

# The Papakura Sentinel



Number 67

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### *Greetings/ Kia ora koutou to all our readers,*

As always a lot is happening. We held our AGM in August. Two members of the Executive, Terry Carson and Corallie Hart, stepped down after providing long and sterling contributions. Both are life members, Terry is our new Patron (with Edna still our Membership secretary), and Corallie helps out in the Museum. The new committee is listed on page 3.

We have had some very interesting talks. Terry spoke at the September Museum Talk on Law and Disorder in early South Auckland, and Graeme Walton, Eden Park historian, addressed the September meeting on the Mystique of Eden Park. To coincide with the opening of the Vietnam War display and the Auckland Heritage Festival, a panel of three speakers Barry Dreyer, Rod Baldwin and Stoney Burke told the stories of their deployment in the war. The meeting was well-attended, in particular by old soldiers. Our heritage walks continued on the 7th and, hopefully, the 14th October. Following Turama: illustrating Matariki, which has been very popular, our next exhibition will be on Old School Tech, and the remaining Museum Talk in November will be our introduction to the story behind the upcoming Ring's Redoubt display by our redoubtable Curator Alan. The talk at the November will be by our departing Front of House, Anna Part, and will sugar the pill of parting. (See p 17) This *Sentinel* features ostrich farming, showcases two interesting artefacts with local links, and traverses the waters of the Pahurehure. Read on.

*Rob, Ed.*

As *Sentinel* was being readied for print we heard of the passing of Malcolm Deeming, enthusiastic member and willing volunteer. Our sympathies go to his sister Wendy and family.

### **PAPAKURA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Monthly Members' Meetings: 4th Thurs, 1pm – 3pm  
 Regular Saturday heritage Trips to places of interest

### **PAPAKURA MUSEUM**

**Open: Monday—Friday, 10am—4.30pm,  
 Wed open till 6 pm, Sat 10 am—3 pm**  
 Accent Point Building, 209 Great South Road  
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# A Treasured Prop

Alan Knowles



The tip of the Corsair fighter aircraft blade from the propeller of Barney Warbrick's aircraft. Image credit Alan Knowles

The Papakura Museum holds an object with a special story. The artefact is a propeller tip from a Corsair fighter that served with the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) during WWII. The Corsair was flown by Sergeant Barney Warbrick who was the son of Waata (Walter) and Awhuti Warbrick of Waiuku.

Barney Warbrick attended Wesley College and was the first person from Ngāti Te Ata to qualify as a pilot. He attended elementary pilot training at RNZAF Taieri, progressing through the training process before gaining his wings. He was then sent to Canada for advanced pilot training with Harvard aircraft before returning to New Zealand where he flew the Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk at RNZAF base Ohakea and then the F4U-1 Corsair at RNZAF base Ardmore.

Warbrick was allocated Corsair, NZ5515, 5467 F4U-1 Bu50220. The aircraft had been shipped from USA on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1944 aboard USS *Northfield* and assembled at No.1 assembly depot and BOC Unit 36 at Hobsonville on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1944. It was then allocated to No 22 Squadron in July 1944 and then to No.23 Squadron, both based at Ardmore, by August 1944.

Tragedy struck on August 6<sup>th</sup> 1944, whilst Warbrick was undertaking a training flight from Ardmore. The aircraft ploughed into the Waiuku golf course at 11.35 hours on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1944, after completing a slow roll at 200 feet. Pilot Sergeant Barney Warbrick aged 23, was killed instantly. The Corsair was written off the books at Ardmore on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1944. The tip of the propeller was salvaged and passed through two sets of hands before being passed into the care of Papakura Museum. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005, a tohu or memorial stone to Sergeant/Pilot Barney Poukeke Warbrick was officially unveiled at Waiuku Golf Course. The tohu, carved by George and Karl Flavell, shows a hawk and a Corsair on the front and a korowai (feathered cloak) on the reverse, honouring Warbrick as a Ngāti Te Ata rangatira. Barney Warbrick is buried at Tahuna Marae north of Waiuku, and listed on the Puni roll of honour in a grove of memorial trees at Puni School, and at the Wesley College chapel.

Fast forward to 2023; plans are under way to display the prop in an appropriate setting to serve as a permanent memorial to Barney Warbrick. The display being developed by N.Z Warbirds in the main hanger at Ardmore will pay tribute to the pilots killed in sorties operating out of Ardmore. Parts of a crashed Corsair will be displayed in a crash diorama setting. Panels will tell the story of each pilot, and a memorial book will accompany the moving setting. Papakura Museum will be placing the precious prop from Warbrick's Corsair into the display on long-term loan. This will serve as a permanent memorial: it will be seen by thousands of visitors each year, and preserve the memory of Barney Warbrick who tragically lost his life at such a young age in service of his country .

# Artefact de jour

Wendy Deeming



The **commemorative plate** marks the occasion seventy (70) years ago when Sir Edmund Hillary (1919-2008) and Tensing Norgay climbed Mt Everest (or Chomolunga, meaning “Mother Goddess of the Sky”). After overcoming the final obstacle, a 40ft (12m) rock face, later named the ‘Hillary Step’, they finally stood on top of Mt Everest (29,029 ft or 8, 848m high). It was 29 May 1953. On returning down the mountain, Edmund Hillary said, “Well, George, we knocked the bastard off”.

Accession Number 8135

Donated by Earl Walsh, February 2007

(Artefact de jour is based on monthly Museum display by a team of volunteers)

## **The 2023-2024 Executive of the Papakura and District Historical Society:**

Brian Leonard (President), Margaret Gane (Vice-President), Erwin de Raad (Treasurer), Rob Finlay (Secretary); Committee members are Celerina Balucan-Robertson, Wendy Deeming, Mary Anne France, Sue Smurthwaite. Kay Thomas (Admin Manager) and Alan Knowles (Curator) are ex-officio members.

# OSTRICH FARMING IN NEW ZEALAND

**Edna Carson**

We read very little about ostriches these days and in all probability none of us has been at close quarters to one except perhaps in a zoo. However, in the late 1800s / early 1900s they were highly prized both in New Zealand and overseas. There were farms operating in South Auckland and Franklin. The ostrich is unique in many ways in that it is the largest bird, lays the largest eggs, has 3 stomachs, no teeth and just two toes, can grow to a height of 2.8 m with a wingspan of 2m and, though flightless, can reach speeds of 70 km/h when it runs. What brought it to prominence here in New Zealand was not its size or speed but its eggs and feathers in particular.

Due to the depressed economy in New Zealand before the introduction of refrigerated ships in 1882, sheep and dairy farmers were receiving such poor returns for their produce that other alternatives such as tobacco and grape growing were being promoted. Another alternative suggested by Sir George Grey, after he returned from the Cape Colony for his second term as Governor, was ostrich farming, as this had proved to be a great boost for the South African economy.

In New Zealand, the farming of ostriches owes its beginning mainly to the fashion industry and in a small part to the influence of Sir George Grey. In earlier years, ostrich plumes had decked the brows of Pharaohs and chiefs of African tribes and also adorned military dress uniforms. By the late 19th century, the feathers had become all the rage for women's hats, boas, stoles and capes. New Zealand women naturally liked to follow the fashions they had seen in overseas journals, but any feathers used to decorate these garments had to be imported, as none were produced locally. Grey, while he had been Governor of the Cape Colony, South Africa from 1854 to 1861, is said to have kept a pair of tame ostriches in the grounds of Government House in Cape Town. South African friends had told him that many of the wild ostriches in the country had been successfully domesticated and turned into a profitable industry, using both their feathers and eggs. A further reminder in September 1881 by a friend, Hollings William Ogilvie, about the continued success of ostrich farming in South Africa, prompted Grey to lobby Parliament for a bonus of £5.00 per head to be paid for healthy chicks landed in New Zealand for the purpose of being reared and maintained in the country.

In May 1883 the first recorded import of ostriches to New Zealand was mentioned, when the *Daily Telegraph* and other newspapers announced that 'a shipment of 6 birds was expected to arrive on the steamer *Westmeath* to form the nucleus of an ostrich farm to be commenced at the Bombay settlement near Druiry'. Unfortunately, this turned out to be a complete myth, as a later article confirmed that the *Westmeath* had sailed direct from London to New Zealand with over 300 immigrants on board and the only stop on the way had been at Hobart to replenish its coal supplies. It had definitely not stopped anywhere in South Africa to pick up ostriches. The people who had rushed down to the port expecting to see the first arrival of these birds in the country were sadly disappointed.

Nevertheless, it was just three months later in August 1883 that ostriches did make their first appearance on New Zealand soil. John Thomas Matson, perhaps encouraged by the profit that was reputed could be made by farming these birds - in addition to the bonus offered by the government - bought two pairs of ostriches from Adelaide, which had been part of a shipment from the Cape Colony. The birds completed the journey to Lyttleton in the screw steamer *Te Anau* to provide the basis for an ostrich farm on his property in Springfield Road, Papanui. Unfortunately, one of the male birds died on the journey but one pair mated successfully, the female laid 14 eggs and most of these hatched. By the end of 1886, the older birds had been plucked and Matson was able to send off a shipment of feathers through the DIC department

store in Christchurch for sale in London.

He was fortunate that he had bought the birds before 1886. As the demand for ostriches from countries like Australia and the United States had increased by this time, the South African authorities decided to impose a duty of £100.00 per bird and £5.00 per egg on exports, because they could foresee that the day would come when there would be extra competition for the profitable sale of feathers if large farms were started in other countries. Matson continued exporting feathers to the UK for several years, among these a beautiful ostrich feather fan for Queen Victoria in 1888. Like many other entrepreneurs, he experienced financial difficulties, as the returns he had received from the sale of feathers hadn't covered his initial and ongoing costs. To expand the business, he knew that it needed an injection of capital. After months of promotion and investment by a number of shareholders, the Canterbury Ostrich Farming Company was set up in 1893 and the birds were sent to a larger and better equipped property owned by George King in Burwood, Christchurch. By this time, the flock of birds had increased to 43 and though the business continued to operate in a small way for several more years, returns still did not reach expectations. In 1897, additional income was sought by selling off some of the birds. However, only one pair of birds was sold at the time for 40 guineas. The rest of the birds were eventually sold in 1908, some going to an Auckland buyer and the remainder to one of the farms already established in South Australia.

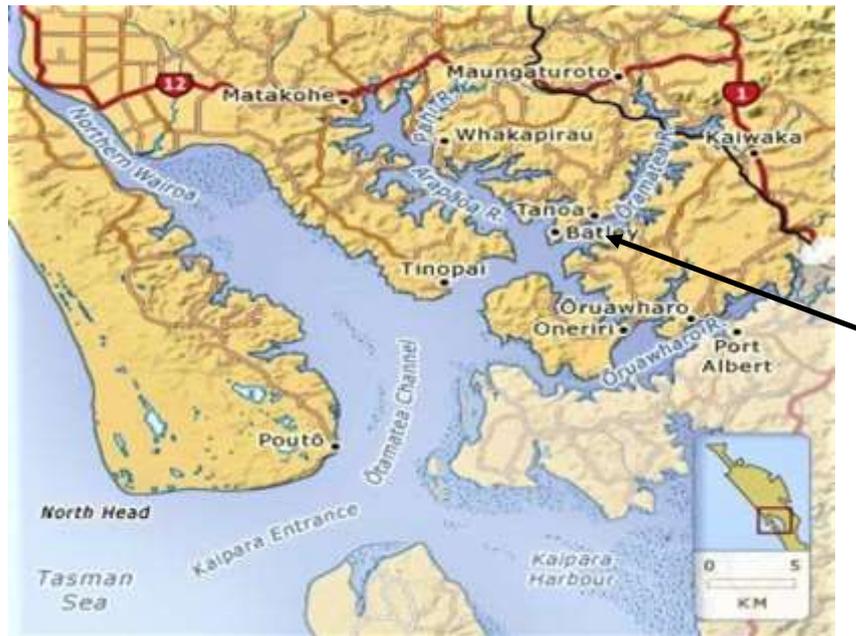


George King and Ostriches at Burwood, 1893

*(Christchurch City Libraries. CD10)*

Meanwhile in another part of the country, an attempt was being made to turn the ostrich farming dream into a reality. Victor Nissen, a farmer with about 6,000 acres in the Kaipara region, had travelled overseas in July 1886 to investigate new farming industries in other countries in the hope that some of these might be successfully introduced in New Zealand. On reaching South Africa, he had been impressed by the ostrich farms he had seen in operation there - and even more so by the lucrative returns that the farmers were receiving. As a result, he bought 56 carefully selected birds at a cost of 150 guineas each and chartered the Danish barque *Johann Broderson* to ship the birds to New Zealand. When the ship had been specially fitted out with padded stalls on each side of the hold, he accompanied the birds on the voyage to supervise their feeding and care. The ship encountered days of rough weather and seven birds died on the way. Finally, in January 1887 the barque was towed into the Kaipara Harbour and up the Otamatea River to his property, the Aramando estate, at Rangiora near the former Wesleyan Mission Station established by the Reverend William Gittos. The venture had cost him a total of £12,000 (including export duty), and the loss of 7 birds at sea (plus another two on landing) was a major setback. He did recoup a little from the sale of the feathers plucked from the dead birds, as the Collector of Customs at Kaipara advised him that no duty was payable on these, because the feathers had not been processed. A further disappointment was that he had expected to receive a bonus of £4,000 from the government towards setting up this farm, only to discover that this offer had lapsed in June 1882. He also found after a few months

that the Otamatea area was not a good location, as the river was tidal and his farm was not easily accessible. There was also no regular communication with Auckland.



Location of Victor Nissen's property on the Kaipara Harbour

A decision was made then to sell the ostriches to L D Nathan & Co Ltd and remove them to one of the company's properties called Whitford Park near Howick. The steamer *Glenelg* was dispatched on 29 May 1887 to collect the remaining birds from Otamatea and to land them at the Turanga Creek which ran through the 2,656 acres of the Nathan estate. Mr Nissen accompanied the birds on their second sea voyage to their new home and under his care, six young ostriches were hatched from the incubator not long afterwards in January 1888, while many others also hatched later under normal conditions outdoors. Seven years later, to improve the strain, some Algerian birds arrived on the steamship *Matua* from South Australia and were added to the flock. Richard Robert Martin, an expert in ostrich farming was hired to look after them. The birds were able to run freely in the paddocks, though during the mating season, the pairs were placed in a smaller two acre paddock, where the female bird would choose a nesting place in the sand and would lay between 12 to 15 eggs. The incubation/hatching period was 6 weeks and both male and female birds took turns at sitting on the eggs. When the chicks were older, they were moved to their own enclosure and when they were a year old, they were fully grown with a height of about 6 feet. The birds lived mainly on grass, while in the winter they were also fed turnips and pebbles to aid their digestion. Ostrich feathers were clipped from the tails of the male birds twice a year and Mr Martin's wife Florence sorted, graded and baled the feathers ready for the market. The flock grew to 600 birds and it was necessary from 1892 onwards to sell off some of the ostriches, as the property was not large enough to keep so many birds.



Nathan's Ostrich Farm at Whitford, ca. 1900

(Howick Historical Society original photograph)

At the turn of the century, there were a number of people who owned small groups of ostriches in other parts of New Zealand, which they had probably bought at the Christchurch or one of the Nathan sales. Among these were the Reverend Kattern at Katikati, the Reid brothers at Motutapu Island, and closer to home, the Clarks at Waiau Pa and the Chamberlins who lived in the Drury foothills. Robert Clark had bought his ostriches at the 1892 Nathan sale but there is no record of when those on the Chamberlin property had been acquired, either before or after Henry Chamberlin's accidental death in 1888. The *Auckland Weekly News* of 24 September 1903 included a photo of his widow, Elizabeth Chamberlin, feeding the ostriches outside her Drury home and there were certainly some still there a few years later when it was reported that vandals had broken into the property and stolen some of the birds' valuable feathers, a despicable act which had resulted in the death



Mrs Chamberlin Feeding her Ostriches, Drury

(*Auckland Weekly News* 24 Sept 1903)

of a few birds. There is also the story told how one of the birds, attracted by the cameo brooch Mrs Chamberlin was wearing, snatched it from her and swallowed it. She reacted quickly and was able to retrieve it by locating the brooch and wriggling it up the bird's long neck until she could take it from its mouth. The birds were always quick to snatch anything bright that came in sight, something that visitors to any ostrich farm had to be aware of. However, there does not appear to have been any significant attempt by Mrs Chamberlin or the other ostrich owners at this time to farm the birds as a commercial business.

By 1903, when L D Nathan & Co had proved that it was possible to acclimatise the birds and produce feathers of the same quality as could be purchased from overseas, the firm arranged with John Schlaepfer at Helvetia near Pukekohe for the formation of a private company to take over the birds to extend both the breeding programme and feather production. The Schlaepfer family had bought property there in 1884 as part of a Swiss settlement and members were already farming in a small way. The directors of the new company included William Ferguson Massey, the local MP and leader of the Opposition, while Mr Schlaepfer was responsible for developing and clearing the property, much of which was still in virgin bush. It was hoped that with the extra land and facilities, the number of feathers produced would not only supply all the domestic market but be sufficient to export some overseas.



Helvetia Ostrich Farm Feather Factory and Plucking Shed

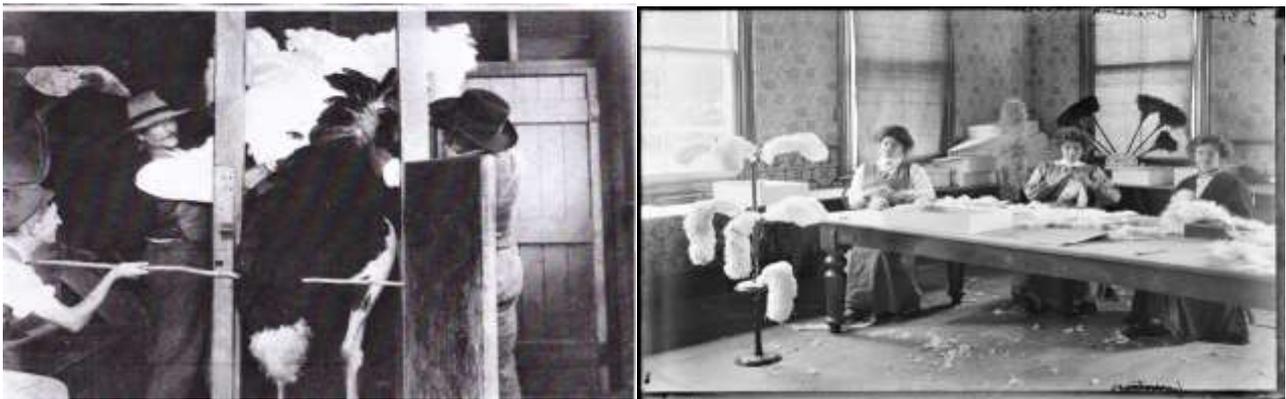
(*Alexander Turnbull Library Ref: PA1-o-201-05*)

Another reason for the move was that after heavy rain, the low-lying ground at Whitford became waterlogged and the chicks got wet feet, resulting in a number dying from exposure. The Schlaepfer property at Helvetia of nearly 3,500 acres, though undulating was at a higher elevation, with some parts already fenced and a number of sheds and shelters built in preparation for the new arrivals.

Removing the ostriches to their new home near the Paerata railway station presented some difficulty, as there was no form of transport that was convenient to both locations. Although the chicks were easily transported in crates on a wagon, it was decided

that the older birds would have to be driven there along the road like a flock of sheep. This had to be undertaken early in the morning, as the birds did not like travelling in the dark and any later during the day might have frightened other stock on the road. The birds were divided into two groups and each operation took two days with the first group of birds being housed for the night on a farm near Alfriston before completing the six hours' drive to Helvetia the following day. The second group of birds were driven in the same way to complete the initial flock of about 460 birds at Helvetia.

A similar procedure was followed by Mr Martin for their care as had been carried out on the Nathan estate, where the ostriches were allowed to run free until they mated and then enclosed in smaller paddocks with ti-tree nests. The first eggs were hatched in a purpose-built incubator and the chicks then housed in a separate area. In the early days, there were many failures, as a number of birds were lost when they got caught up in the bush, became entangled in the fencing or drowned in creeks, while electrical storms and unfavourable weather meant that others failed to hatch their eggs. Most of their extra winter feed of turnips and swedes was grown on the property. The farm had high wire fences, post and rail fences to prevent the birds escaping, as they could be a danger when on the run. At plucking time, usually about every eight months, a sock was slipped over their head and they were steered into a plucking pen with a crook. Several women were employed to sort, grade and dye (if needed) the feathers, some of which were made into dusters, boas, capes and other fashion items, while the rest were baled and sent to the shops in Auckland with a few being exported to New York and London. Feathers at that time could bring in £20 a pound and the prized tail feathers even more.



Above, Left: Breckon, A.N. Ostriches in the Plucking Shed. (*Auckland Museum collection PH-NEG-B831*)

Right: Breckon, A.N. Women at Work in the Feather Factory (*Auckland Museum collection PH-NEG-B835*)

From 1905 onwards, the Helvetia Ostrich Company had exhibits of its products at the Franklin A & P Shows, the Auckland A & P Shows, the Waikato Winter Shows and the New Zealand International Exhibition held in Christchurch (1906-7). During this period, the farm was the venue for the large annual garden parties given in honour of Mr Massey, the local MP and company director, and it hosted many overseas visitors, who were usually met at the Paerata railway station and conveyed by horse and trap to the farm. Local groups and students came to picnic in the grounds and learn about the day-to-day operation of an ostrich farm. If no farm vehicles or other transport was available, this group often had to face the one and half mile uphill walk from the station on a hot summer's day.

In August 1908, a special occasion for the company was an order, which had been cabled from Sydney, for the delivery of 1000 22inch white plumes for the officers of the American Fleet when it arrived in Albany, Western Australia. By then, such large orders were rare. Nathans had sold their share in the company and both Mr and Mrs Martin had left their positions on the farm to pursue other interests. With the start of World War I the demand for ostrich feathers further decreased and there were no more chicks incubated



Above: Helvetia Ostrich Company Display of Products (Alexander Turnbull Library Ref: ½ -096502-F)

Below: Section of Helvetia Estate Sale Plan 1916 (Reproduced with permission of Franklin Historical Society)



after 1914. In 1916, the original farm was subdivided and sections ranging from 62 to 269 acres were offered for sale, with the Schlaepfers diversifying into sheep farming and horticultural produce, as well as keeping the remaining ostriches until the last one died in 1935. By then, the only other ostriches still in New Zealand were owned by private buyers or in one of the zoos, though Auckland Zoo did not get its first ostriches until 1971.

The important role that this industry played in the Franklin district is summed up in an article which appeared in the *Franklin Times* 6 October 1924. 'Helvetia Land Company did valuable pioneering work (maybe with little profit to themselves) in paving the way for closer settlement, necessary work involving large expenditure impossible for individual settlers. Once famed for its ostriches ... it is now better known by reason of its capacity for turning out fat sheep and the production of lambs which are second to none in the country'.

Ostriches virtually disappeared from the country until the 1990s, when a number of companies were set up to utilise other parts of the birds, namely their meat and skins. Very few of these companies proved to be profitable or long lasting, especially those which had paid a premium price to purchase the initial birds. A recent search of the Companies Register revealed the large number of ostrich companies which had been registered during this period and had since been removed. Some ostriches could still be found on the lifestyle blocks of hobby farmers. There was even mention of the Papatoetoe Historical Society making a visit to Puketutu Island in 1995 to see the group of ostriches there and two years later in 1997, a Waiuku newspaper advertised a public open day at the newly established Overland Ostrich Farm in Pukeowhare Road. How long these ventures lasted, I have yet to find out. There are very few large farms operating today. Some of the meat from these is exported to Korea and some is available through retail outlets catering for the sale of exotic meats.

Finally, in a recent copy of the magazine *Rural Living*, there was an article about a couple in Mauku who are planning to introduce ostriches on their animal farm in the near future. If this plan comes to fruition, we may see ostriches once more strutting the fields in South Auckland. Perhaps ostrich feathers will also become a fashion item again.

Further Reading:

La Roche, Alan. The history of Howick and Pakuranga, Whitford, Bucklands and Eastern Beaches and surrounding districts. Howick & Districts Historical Society, 1991.

Nathan, Lawrence D. As old as Auckland: the history of L.D. Nathan & Co. Ltd and of the David Nathan family, 1840 – 1980. L.D. Nathan Group of Companies, 1984.

Carter, Kay, ed. Patumahoe : History and Memories. 2016.

National Library of New Zealand. Articles from *Papers Past* about ostrich farming

# Pahurehure Inlet—Watercraft and Landings

## Backwater

Rob Finlay

On the last day of December 1863, two men, Henry Erfmann, a German working for the Drury publican William Cronkshaw, and James Simpson of Onehunga, left Drury in a dinghy for the cutter *Progress*, lying at anchor in the 'Slippery' (Hingaia) Creek. This was the last time either was seen alive. The dinghy was found bottom up 4 or 5 miles from Drury, and Erfmann's body where the Slippery Creek met the Pahurehure Inlet. His body was brought into Papakura by Captain Grundy of the cutter *Kate*. A search party for Simpson, part-owner of the *Progress*, discovered his body within a hundred yards of where she was lying at anchor. Both men were judged to have drowned accidentally through the upsetting of the dinghy.

Drownings were not uncommon in the waters of the inlet, especially when the tide was running. Even the Laurie family of Weymouth, fishermen and ferrymen long familiar with the Papakura Channel, fell victim. Four men, two fathers and two sons, were drowned while fishing and their bodies never recovered—only an improvised raft of boards fastened together with the men's braces. (Tonson, *Old Manukau*, 204.) Muddy backwater the Inlet might be, but tidal currents run swift, and the deep mud is also a threat to safety.

This is the third part of a short series on water transport in the Pahurehure Inlet—Papakura, Drury, the Karaka shores and Weymouth. In the previous article I wrote about the decade from the mid-1850s leading to the end of the Waikato Wars which reshaped South Auckland as a settler district. This article takes the story up to World War 1.

War was followed by confiscation of remaining Māori land, and the deliberate re-settlement of the Manukau and Franklin areas, involving 13 specially commissioned immigrant ships (none of which entered the Manukau themselves). Independent immigrants were also encouraged. There was an expectation of economic prosperity and progress for the district, but in the downturn caused by the end of the war and the removal of the capital to Wellington, many of these hopes were not realised.

This was also the case for shipping in the Pahurehure Inlet. What had been busy waters plied by waka, sail-

ing craft and some steamers, now became a backwater. There were several reasons. With the war and confiscations, Māori and their craft had disappeared from the Pahurehure after centuries. The Commissariat port occupying Runciman's wharf at Drury was no longer required for military purposes once the conflict pushed South into Waikato and Waipa headwaters. And the coal port built with such enthusiasm in 1862 fell into disuse at the outset of the war, and after sporadic use finally closed down in 1865-66, due to the war, inferior coal, multiple handling and the prospect of the Drury Railway. (Munroe Graham, *NZ Railways Observer* Dec 2012/Jan 2013). In addition, the land route south from Auckland along the improved Great South Road was now the main line of transport with a parallel rail route only a matter of time and political will: Papakura and Drury became stations in the new line in 1874. Freight and passengers now travelled mainly by rail, or on coaches, carts or vans on the road. Meanwhile the Harbour route between Onehunga and Waiuku remained important.

A news report from 1885 described the change: "Twenty five years ago . . . The Papakura Creek was studded with canoes and boats owned by natives and Europeans; now, save for the occasional boating party, its waters are undisturbed." (*NZH* 5/10/1885.) That was the story for the Pahurehure Inlet and Hingaia Creek (though not for Karaka shores linked to Weymouth).

But this was not for want of trying. Efforts to build up shipping and shipping infrastructure continued. Drury had two wharves—at the coal port, and the Commissariat wharf by the bridge, and in 1865-6 there was a move by Papakura people to do the same.

### **A wharf for Papakura: hopes for a regular Onehunga link**

Up to this time, Papakura had relied on simple landings—beaches or small jetties, like many private holdings round the Inlet coast. Reference has already been made to Waipapa and Chalky Point, and as late as 1882 maps show a landing reserve at the end of Wellington Street (where Papakura Central School is). But by 1865, locals decided to build a wharf at Chalky Point, the traditional landing place for waka, because the water was deeper, in the expectation that Papakura would become a port.

A meeting was held at the Papakura Hotel where Nathaniel Reid was publican. Captain Pye took the chair. He suggested that a public wharf would be beneficial for the shipping of goods and merchandise between Onehunga and Papakura and would cost about £200, a sum which could be raised if enough people bought £2 shares. He was aware of a steamer being built at Onehunga which could visit occasionally—an additional incentive.

Reid volunteered that with spring tides the water was 9-10 feet and at neap tides 7-8 feet, and that when completed the wharf could take ships of up to 100 tons burden. (Today, even with rising sea levels, 4-5 feet would be a good tide at that spot – an indication of the siltation that has taken place.)

It was agreed that Captain Pye and Mr Nathaniel Reid would take responsibility for getting qualified advice on costing, site and advantages, and support was demonstrated with the promise of 40 shares: £80 was a good start. It was also suggested the plan be put before the Papakura Association.

[Captain Pye, living in Papakura at the time, had been an officer in the Colonial Defence Corps, and had seen action locally, in the Waikato and in the Bay of Plenty, where his name is remembered at Pyes Pa.]

In early June of 1866 it was reported that the building of the wharf was well under way, under the management and ownership of Mr Reid. It was said to be 120 feet long, built of wood with stairs on the end, and was planned to accommodate boats with 5 foot draught. It would be ready for trial 'within days' by the new twin screw steamer *Halcyon*, built by and for the Manukau Harbourmaster Thomas Wing. Much hope was based

on this ship, which was planned for the 'Papakura, Onehunga, Mauku and Waiuku trade'. It was hoped it would contribute to the development of the Papakura district (sentiments later expressed at the coming of the railways). *NZH* 11/6/66 In the meantime, real estate agents Hunter and Co. leapt at the promise of the new wharf to advertise adjacent sections. (Advertisement below right)

*Halcyon* was indeed launched and christened by Mrs Wing at Paratutai, home of the Wing family and the pilot station, in early June. She was 81 feet long, with a 13 feet 4 inches beam and a hold 6 feet 4 inches deep, and 'is to be propelled by twin screws on a draught of water of 4 feet.' She was deemed to be well-adapted to the Manukau. *NZH* 5/6/1866 She had comfortable saloons fore and aft which could accommodate 16 people each, and good hold capacity. Her trial was under sail as well as steam, beginning at Onehunga and stopping at Paratutai for a picnic at the Wings'. But she did not make that June trip to Papakura. Her initial run to Waiuku took place on 13 September, returning the next day. *NZH* 15/9/1866

But even for Waiuku *Halcyon* turned out to have too deep a draught. This was surprising given that its owner and builder was the capable and experienced Manukau harbourmaster, who had known the harbour since the early 1830s and had built it with shallow estuaries in view. The case for Papakura services does not appear to have been convincing, and although *Halcyon* may have visited Papakura, there is no reference to it in newspapers: her regular run was to the Waiuku river. Even on this run, drawing 5 feet 6 inches when fully loaded, she sat too deep. In three months she was able to reach Waiuku three times only. (Hawken and Walker 71) By December it was judged that 'she does not pay at her present trade.' *DSC* 12/12/66 There was speculation the Governor might buy her for his own use. A notice in the *Daily Southern Cross* reported that the *Halcyon* would 'discontinue running in the Waiuku and Onehunga trade'. (15/12/66) Instead she would take up the Hokitika trade.

STEAM COMMUNICATION WITH THE  
SETTLEMENTS ON THE MANUKAU.



THE s.s. 'HALCYON,' Captain WING, will leave the New Government Wharf, Onehunga, for Waiuku twice a week, landing cargo and passengers at Awitu, Karaka Point, for Mauku River, or any other station on the Manukau.

FARES: Saloon, 7s. 6d.; Forecabin, 5s.; Cargo, 10s. per ton.

Goods taken at through rates from Auckland.

Leave Onehunga on Wednesday, Sept. 26, at 9 a.m.  
" Waiuku on Thursday, " 27, at 11 a.m.  
" Onehunga on Friday, " 28, at 10 a.m.  
" Waiuku on Saturday, " 29, at 12 a.m.

For further information, apply to

ALFRED BARNES,  
Beach, Onehunga,  
Agent

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11.

LAND SALE.

PAPAKURA.

HUNTER & CO.

Have received instructions from Mr. POWELL to sell, in the Township of Papakura,

**23** CHOICE BUILDING ALLOTMENTS fronting the Great South and Government roads, and immediately adjoining the New Wharf to be erected.

Plans to be seen at our Office.

At 12 o'clock sharp.

Left: Advertisements for *Halcyon* only refer to the Onehunga and Waiuku run, and notably, tides affect daily arrival and departure times, generally an hour later every two days. *Daily Southern Cross*, 18/9/1866. Right: But land agents were quick to seize on potential advantages offered by the wharf. *Daily Southern Cross*, 10/4/1866.

The usual description is of trips to Waiuku 'and all intermediate stations', which included Orua (or Coulthard's) Bay, Graham's Beach, Awhitu and Pollock. Papakura does not fit the pattern. In fact judging from the importance of catching high tide in all three inlets, travelling to Waiuku via Papakura or Drury would have made little sense. At intermediate stations, steamers were only able to dock quickly, or else locals might have to rendezvous with the steamer in the channel. Later attempts to run steamers on the Manukau

tended to be disappointing. Few lasted any length of time.

However, advocates for a regular harbour run to Papakura and Drury made one more effort. If a regular steamer run wouldn't work, the same agent, Alfred Barnes at Onehunga was prepared to run a cutter between Onehunga and Papakura and Drury. In September and October of 1866, he advertised regular, daily runs by the *Sea Shell*. The fact that these advertisements ceased in mid-October indicates that the venture was not successful.



**T H E** Cutter  
'**SEA SHELL,**'  
will trade regularly between Onehunga  
and Drury and Papakura. The under  
signed will deliver goods from Auckland at either  
place at 25s. per ton. Carts in Auckland daily  
Orders to be addressed to the care of Messrs. Combe  
and Daldy, Auckland, or to  
**ALFRED BARNES,**  
The Beach,  
Onehunga.

September 8, 1866.

Left: Advertised September and October 1866 in *Daily Southern Cross*

Below: An accident on the Manukau.  
(NZH 6/11/1872)

Further evidence that it was difficult to set up a regular Onehunga—Papakura run is the story of the cutter *Isabella*, owned by a storekeeper of Papakura Flat, David Lindsay. Both the owner and the master Delaney were living in Papakura, but any newspaper references to *Isabella* refer to her regular runs between Onehunga and Awhitu. The first—right—describes an accident in 1872.

The following January she was on the same run, when, off Ihumatao, a sudden squall capsized her and she sank with the loss of the sole passenger. The newspaper recorded that the master Delaney and crewman swam for shore and made their way as fast as they could for Papakura where Lindsay organised a boat to search for *Isabella* and the missing passenger. This is the last reference to the cutter. David Lindsay remained in Papakura a few years more, and was convicted for selling liquor without a licence in 1874 (DSC 26/3/1874) before failing in business. He appears to have moved to the Waikato.

An accident occurred in the Manukau on Tuesday last, which might have ended seriously had it not been for the skill and intrepidity of the passengers and crew of the cutter *Isabella*. It appears that the *Isabella*, cutter, belonging to Mr. Lindsay, of Papakura, and trading in the Manukau, was proceeding on one of her usual trips to Awhitu, with a number of passengers and a general cargo, but when off Cape Horn she was struck by the cutter *Dante* with such violence as to stove in her bulwarks, tear away her sails and rigging, and leave her almost a total wreck, and it was with considerable difficulty that the shattered vessel was brought back to Onehunga for repairs.—  
[Awhitu Correspondent, November 2.]

Water transport in the three major inlets of the Manukau had evolved differently. Onehunga was the second, south- and west-facing port of Auckland, the hub for Manukau shipping. Regular advertised and scheduled runs by steamers and cutters linked Waiuku and the Waiuku river with Onehunga right up to the 1920s. This did not happen for the Pahurehure Inlet with its ports of Papakura and Drury. This is not to say that they were not served by steamers or cutters and scows, but only on a chartered basis. While boats used the Papakura wharf I found no documented proof. And although Papakura became a bigger settlement than Drury and was easier of access, it still made sense in the 1860s and later to use the wharves at Drury because the latter was, even after the railways came through, the head of transport to the south and to Karaka. In the railway era the long-running debate was which of the two Drury stations, Drury or Runciman, served those areas better. Papakura was a through-way on the railway tracks and a node for Papakura and Wairoa valleys and Hunua via Ponga road only, until the bridges were built linking Karaka and the rest of Franklin in the 1910s.

While land traffic became dominant to Papakura and Drury, the Onehunga - Waiuku route involved many in-

intermediate stations. As late as 1926, the OV *Te Toa* and *Outlaw* had regular routes with stops at Graham's Beach, Awhitu, Pollock, Te Toro and Waiau Pa, with Orua Bay and a hop over the channel to northern coast ports at Cornwallis, Huia and Whatipu. The main shipping route remained along the West- East route between the Heads and Onehunga and with the jetties down to Waiuku. In addition to providing for the needs of isolated communities along the route, this is where the big sawmills were (at Cornwallis, Paratutai, Huia and Awhitu), and the destination for excursion trips.

However, given the choice, it appears Waiuku people would have preferred a railway. 'The great want of the Waiuku and surrounding districts is a railway. . . All are anxious to get a railway or a large steamer on the river. The majority are in favour of a railway. . . It would increase the value of property very much, and the settlers' produce would arrive in Auckland in good order and in good time. . .' NZH 5/4/1879.

However, there were occasional steamer visits to the Pahurehure. Late in October 1874, 'a large column of smoke' was reported at Drury when the *Tam O'Shanter* delivered 9 tons of agricultural material consigned to a Mr Lyell. It unloaded at the old military wharf at Drury, and anchored in the channel overnight. (DSC 24/10/1874) The *Tam O'Shanter* was the only steamer to run on the Manukau for any length of time (1874-78, 1891-1909—Laxon). Built in 1874, her main local connection was that the kauri timber for her planking was cut at Opaheke on the property of William Hay. (Hawken and Walker 71. NZH 13/11/1873) So her planking visited home.

Craig (*Breakwater against the tide*) mentions 'loads of bricks and coal' carried from Drury on the Hingaia. The bricks were made by the Drury Pottery and Fireclay works which closed in the early 1930s.

### **Steamers, cutters and the odd scow**

Of 30 named steamers and motorships listed in Laxon's *Steam on the Manukau* between 1863 and the 1950s, only *Lady Barkly*, *Bluenose*, *Halcyon*, *Tam O'Shanter* and *Weka* are ever mentioned in newspapers in connection with Papakura or Drury, and there is no evidence that *Halcyon* ever visited. *Bluenose* or *Blue Nose*, a paddle steamer, is known to have visited Papakura and Drury in 1864. (Previous article)

The little cutters were smaller and vulnerable to squalls but suited the purpose, and they remained in service for many years.

There are few local references to scows. Wide, flat-bottomed sailing ships, usually undecked, scows became the workhorses of the New Zealand coast. They were useful because in New Zealand's long coastline, they could be tied up to a jetty or could be beached on a sand or mud bottom, and loaded with bulk items such as timber, shingle, bricks. Although they lay low in the water, especially when heavily laden, they were also remarkably stable in rough seas. The literature on scows seldom mentions the Manukau, but in 1915 the Drury Road Board ordered a scow of shingle for Suttons Road. (PWT 27/4/1915) In the 1920s, the Papakura Town Board ordered a scow-load of shingle to patch Settlement Road. (FT 25/6/1924). But by now, the term might have been used to refer to the barges which replaced them.

### **Spring tide in the 1880s**

A *Herald* report in 1885 (5/10/1885, extract over) was upbeat about activity in Papakura and Pahurehure waters. In particular it referred to a steam launch owned by Richmond Park, a large Karaka block being ambitiously developed on the west side of the Hingaia Creek by a businessman called Aiken, and to a new wharf. I have found no further reference to this new wharf at Chalky Point, but after 19 years the old wharf could well have required repair, if it had survived, or rebuilding.

Meanwhile, waka and Māori owners had made their appearance again, in what looks like an old pattern of seasonal fishing expeditions. People from Te Akitai and Ngati Tamaoho were probably among those

We can hear once more the whistle of a steamer on the Manukau waters at Papakura, as the steam-launch connected with Richmond Park brings up a load of produce to the new wharf, which has been erected near the site of the old mill. Twenty five years ago this mill was in full operation, not only upon the wheat raised in the district, but at Waiuku and elsewhere in the estuaries of the Manukau. Then the Papakura Creek was studded with canoes and boats owned by natives and Europeans; now, save for the occasional picnic boating party, its waters are undisturbed. But signs of change are apparent. The natives are returning to Papakura, and have brought their canoes with them. Recently we have had several parties of natives from Raglan, Waikato, and elsewhere here on fishing and gundigging expeditions, and, though some of them have gone back to plant their potatoes, they all spoke of returning, and many still remain. The settlers, too, are

from Raglan and the Waikato, returning to familiar haunts, maybe with the prospect of putting down roots again.

The description refers also to the 'occasional picnic boating party' – like the leisure fishermen of today.

How enduring was this new pattern of activity?

### Karaka and the Weymouth ferry

Water transport to Papakura and Drury never regained its early importance. But the Pahurehure inlet remained important for locals. For many on the Karaka shores, like Richmond Park, and the islands, especially Pararekau, it remained an archipelago of landings. Karaka shores were deeply indented by south flowing streams of

which the Hingaia or Drury Creek was the most important. Direct land transport was impossible west of the Hingaia or Drury creek, and these areas continued to rely on boats.

Reference was made to the Weymouth ferry in the previous article, originally provided by Charles Cameron. By the end of the century the Urquharts and Glassons were farming in Karaka. Access to Karaka Point was by water either from Weymouth or Papakura, but the former was more direct, being separated only by the narrow Papakura Channel at the entrance of the Pahurehure inlet.

The Government ferry service employing Laurie de Boys, and later the Laurie family, local fishermen, was first voted in 1855 (N Morris) and set up in 1859 at Weymouth. Travellers flagged the ferry to be rowed across. 'Alfred (Laurie) lived in what was known as the ferry house, on the Karaka side of the inlet' at Karaka Point. They used to 'ferry stock across on a barge to Weymouth for the farmers of Karaka.'

Tonson (*Old Manukau*) also describes how the Rev O R Hewlett, Papakura vicar from 1884, visited his parishioners at Karaka on frequent occasions. He would walk to Weymouth, be ferried by boat over Papakura Channel to Karaka Point, and again walk to the Urquhart or Glasson house for services. Alternatively the Urquharts apparently 'kept gigs in a shed at Weymouth and would swim their horses over the channel from Karaka and then ride to church in Auckland.' A deep water jetty, described as a 'somewhat rickety structure', was built in Weymouth in 1911. A more substantial affair opened in 1926 and was in use till 1970, demolished in 1976. (B Ringer, *Naming Manurewa*,127)

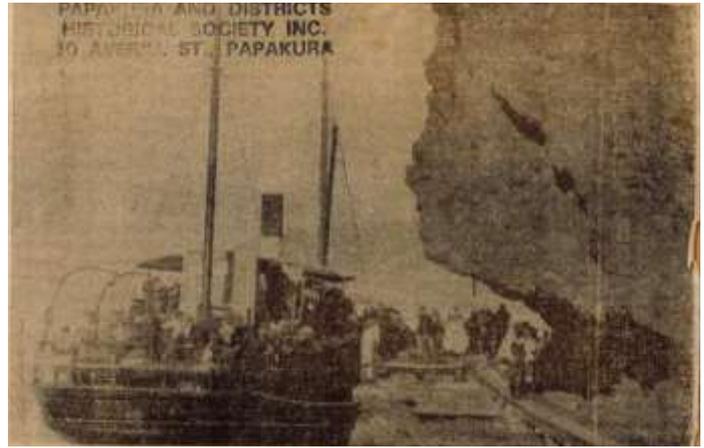
Once two ferro-concrete bridges across the Hingaia and Whangamaire creeks were built in 1916, Karaka had a direct and easy land route to Papakura, diminishing the importance of the Weymouth ferry. But Weymouth's location and deep water gave it a continuing advantage over Papakura in water transport and activity.

### Excursion trips

One steamer that occasionally visited Papakura and Weymouth was SS *Weka*. *Weka's* normal timetables operated between Onehunga and Waiuku, but she was available for hire and excursions were advertised

from time to time. *Weka* was built in 1894 by the Waiuku and Onehunga Steam Navigation Co., and in 1903 was sold to the Manukau Steamship Co Ltd. She remained on the Manukau until 1913.

Laxon wrote: 'The *Weka* with various alterations and adaptations was to remain the undisputed queen of the Waiuku run. A trip out of the ordinary came her way on Easter Monday 1899 when she was chartered to carry a picnic party from Papakura to the Manukau Heads. Although it was many years since the upper reaches of the Papakura Channel had seen a steamer of anything approaching her size, Captain Clark brought the *Weka* successfully up to the landing calling at Weymouth on the way down to embark further picnickers, and an enjoyable day's outing was had by all.'



*Weka* at Paratutai on an excursion trip from Papakura. Photo by Anne Campbell in the 1900s. Her husband was chief sawyer at Coulthard's mill, so this trip may have been one organised by the Coulthards, like the one described below.

An earlier trip was recorded by John Eric Coulthard (*Orua Saga*, 1963): 'When I was about nine years of age, my uncle, Frank Coulthard, who owned a sawmill at Papakura, chartered the *Weka* to take the mill workers and families on an excursion to Whatipu. It had been arranged earlier that the excursion steamer should call at Orua on the way down the harbour. My cousin who was about my own age, would be on board and I was to join the party. It was a beautiful summer day, and Joe rowed me out in the dinghy off the Bay, to meet the steamer, and put me on board. It was just wonderful, a trip on a real steamer. Going out towards the Heads, we could see the waves breaking on the bar near the Signal Station.

'Arrived at Whatipu, the *Weka* tied up alongside the old wharf, and after lunch my cousin Percy and I set off round the rocks with our fishing lines (and caught a big brown cod in a deep water hole under some rocks). I have never forgotten that day, and I came home tired, but happy, after a wonderful time, my first trip in a steamer, out to the Heads.' (This event was in the mid-1890s)

Newspapers recorded trips in March 1901, March 1905 (organised by the Papakura Brass Band), February 1912, and there were doubtless other occasions. Drury is never mentioned, but Weymouth was a regular port of call. There were always reports of a great day out, even if there was some seasickness as the steamer approached the Heads, and no doubt sunburn discomfort following.

*Weka's* excursion trips were long remembered. Mrs Lock told Jan Hawkins: 'I always remember in January on a certain tide a very large ship used to come up from the Manukau... to Youngs Beach Road. All of Papakura would be waiting on the beach. They would row over to the ship and we would go down the harbour with the tide and come back with it. We had a beautiful day, take our lunch and that went on for quite a few years. The ship was normally used for cargo. I suppose they would ship live stock and things like that. I don't remember it ever being smelly or dirty, it was a lovely boat...Whole families used to go.'

Another memory in the same book: 'The steamer 'The *Weka*' used to come up to Wharf Street on New Year's Day. Of course they had to work the tides, the water was deeper and there were very few mangroves.' (Quoted from *Big hats, scent pots and old Joe*, ed Jan Hawkins, 1990.)

Almost up to World War 1, Papakura and Weymouth people were able to imagine living with a port.

**Sources** will be cited at the end of the next (and last) article in this series. In addition to the newspapers used in previous issues, this article quoted from *Pukekohe and Waiuku Times (PWT)* and *Franklin Times (FT)*.

# NOTICES

## MEETINGS: (held in the Papakura Library Meeting Room):

**October: Thursday 26 October at 1 pm.** Rob Finlay, Landings and wharves, mud and water: the Pahurehure inlet of the Manukau.

**November: Thursday 23 November at 1 pm.** Anna Part (our receptionist/media person), Sugar-coating the past: the history of confectionery advertising and packaging.

## MUSEUM TALKS quarterly series in the Museum:

**Saturday 11 November, 1 pm.** Alan Knowles; Papakura's stronghold: the story of Ring's Redoubt. (The talk of the new exhibition.)

## MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS:

Turama, illustrating Matariki has been very popular. Vietnam War. Old School Tech follows.

## TRIPS:

**October 28, Saturday** —take 10.14 train from Papakura station to visit Jewish, Presbyterian and Catholic sections of **Symonds St cemetery**

**November—Red Earth, Papakura, for Christmas lunch. Details to follow**

**Meetings** held on the fourth Thursday of each month in the Library Meeting Rooms opposite the Museum, the talk first at 1 pm, then business and afternoon tea provided by PDHS members (for \$2 gold coin). Phil Sai-Louie & PDHS arrange interesting speakers.

**Museum Talks** quarterly in evening or Saturday.

**Events are advertised** here, on the screen in the Museum window and on our blog and Facebook pages. Please check for updates and Museum news.

**Trips** are usually held on the fourth Saturday of each month two days after the meetings. Watch notices for transport arrangements and cost. Cost is \$5 more for non-members, but anyone is welcome on a first come first aboard basis. Please register early and advise if unable to attend as numbers are limited.

**To register for trips, please ring Dave at (09) 2984507**

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