after the formation of the park was begun the circus moved to our back paddock of Roseberry Ave, which is now Miraka Place.

The circus caused a lot of excitement of course and people came from miles around to see the show. Sole Bros. Ridgeways and Coyles Snowy River Stampede were the names they went by but many performers were virtually the same people.

We were very lucky as there were several children among the circus families and just wanted to play normally with non-circus kids just as much as we wanted to mix with them. We just lapped up having friends in high places in the circus world! This of course meant that we could go and watch rehearsals and see what went on behind the scenes.

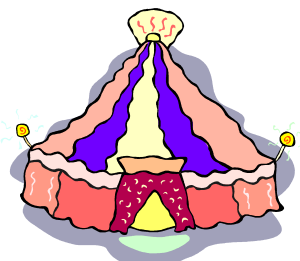
One special friend was a girl about my age called Faye Sole and she signed my autograph book as 'tumbler and rider'. She did what to me was amazing flips and things on horseback. We got to have a go which entailed putting on a safety harness on a pulley and just as you managed to stand up, one of the circus hands would whisk you high while the horse continued gently going on round the ring as if nothing had happened. It was a lot of fun to watch poor unsuspecting kids in the audience who were invited to go and give it a go as part of the show.

One night there was a bad electrical storm and one of the bucking broncos took fright and tried to jump a fence but only succeeded in getting tangled in the barbed wire, gashing his leg rather badly. This meant he was useless to perform, so he was left grazing on the farm until he was healed and picked up a few weeks later. I remember him being a beautiful gentle horse but we were not allowed to put a bridle or halter on him because he was trained to buck violently when touched behind the ears. That is how I learnt that all the bucking horses had one spot, that when touched, turned them into frenzied wild animals. Probably condemned as cruel by today's standards and leaves me wondering even now every time I see rodeos in action.

One other person that I absolutely adored was the country and western singer Shirley Thoms who went on to be a very popular New Zealand recording artist. She was only young then and tried desperately to teach me to yodel, with very disappointing, but hilarious results. She signed my autograph book in 1949.

It wasn't long before circuses in general were placed under far more strict conditions and after a few years they ceased to come to little places like Birkenhead and only performed in bigger and more lucrative locations. But for the few years they were at our place, we made some good friends and always looked forward to their return visits.

Coral Malcolm



## LOOKING BACK

Excerpts from a letter that was sent out by an Insurance company for the year 2000

### The “ 2000 issue” or “Millennium Bug”.

Our defence of the America’s Cup will not be the only major event to impact New Zealand in the Year 2000.

You may have read media articles highlighting the potential risks and far reaching effects that the Year 2000 date change will have. Put simply, some computer systems store the year by the last two digits i.e. 98 for 1998. As we move from 1999 to 2000, some computer systems may miscalculate or malfunction as time will have appeared to have moved backwards, as the two digit date will move from 99 to 00. Not only this but the Year 2000 is also a leap year with 29 days in February.

This problem isn’t restricted to conventional computer systems – it could affect any device with computer chips such as home appliances, lifts, security systems, and telephone systems to name a few. The technology industry has labelled this problem the ‘Millennium Bug’.

With good planning and action, however, we will all be able to greet the new millennium with confidence.

### What can you do to reduce the effect on you personally?

Below is a partial list of potential items which may be affected by the Millennium Bug:

Computer hardware and software	Fax machines
Home appliances	Video recorders
Telephone equipment	Lifts
Alarms	Security systems
Lighting, heating and air conditioning systems	Cars
Credit cards	Safes with timers

You should talk to the manufacturers of your equipment if you are worried that they, or their products, are not Year 2000 compliant. It is generally accepted that any new equipment you buy from now on, which may have computer chips in it, should be guaranteed compliant. However, we recommend that you check with your supplier before purchase.

We hope this information is of some assistance and would like to thank you for your continued support of \*\*\*\*\* Insurance.



# COMING EVENTS

## **MYSTERY TRIP 18<sup>th</sup> August 2012**

We leave Birkenhead College at 9.30/Museum at 10am, Costs \$25.00

*Please bring your own lunch.* We plan to be home about 4pm.

To book call Betty Durham on 483-7545.

Where we go nobody knows (until we get there).



## **15 September - 2pm at St Andrews, Hinemoa Street, Birkenhead – Stories Day.**

It's time to sharpen pencils and compose your stories for *your* story is part of our history.

Looking forward to catching up with you at these events.



## **Heritage Week – 29 September to 15 October**

### **Photo display at the Birkenhead Library**



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*Thank you to those who have supplied an email address for us to send the newsletters to. If anyone else would like to receive the newsletter electronically please don't hesitate to contact us with your email address.*

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