



TAMARUNUI NEWSLETTER

Taumarunui and Districts Historical Society Inc. September 2019

Looking back at a decade of achievement

Taumarunui & Districts Historical Society came into existence in 2008 with the aim of researching and publishing local history to make it easily available.

2018 was the first year we actually didn't publish a new book, our last book launch being Roll Back the Years Vol 7 in December 2017.

Looking back over the previous decade 13 new publications were produced. We have also steadily reprinted Ken Anderson's three books in our care along with reprints of our own when needed, ensuring these rich histories of our area continue to be available.

We are working on our next book, the third in Ken Anderson's trilogy of Ellis & Burnand's King Country sawmills. We have a deadline of publication by mid 2020 - all good things take time and when we do get there I'm sure we'll all say it was well worth waiting for!

2018 did actually produce a local history, but not of the Society's making, Raewyn West's Remembering Them as featured in our last newsletter, telling the stories of the soldier settlers in the ill fated Mangapurua Valley.

2019 has seen Waimiha Sports Club reprinting an updated edition of Audrey Walker & Ron Cookes' Waimiha People of Character.

Good to see we have an active community.

Changes in things historical in Taumarunui

There have been changes over the last six months and this newsletter is a chance to update you on what has been happening.

Sale of The Memory Bank

The Taumarunui Museum Trust which owned the Memory Bank archive building had been concerned for sometime at maintenance issues and their ability to fund repairs, or indeed the rationale for retaining the old ANZ Bank building.

The upshot was in November 2018 they sold the building. Vacating the premises was a big job as you can imagine.

The Museum Trust took material into storage. Ron Cooke shifted his collections, and others he considered he had custodianship for, into temporary, emergency storage in a nearby warehouse. The Society has the material given in to our care in safe storage

There were sore knees and muscles after that exercise which involved many trips up and down the stairs. The fitness and muscle of the Taumarunui Fire Brigade volunteers was employed for part of the shift.



The Memory Bank. Before and After - Spot the difference

In December 2018 Ron Cooke and Dennis Smith set up a Charitable Trust – KCET (King Country Education Trust) to which Ron sold “his” collections. Dennis is a newcomer to town but has a profile on www.dennis.co.nz

Since then Ron has sold his business Abundant Past to Dennis. They have recently vacated the office in the old Memory Bank building and are now working from a container set up as an office working space.

If you are passing through town and should be wanting to consult Ron you will find his container office on a site in Matapuna. It is joined by other container pods which will house their archival material.

Amongst all this change Taumarunui & Districts Historical Society is concentrating on completing the book on Ellis & Burnand’s Manunui sawmilling operation that we have had underway for sometime.

Progress has been slower than originally envisaged and both Lotto and Creative New Zealand, who have generously supported the project, have given us a year extension to the original timeframe. A concerted effort is being made to move things along.

Members of the Society have been making use of the microfiche files of the old Taumarunui Press papers at Taumarunui Library to assist with this research.

Needing to do some research?

Microfiche of the Taumarunui Press papers are available at Taumarunui Public Library should anyone need to search for family history or events. Taumarunui Museum Trust has also sent copies of other local papers away for microfiche, which will be achieved in time.

The Taumarunui Museum Trust and Ruapehu District Council have worked with Ron Cooke over recent years to create a data base of photo references, newspaper clippings and other documents and photos in the archive. The data base can be accessed at Ruapehu District Council or from KCET or Abundant Past should you wish to do any research.



Sculpture Exhibition

The old ANZ Bank building/ Memory Bank building was bought by Jonathan Organ and Jessica Pearless, artists from Auckland who were already regular visitors to the area, having a base at Owhango.

In January 2019 they held the inaugural Owhango Summer Sculpture Show outdoors at their Owhango property. The works of 18 New Zealand sculptors, both well known and emerging, were displayed in the paddock and amongst the trees. Hopefully this will happen again in a couple of years time.



Museum Update

The community plans for a museum in the Railway Station are on going. As explained in the last newsletter, Ruapehu District Council has a long term lease of the station building. Plans for a museum have advanced to the stage where an application has gone to Lotto for major funding. Those involved on the committee are very impressed with the concept that has been developed and are calling for artefacts that can be loaned for display.

The story of the area will be told through Maori, railway, river, sawmilling and farming eyes.

Alongside the museum plans, those who have visited Taumarunui lately will have noticed the work being done along Hakiha Street across the road from the shops. Beginning at the Railway Station end of town the old pull in bus stop in front of the station has been replaced by new shelters in front of TRAC, the little Taumarunui Rail Action Centre Museum.

Angle parking is now in place along the street as the Council continues with its facelift.



Currently the square (to be called Central Park) at the centre of town beside the town toilets is fenced off. The paving pulled up and new landscaping is being done incorporating the square plus the grassed area where the old library once was. Intriguing to see the finished product as the workmen have been involved in erecting intricate and unusual structures. (Since this photograph was taken the work has been completed and will be officially opened to the public on 14 September) Looking over at the background of the photo, the shiny new section of roofing indicated the repaired section of the shed now occupied by TRAC (Taumarunui Rail Action Centre) and being developed as a their workshop.

The Ruapehu District Council CEO Clive Manley has proposed space to store material upstairs at the Railway Station and room to work. The Society is very much in support of this and are looking forward to seeing how we fit into the equation.

Action at TRAC

In December the Historical Society held their Christmas gathering at the building on Bell Road that is now home to TRAC. (Taumarunui Rail Action Centre). TRAC have a museum housed in the small building beside the railway station. They will open up if you give them a call.

True to their name, the group is full of action and have now bought the old engine shed on Bell Road and the concrete block building beside it, subleasing the land off the Council.

The big old shed was missing a part of the roof due to a fire some years ago. When no longer needed by the railways it had been the first home of PDC Barn, Taumarunui's home grown farm supply store, a transport depot and a scrap merchant business site.

Since taking on the building, TRAC members have tidied it up, accomplished the big job of repairing the shed roof and are developing a workshop. They also now have a comfortable meeting and smoko room, library and further space for other material in the small concrete building.

We had a very enjoyable Christmas gathering with the added entertainment of a demonstration by a model train.

Until recently the model engine and carriages had been displayed on shelves around the room at Taumarunui Cosmopolitan Club. The engine and carriages are each about a metre long so it has been quite a challenge to find them a home over the years. That problem has now been solved.

Originally from Te Kuiti they were given to the Tuffins at Waimiha's Black Fern Lodge with the intention they could be set up there. Then to Lois Mills at the Ongarue Museum that specialised in all things railway. Then on to TRAC who arranged the display at the Cossie.



Now that they lease the big railway shed and accompanying piece of land around it, TRAC members have begun installing a track which the model train can run on. With the track only partially completed in December 2018, it was still enough to put on a good display when Historical Society and TRAC members enjoyed a Christmas gathering. From left: Gary Stewart, Jim Walker, Neil Radford in charge of the train and Geoff Hambly. The plan was to build a couple of model engine sheds in the centre of the circular track so the engine and carriages can be stored in situ. In the background are ex-Auckland suburban commuter train carriages. They have been stored in the Taumarunui station yard for several years providing employment for security staff who have warded off graffiti artists.



Housed in the old engine shed is this magnificent traction engine. Its size can be appreciated as it towers over Weston Kirton. TRAC also own the old Borough Council steamroller. Now completely restored, it will return to Taumarunui in time for this year's Christmas Parade.

Cleaning Up Shed

Mid November 2018 and the urgent need was to remove material stored in The Memory Bank to provide vacant possession for the new owners. From left, Historical Society members Jim Walker, Celia Martin and Don Tidswell were clearing space, cleaning up and erecting shelves to accommodate the collections Ron Cooke was shifting to the nearby warehouse. Pharmacist Baraq Al-Tuhafi had kindly provided an emergency solution to Ron's problem by allowing him space in his storage area.



Annual General Meeting

Normally the Annual General Meeting would be the second Thursday 10 October. However as Mamma Mia will still be running (see the next page for booking details) the AGM will on Thursday 17 October at 7pm in the Ruapehu Arts Council Building, Hakiaha Street, Taumarunui.

Taumarunui & Districts Historical Society Inc Annual Membership 2019/2020

Society membership year is from July to July. Your support is very much appreciated. Having a good membership base increases the chances of success when we apply for grants for the projects we undertake. Please let us know of any changes in your contact details so we can update our data base. Thanks.

Our contact details: email: tdhs08@farmside.co.nz web: www.rollbacktheyears.co.nz

MEMBERSHIP:

Annual subscription \$20

Payment may be made via the website or by:

1. Direct Credit to Account No 03-0426-0226242-00. Please use your name followed by "mem" as reference:

Or

2. By cheque to: Taumarunui & Districts Historical Society Inc, Box 329, Taumarunui 3946 with accompanying form or details below:

_____ cut here

T&DHS Inc Membership Renewal 2018/2019

Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Email address: _____

PERFORMING ARTS TAUMARUNUI INC.
PRESENTS

MAMMA MIA!

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
BENNY ANDERSSON
BJÖRN ULVAEUS
AND SOME SONGS WITH STIG ANDERSON

BOOK BY **CATHERINE JOHNSON**
ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED BY **JUDY CRAYMER**

27 SEPTEMBER - 12 OCTOBER 2019
THE LITTLE THEATRE, TAUMARUNUI
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