

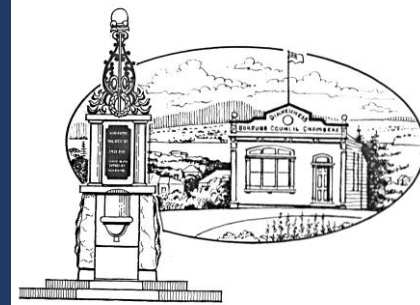
BIRKENHEAD HERITAGE

— SOCIETY INC —

✉ P O Box 34419, Birkenhead, Auckland 0746

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March - April 2021

SPECIAL EVENT held
at Farrington House 13th February



Members and guests at the Reopening of Farrington House Museum

Opens at 44 Mahara Ave 2nd & 4th Sunday 2-4pm

Our appreciation for sponsoring printing to

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UPCOMING EVENTS

St Andrews Hall 172 Hinemoa Street – 2-4pm

Sat. 13th March Guest Speaker

Giuseppe Galina, Italian Campaign NZ 2nd.Div.

Sat. 10th April Guest Speaker

Matt Elliott, Strawberry land - the history of
strawberry growing in the district'?

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CONTACT US

President – Marcia Roberts 418 0397

Vice President – Brian Potter 483 3400

Vice President – Colleen Durham 483 4001

Reopening of Farrington House

A perfect sunny, calm day, a beautiful restored Packard 1929 vintage car stood outside. A gazebo was lent by the Kaipatiki Local Board, bunting to decorate, and afternoon tea with scones, jam and cream was prepared by your committee.

As President I was delighted to welcome past President Alec Utting and Judy from the Waikato, John Gillon, Paula Gillon and Andrew Shaw from the Kaipatiki Local Board. Members and guests included Lisa Trutman, President of New Zealand History Federation, and Bill and Barbara Ellis from Torbay Historical Society, and well known historian and member David Verran and his wife Susan. Over thirty attended the event.

Brian Potter, Vice President recounted the early founding and conversion of the villa into the Museum and recalled the people, and the tremendous amount of work put in by the early volunteers and founding members of the Society.

Colleen Durham, Vice president wore her heritage costume and looked the part beside the vintage car. There were many favourable comments about the repainted Museum, displays, and the beautifully presented vintage car. There was a follow up suggestion we should have rotating displays, and material available on some of the prominent Birkenhead early residents. We have had many articles about these interesting individuals but they are not readily visible to the casual visitor.

The absence of a Covid 19 poster to scan has now been rectified, and a list was made of all members who attended – the guest contact details are all known. On the day we were at Alert Level 1, at 11.59 pm the next night we were back in Alert Level 3 in Auckland with further Covid 19 cases linked to Papatōetoe.



Photos by Barbara Wesley, 13th Feb. 2021

Page 1 – Photo by Arnold Van Zon

BIRKENHEAD HERITAGE SOCIETY

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Coral Malcolm assisting in the museum



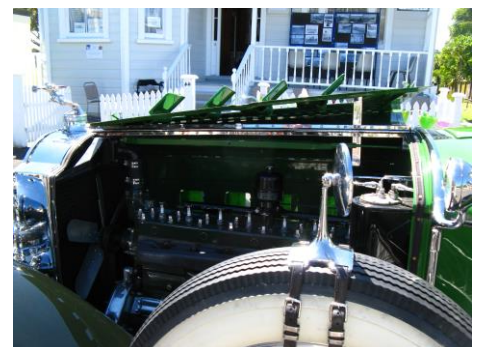
Alec Utting, Marcia Roberts & Brian Potter. Below Marcia & Brian with Andrew Shaw, John Gillon & Paula Gillon, from Kaipātiki Local Board



Colleen Durham beside the 1929 Packard.



Owner Arnold Van Zon restored the vintage car, with Brian & Marcia above, and Anne Farrington left. Showing details of the engine >



Connie Purdue

23rd May 1912 - 16th March 2000



Daughter of Miriam Soljak, (nee Cummings) a N.Z. born feminist, & unemployed rights activist. Her mother was of Irish descent, and father Peter Soljak, a Croatian gum digger. Miriam eventually settled in Northcote.

Connie “I was born a rebel, I lived a rebel and I am what life has made me, still a rebel” (C.P. 1985) – A long-term trade unionist, Women’s equal pay campaigner and advocate for working women.” NZ History Online.

Late 1960’s & 1970’s Connie fought for Women’s rights on many fronts, Secretary of the Council for Equal Pay and Opportunity in 1969.

1971 Joined Auckland University women’s liberation group and helped facilitate Australia feminist Germaine Greer’s visit to tour N.Z. in

1972 Connie & Sue Kedgley formed the National Organisation for Women NOW, and was the 1st. President – focussing on women’s equality in law, workplace and education.

1973 – led a demonstration – calling for women to be able to work as newsreaders and on radio and TV.

1974 Elected to Auckland Hospital Board.

Constance Miriam Purdue MBE, was a New Zealand trade unionist. Formerly a communist and a Labour Party member, she later became a conservative Catholic, and an anti-abortion activist. [Wikipedia](#)

Editor; Marcia Roberts

Connie Purdue was a lifelong campaigner for what she saw as right. She died on March 16, 2000, aged 87, and her memorial is in our Birkenhead Catholic Cemetery.

Mention her name and many recall her as a Feminist, a founding member of NOW. She was involved and lived on the North Shore. It is interesting to learn more about this women who was not afraid to speak out.

Her Mother -

Miriam Bridelia Cummings married Peter Soljak.

Miriam (1879 - 1947) was Born in NZ and had 6 children, She was the daughter of Matthew and Annie



(bn. Cunningham). Miriam Bridelia was a teacher, political activist, feminist and journalist, and a president of the Unemployed Women’s Movement. Connie Purdue wrote: “Our days were centred around the Hobson St. Trades Hall, raising money, holding jumble sales, distributing donated food and arranging deputations.”

Their daughter Connie m. Barton: Connie Miriam Barton, was also called Connie Miriam Purdue. It is not surprising that she followed her mother into an active public life.

Connie Purdue was a clerical Workers Union organiser, founder president of the National Organisation of Women, member of the executive of SPUC, campaigner for equal pay.

(The **National Organisation for Women** was modelled on NOW in the USA, an organisation established in 1966 by Betty Friedan, author of The Feminine Mystique. **NOW** groups were autonomous, sharing the goals of achieving full equality for women in the law, workplace, education and family life.)
