

# BIRKENHEAD HERITAGE

— SOCIETY INC —

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Covid safety 'Red' recommends

- Scan Covid App. / sign in on arrival.
- Show evidence of Covid Vacc.
- Masks worn, and spacing of seats

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2-4pm**  
**St Andrews Hall 172 Hinemoa Street**  
Brian Potter will present  
*The Gem of the Waitemata ...*  
“The history of Beach Haven”

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2-4pm**  
Discussion on the volunteer groups and  
the helpers in our community.

**Sunday February 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**Farrington House Museum Open 2-4pm**  
44 Mahara Ave., Birkenhead  
Scanning / or signing in requested.

*Our appreciation for sponsoring printing to*

**Trish Love** [trishlove@premium.co.nz](mailto:trishlove@premium.co.nz)

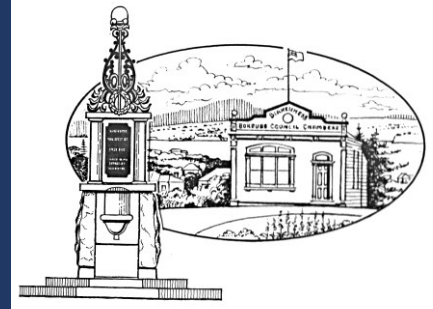
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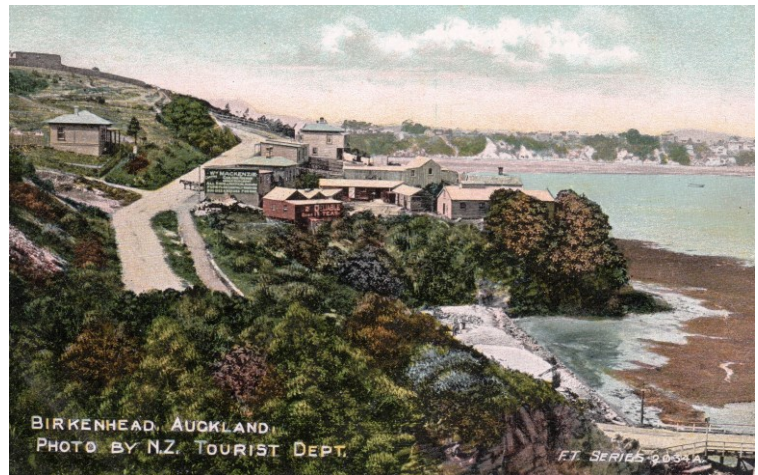
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January  
February  
2022

**NB** Meetings / Museum openings may be cancelled if Covid regulations change.



An early publicity postcard of  
Birkenhead Point

This Issues contains a tribute to  
volunteers, and concern expressed  
for the mowing and destruction of  
volunteer's plantings at a Reserve.

## CONTENTS

**P2-3** A tribute to Margaret Hutchinson,  
by Margaret Paine

**P 4** Library ref. to St Peter's Church

**P5-6** Volunteers and the Rotary Club of  
Birkenhead Inc.

## CONTACT US

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## A tribute to Margaret Hutchinson from Margaret Paine

In the last newsletter there was an item about the death in October of Margaret Hutchinson, one of the earliest members of this society. In fact, Margaret and I became members of the Birkenhead Historical Society at the very first meeting when Cyril Crocombe was elected president.

In the early years of the society, Margaret was one of our most enthusiastic members, as can be seen by this cutting from the 'North Shore Times' (unfortunately it has no date). Alan Tanner was our good secretary for many years.

Mrs Margaret Hutchinson and Mr Alan Tanner are delighted to add to the Birkenhead Historical Society's archives with these prints of the original sugar refinery buildings at Chelsea.

Mrs Hutchinson had three small photos — the Chelsea Village in 1884, a close-up of the refinery taken from Tizard Rd (at that time Tizard's Farm) in 1907 — blown-up and framed as a way of preserving part of the area's history.

Other memorabilia Mr Tanner has received on behalf of the society, include copies of Memorandum of Transfer of Title to Duck Creek (now referred to as the Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4

refinery dams) by the Crown to William Richardson Gundry in 1845, a copy of the survey map drawn up when the refinery was built and newspaper clippings of the Auckland Evening Star in July and August, 1882.

These give details of land purchases and water rights granted by the Auckland Harbour Board when the Colonial Sugar Refining

Company bought the land on which the Chelsea sugar works now stands.

Mrs Hutchinson says the society is slowly building-up its archival materials which record the history of Birkenhead and the importance of such industries as the sugarworks to the surrounding area. People have photographs, manuscripts, diaries, letters which they

either give to the society, or let it copy.

At the moment the society is looking for records of any marriages, baptisms and other ceremonies held at the St Peters Church before it was shifted out to Birkdale.

The church was built at Chelsea in 1885 before being moved in 1908 and Mrs Hutchinson would be very pleased to hear from anyone with certificates or other details they might have. Her phone number is 488-623.





## **Margaret Hutchinson ctd.**

So, having known Margaret since those days and having shared a lot of interests and some interesting times with her, it seemed to me that there was more that should be added to Margaret's story.

In the early 1980s when Birkenhead was a city, before any amalgamations, Margaret and I decided to attend a public meeting at council about the future of land at Kauri Point, which the then Harbour Board was planning to subdivide. We knew from an old map that this same land in the 1880s had been given by Governor Jervois on behalf of the Crown to the people of Auckland to be used as a park. How could this be allowed to fall into private hands?

From doing her earlier research of Chelsea land, Margaret knew where to look in government and council records. After we had spent much time in the city searching through the history of the park land, we had enough copies of land transactions to prove to the council that this land should not be so easily given away. Those were exciting times and most of the land was safely returned and it is now known as 'Kauri Point Centennial Park'. The walks views and beaches there are enjoyed by more local folk and visitors each year.

About this time, the Birkenhead Librarian, who knew that Margaret and I both had connections to Chelsea and the sugar works, asked us if we could take some responsibility for the company archives, which had recently been donated to the library. This included following up and answering any queries that came in from the public and led to us being volunteers there for about 15 years. We came to be known at the library as 'The two Margarets.'

The story of St Peters mission church was another of Margaret's projects. I have copies of several pages of notes she wrote while piecing together a social history of the church which stood in Colonial Rd., just outside the main gate of the Chelsea Estate.

Inside the gate, along each side of the road down to the sugar works, were in the early days more than 30 cottages built by the company for workmen and their families. As well as being a place of Christian worship the church was a centre for this community to gather for recreation and cultural activities.

Margaret gave me these above pages as she knew that for many years my grandparents had lived next door to the church, in the first house outside the Company gate. Her detailed notes, obviously the result of careful research appear to have been written to help someone else writing a history of St. Peters. Does anyone know if such a history has been published.? \*

Altogether, much research and recorded history of our part of the North Shore was done by someone who grew up in New South Wales. Margaret had never been in New Zealand until after her marriage to Aucklander Warren Hutchinson, he was a chemist with the sugar company. They met in Sydney, where Warren was temporarily working at the company headquarters.

Having read the above I hope readers can understand why I wrote at the beginning - there should be more added to Margaret's story. I'm sure there is more that others could add too.

Margaret Paine December 2021

In search of an answer to Margaret's Paine's question, in the Auckland Museum Library collection the following was found.

**The Church of St. Peter, Birkdale, Anglican, centennial  
June 29th-30th, 1885-1985. by Irene Beck**

- St. Peter's Church, Chelsea-Birkdale, 1885-1985 / compiled by Irene Beck

- TYPE

- Publication**

- IDENTIFIERS

- BX5721.A8 BEC (Call Number)

- AVAILABLE IN

- Pamphlet Collection** (Location)

- PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

- [8] p. : plans ; 22 cm.

- PRODUCTION

- St. Peter's Church** (Publisher)

- Beck, Irene (Irene Vera)** (Creator)

- Birkdale (Place of occurrence)

- 1985**

- SUBJECT

- St Peter's Church (Birkdale, Auckland, N.Z.)** (General Subject)

- CITATION

- St. Peter's Church, Chelsea-Birkdale, 1885-1985

- NOTES

- Caption title: The Church of St. Peter, Birkdale, Anglican, centennial June 29th-30th, 1885-1985.

## **Images and documents**



**Volunteers in New Zealand make a huge contribution to facilities and development of Communities through-out our land.**

It was therefore with immense disappointment I read an article on page A5 of the Saturday January 8, 2022 Weekend Herald “**13,700 native trees bowled for view**” at a harbourside reserve. The details explain ‘Since 2018, local volunteers have contributed 3450 hours of their time ... equates to 443 days... days planting trees at Sanders Reserve, near Paremoremo.’ The article explains that some community members raised concerns that “native plants could obscure views when they had grown.” Despite a survey which showed about 94% of the local Paremoremo community wanted the trees to stay the Upper Harbour Local Board ordered their destruction. “The removal of plants via mowing was done at a cost of \$14,000.” – being completed after Christmas...”.

New Zealand was covered in native trees, apart from wetlands and the tussock lands which thrive in high and mountainous regions, before first our Maori population then the Europeans and other settlers arrive. Over the centuries Maori established some slopes for the cultivation of kumara, and their defensive pa, and coastal summer camps – but largely the forests remained intact. It was the European who saw a financial gain to be had cutting down the immense Kauri, and their export brought financial gain to the fledgling settlement before settlers took to the forests to carve out farmland. Since those early times our Government and citizens have become aware of the value of trees, not only for their beauty, providing homes and food for our native and other birds, but prevention of erosion, shade, and preserving the native fauna and flora which are unique to these islands. The pleasure of walking amongst trees, priceless.



A visit to Sanders Reserve (North Harbour) 12/1/2022  
<<< the sloping land, below the visitors kiosk where plantings were mown  
<<<



Only the top edge of the mown >>> area is visible from the visitors kiosk, beyond two cycle tracks and footpath.

N.B. This article expresses the editor’s concern for lack of communication with local volunteers.



## A tribute to Volunteers.

**The Birkenhead Rotary Club** has set a wonderful example of voluntary involvement with our local community. The group was formed in 1957 by local businessmen following an invitation to attend a Takapuna Rotary event in 1954. It took time to convince the Auckland Club that Birkenhead, sponsored by Takapuna, was ready to form a new Service Club. From the start fund raising began, alongside social events, guest speakers and representatives attending District and later overseas events.

Their very first Club Project resulted in the IHC North Shore Parents Group receiving 417 pounds for a new school, and donations to several other worthy causes, including Goal Posts for the Birkenhead War Memorial Park. During that first year 25 School Prefects from Northcote College were sponsored to a luncheon meeting. Bill Foggin was the 1<sup>st</sup> President, followed by Bob Yarnton from the well-known Drapery Retailing store. Outings were arranged for children who had lost a parent, 'old folks' luncheons with entertainment and a film show at the Bridgeway, and sponsorships for some special events were introduced. Membership stood at around 35.

1959-60 Year - the Harbour Bridge was opened. On the 8<sup>th</sup> August a working bee was held to plant trees and shrubs on the approaches to the harbour bridge – over 300 trees were planted. Funds were raised for the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Building Funds. A Mayoral Chain of Office was donated to the Birkenhead Borough Council. Community service activities included the formation of The North Shore Youth Choir, and later the area Senior Citizen's Club.

Birkenhead Heritage Society Inc. received work from Rotarians. Photos of Farrington House on foundations show the deck being laid and volunteers painting, and another of men surveying the work appear in their publication

*The First Fifty Years A history of the Rotary Club of Birkenhead* published in 2007.

A later photo shows a team again painting Farrington House, now complete with curtains hanging and picket fence in place. The many volunteer fund raising efforts and good deeds by Rotary are far too numerous to list here.

Many organisations are run by volunteers, Cubs and Scouts, Brownies and Girl Guides who also participate in activities to help their communities. Boys and Girls Brigades, and Sports Clubs are run by volunteers, various Churches help with food parcels, and various charitable works. Committees for the Plunket Society raise funds to provide facilities for their Plunket Nurses to work, and mothers to meet. Play Centres are run by committees of parents, mostly mothers take turns to assist the Supervisor (a parent who has undertaken additional training). Volunteers delivered Meals on Wheels – initially prepared in Public Hospital kitchens for those unable to cook for themselves. The Country Women's Institute was another Service Club.

Locally when considering volunteers – Frank Larking's huge effort to form the sandy beach at Beach Haven has been well recorded, Frank Fisher was also a popular supporter of youth, forming the Pioneer Club in 1920, he dug a pool on his property and taught a generation of children to swim. To-day volunteers maintain and open our Farrington House Museum – when not under Covid restrictions. Others work endlessly in the various Auckland Council Parks – clearing weeds and pest plants, laying rat bait in pet safe containers, maintaining tracks. A huge appreciation to all our members who themselves have been volunteers.

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Editor; Marcia Roberts