



Incorporating
Hokianga Museum and
Archives Centre

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Kia ora everyone

My last for 2020 – it's been such a nice date to type, but time sweeps on and no doubt 2021 will be just as familiar soon. As for the year itself, for unpredictability there have been few years like it, although 1918-19 must have been worse given the living conditions for most. (The museum still has the exhibition of Hokianga's experiences during that pandemic on the wall, it's too relevant to dismantle).

However, the main recent happening has been our annual lunch, which had maximum attendance, good food and the speaker Barry Jones known to so many there. The attendance I'm sure was due partly to the work of Dawn Metcalfe as organiser, plus Bill Bermingham's enthusiasm in rounding up the troops (Waimamaku / Waiotemarama DHSs) and partly to the need for celebration that we were all feeling. Social distancing rather went out the window and there was only one mask in sight (though there may have been a few in pockets or handbags).... It really was a great time!

Special thanks should go to the staff at Opononi Hotel: they took our constantly growing numbers in their stride, although our lunch was being followed by a further late afternoon group and then an evening booking of 102 – goodness knows how they fitted it all in, let alone what went on in the kitchen.

And a special thank you to Barry Jones who brought with him an extensive display of documents and memorabilia from his early days in Opononi and Waimamaku, all laid out on tables during the 'mix and greet' time before the lunch. Not only that, but he had samples of his two books; orders taken for either or both of these were filled and delivered personally within the week. He doesn't sit watching grass grow, that man!

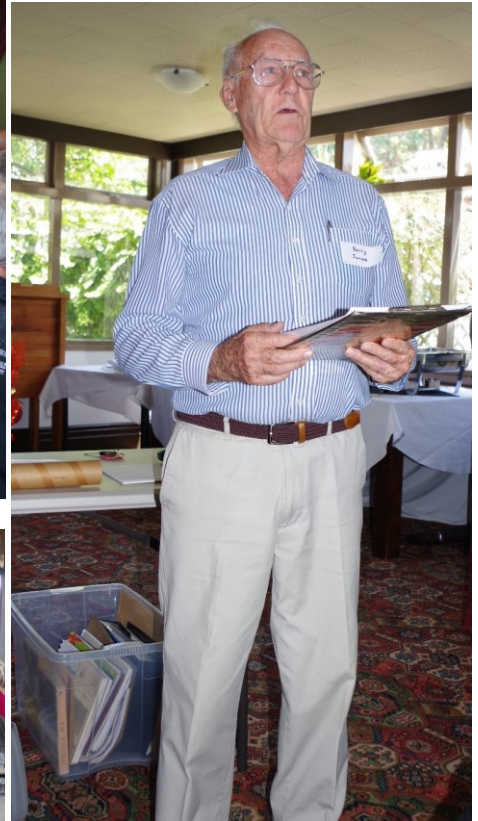
Some copies of Bill Keir's book **Waimamaku Service Station** were also there for the buying, brought along by Bruce Sims and Toia (who had taken two hours away from petrol-pumping for the occasion) We have those for sale through the museum now as well.

And while we're on books – I've had an email from Ken Baker, under lockdown in Brussels, saying "*I have just finished and published a new book called **Finding Joseph Bryers of the Hokianga – Early New Zealand settler**..... It covers Joseph's birth in what is now Belgium but was The Netherlands at the time, identifies his parents and siblings and describes his early life ...I will attempt to get one sent to the HHS but deliveries at the moment are rather haphazard.*" Thank you, Ken, and congratulations – you're another man who never rests.

Our **future plans** are still virtually non-existent. Really, it's taking all our time to keep the archives centre/museum open and looking good, but we still are an Historical Society and we should be doing more for our members, not just being there for passing travellers. Though now that these are just NZers, it's surprising how many once had an ancestor or two chopping down trees round here for a year or two. Or, somewhat later, being among the crowds that came to see Opo. Still, we'd be grateful for any suggestions about activities we could organise. I do have nostalgic yearnings for the old *Alma* making her slow way up each of the tributary rivers! She wasn't quiet, but she had lots of room and you could walk around, swim off her or just enjoy looking at everything. Anyone got a live scow??

Work on the new Manea Centre ("Footprints of Kupe") has reached fever-pitch with the big opening to take place on 9th December. By the time this reaches you, of course, it will have already happened. We'll have to give you a description of it all in next issue. It looks very impressive from the road, all geared up and waiting for the well-heeled tourist, I just hope for their sake that they don't have to wait too long as it's disheartening to spend days waiting for visitors that never come.

These photographs were taken by Bill Keir at the Lunch and passed on for our records:.



Barry Jones in action 21.11.20



As I said before, it was a really good day!

With luck, we might manage something really interesting for early next year, though it would be good to have some suggestions from the floor, as it were. I understand that there's to be no Wood Chops this New Years Day – I can't believe it! New Years Day has ALWAYS been the gathering day for sports and then wood chops at Opononi! Let's hope there's still a Horeke Regatta. But it's all the more reason for us to be putting on something exciting.

In the meantime, here's to a happy Christmas for everyone, and a vaccinated, healthy New Year for the world.

Aroha ki a koutou

Alexa.