Kapiti Coast MUSEUM

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2026

Goings On at our Museum

Health & Safety

Early in April our chairman Neville called the volunteers together at the museum to review the Health and Safety procedures that we have in place. This was a reminder, that volunteers should remain alert—and report—any risks to the safety of themselves or our visitors when at the museum.

We should also be sure we are aware of the location of H&S equipment such as the first aid kit and fire extinguishers. On the other hand, we should not attempt to use the fire extinguishers unless we are trained and able to safely lift the heavy extinguishers. Often the best course of action is to quickly evacuate ourselves and visitors according to our Emergency Evacuation Procedure (copy attached) and seek help (111 or alert a passerby).

After Neville's H&S chat it was tea, coffee and sweet treats and a chance for volunteers to catch up with each other.

Front Door

The museum's front door was showing its age—a little rot and some warping of panels - which is not surprising, as it has put up with years of southerly wind and rain. KCDC have now installed a new door in the same style as the old one, and it is fitted with a dead-lock which can easily be snibbed on for security by anyone working in the museum when it is closed to the public.

QR Code

We now have a QR Code and it is on show in our front and side windows. A passerby with a QR Code reader app on their phone can quickly scan the code and bring up the museum website. This gives much more information about the museum, including any changes to opening hours and new events and displays.

A Bell

Through Menzshed Kapiti we have been donated a large brass bell. It is believed that it may have been used as a fire bell at Waikanae Beach. Judging by the stamp on it, it dates back to 1953, and it may once have been a Royal Naval bell.

Alan WOODWARD, RIP

One of our long serving members passed away on 1st April 2026. Alan Woodward had been a member of the Museum since the mid 1990's having held the position of secretary, treasurer and chairman during his association with the Museum. He contributed greatly to the development and growth, especially the home tools and farm display. He was a leading force in the strategic planning in the early 2000's which helped forge the Museum to where we are today.

Alan's last few years were spent at Parkwood Lodge. His wife Florence pre-deceased him. They have one child, Beth. Alan was 90.

Contributed by Allan Carley

Images from the Heritage Days we used to run in January—before the advent of 'Clue Hunt'

Left: January 2014, Right: January 2016

Primary School Visits

We are keen to encourage visits from local schools. Last year we had junior classes from Kapakapanui School and in May we had slightly older pupils from Waikanae School visiting. These year 6 and 7 students were keen to learn how things used to be done. In groups of about 6 they circulated through different displays in the museum, with volunteers explaining the way things used to be.

Photo from our collection of Waikanae School in 1905, when it was on Elizabeth St. The building still stands and is a private residence.

From the Chair's Notepad – Autumn 2026

.Greetings to all members of the Kāpiti Coast Museum.

Sometimes when you're reading about things "heritage" on the Kāpiti Coast you might come across the small group known as the Discover Kāpiti Heritage Group – DKHG. I get the sense that many members don't know much about the group which our Museum participates in. The DKHG is composed of representatives from the various related heritage organisations on the Coast from Paekakariki to Ōtaki and it is chaired by Allan Carley.

DKHG members are the Wellington Tramway Museum, Kāpiti Marines Trust, Friends of Ōtaki Rotunda, Kāpiti Aviation Museum, Ōtaki Heritage Museum, Kāpiti Coast Museum, Steam Incorporated and the Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC)l. The group seeks synergies and opportunities to co-operate and work together of which the Annual Clue Hunt is a good example. The group is a useful collective for the local Council to work with and through, as well as members supporting each other on a one-to-one basis. You may recall the assistance provided by personnel from the Wellington Tramway Museum as we reconfigured the Museum's Greenaway Room. Recently, our Museum and the Ōtaki Heritage Museum have undertaken mutual volunteer visits and shared helpful contacts and programme developments.

The DKHG meets every 2 months. At our last meeting in late April, we shared each party's work programme and latest developments in our regular end of meeting round table. For the Kāpiti Coast Museum I quickly covered the Museum building improvements (new front door, disabled persons ramp), a visit from Ōtaki Heritage Museum volunteers, a Health & Safety morning tea for our volunteers, developments in building a working relationship with the Waikanae Primary School and our progress on completing the Greenaway Room upgrade plus our major Parata Township display project lead by Committee Member Rā Higgott. I am sure I left a few things out, but it just goes to show that progress is being made on several fronts even if it doesn't seem like it at times.

On the KCDC front we were advised about their heritage support organisational changes, with our long-term advisor Rosie Salas now part time and the appointment of a new Arts and Heritage Team Leader, Simone Gabriel.

Finally, can I thank all volunteers for their support of Museum activities including being available for the hosting roster which ensures we can keep the Museum open to the public, a challenge during the darker, colder winter months. On your behalf I would like to thank Committee member, Myra Kunowski, for the sterling work she does in putting the monthly roster together, which can be a real challenge when volunteers are away.

Best wishes,

Neville Queree
Chair

The Greenaway Room

Down the ramp, this room has been transformed from how it was a year ago. There is now a ceiling, recycled spot lighting, carpet, newly painted walls and a re-vamped ‘Home Entertainment’ display. We have been donated a large flat-screen TV, and this is now mounted on the wall. Slide shows and videos will be prepared for it., and seating will be available.

Among the items on show is an old windup gramophone. It’s a smart looking unit, but it is believed that it is an HMV machine that has been rebuilt by a local handyman. The main thing is that it works, and we have a good supply of 78rpm records to demonstrate its use. It’s worth coming to listen to it—it has a novel way of controlling volume.

One thing in the planning stage is to make use of an old radiogram that includes a functioning valve radio. It will have an aerial connected to one of the long outside aerials used in the early days of the museum (1980s and 90s) when Ham radio enthusiasts were dominant among the volunteers. Soon we’ll be able to tune in to Radio NZ to catch the news and other programs. It will be AM frequency only, no FM.

[FM radio in New Zealand officially began in the 1980s, after broadcasting authorities resisted the technology for nearly two decades. Entrepreneurs applied for FM licenses as early as 1963, but back then the state-owned New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation claimed AM was sufficient. It was in February 1982 that Victoria University's student station, ***Radio Active****, became the first station to legally broadcast on FM in Wellington].*

The museum’s old radios depend on valves to function. From the invention of the transistor in USA in 1947 the valve radio became obsolete. The main advantages of transistors are extreme portability, high energy efficiency, durability and shock resistance, instant operation and minimal heat generation. We have some transistor radios on show, representing the latter part of our ’Home Entertainment in the 20th Century’ display in the Greenaway Room..

MUSEUM HOURS: FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1-4PM

PRIVATE & GROUP VISITS BY ARRANGEMENT

PHONE: 04 905-6313
ADDRESS: 9 Elizabeth St, Waikanae
WEBSITE: www.kapiticoastmuseum.org.nz
EMAIL: manager@kapiticoastmuseum.org.nz
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/kapiticoastmuseum
INSTAGRAM: www.instagram.com/museumonkapiticoast/

The Otaki Rotunda Quiz Night

On the evening of Wednesday 29th of April four Kapiti Coast Museum volunteers drove to the Otaki RSA (thank you Neville) to take part in a fund-raising quiz night, the money going towards the restoration of the large rotunda at the old children's health camp at Otaki Beach. Our brains trust comprised Neville Queree, Gillies Cornelius, Carol Hogan and Scott Stevenson. It was a well organised fun night and we were happy with where we came, results wise—8th out of 20 teams, and some teams had more than 4 members.

We are the studious lot at the table just beyond Sophie Handford, the climate activist and Labour candidate for Kapiti.

New Members Welcome!

Our members and volunteers are the lifeblood of our Museum. Members mostly start their Museum experience when they visit us and decide to sign up on the spot or are introduced by an existing member. For a voluntary society such as ours the more members the better. Membership can lead to an active contribution such as joining the duty roster or helping with display set up.

All current members are asked to encourage family, friends, acquaintances or even strangers (!) to sign up or just come for a visit to measure interest. Duty volunteers can suggest that visitors sign the Comments book and if the feedback is positive make sure they walk away with a membership application form in their hands.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Kapiti Coast MUSEUM

DATE: 8 APRIL 2025

ALL VOLUNTEERS SHOULD MAKE THEMSELVES FAMILIAR WITH THIS PROCEDURE

Responsible Person: The Museum keyholder on duty or any Committee member present should assume the role of Evacuation Warden and do their best to ensure the following procedure is followed.

When to follow this procedure:

- **fire or fire alarm activation** at the Museum,
- after an **earthquake** where items have fallen over or off shelves or
- where **volunteers or any visitors express concern** over their **safety or security**.

Assembly Area: Footpath in front of the park away from the Museum.

PROCEDURE

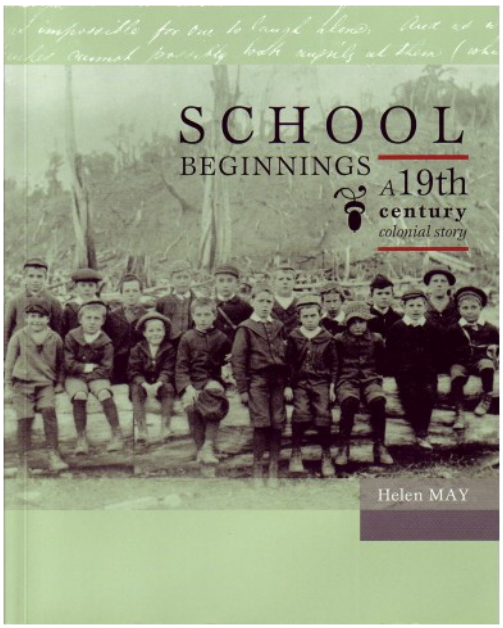
TRY TO REMAIN CALM AND KEEP YOURSELF SAFE

- **Call out** for the other duty volunteer to join you and ask them to leave by the **nearest**, **safe exit** and **prepare to direct any visitors to the Assembly Area.** Use the roller door exit at rear if necessary.
- **Call out** to visitors to **EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY** and to **remain at the Assembly Area** until a head count has been undertaken.
- **Assist disabled or injured visitors** to evacuate **if you can do so safely.** If not, seek help from passersby.
- Without unnecessary delay, do **a final call out to** check no visitors remain in the building and **evacuate yourself** to the Assembly Area.
- **Do a head count** to ensure there are no unaccounted-for personnel. Seek help from passersby if someone is missing.
- In case of **injury or medical event call 111** for first responder assistance.
- Finally, call the Museum Committee Chair to update on the event.

New volunteer and member Helen May

Helen May trained as a primary school teacher in the mid-1960s and taught 5-6 year olds. Later, when Helen had her own children she worked in childcare and was the Coordinator of the Victoria University crèche, involved too in setting up the Early Childhood Workers Union and was its first President 1982-84. During 1983-87 Helen completed a doctorate in Anthropology exploring the lives of two generations of childrearing women and was appointed to a position at Hamilton Teachers' College - later the University of Waikato.

In 1995 Helen was appointed to the first NZ Professorial Chair in Early Childhood Education at Victoria University. In 2005, she shifted to the University of Otago, and from 2007-2011 was foundation Dean of the University of Otago College of Education. Helen retired in 2017, was appointed an Emeritus Professor, returned to Wellington and became an Adjunct Professor at Victoria University Wellington.

Helen has spoken and published widely in the field of early education, that include books on the history of early childhood education and schooling in Aotearoa - something that continues in retirement.

In 2025 Helen shifted to Waikanae with her husband and has been working with Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens, writing history stories in celebration of what was the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's 120-year Jubilee, including a story on the beginnings of kindergarten on the Kapiti Coast. Coincidentally, after a recent visit to the Kapiti Museum Helen realised that the cover image on her 2006 book was the opening day at Reikorangi School in 1895. The imagery of settler children in their best clothes (apart from the absence of girls photographed separately) in a deforested landscape is also a story of the shifting ownership and usage of land from Māori to Pākehā. The 1877 Education Act created a national system of free primary schooling and the rural Reikorangi community was finally of sufficient size to get a one room school; a pattern, with its mix of loss and opportunity, that is quintessential in the story of 19th century schooling in the colony.