

Waiheke Island Historical Society, Inc
P O Box 206, Ostend
Waiheke Island 1843
New Zealand
09 372 2970



President's Report

6 March 2023

General

The past year has been one of steady recovery from the lows of the pandemic years. The Museum entered the 2022 year with visitor numbers in each of the previous two years at only 40% of what they had been in the 12 months prior to Covid's arrival. While numbers still have some way to go before they return to pre-Covid levels, the figures for the year through February indicate we are moving in the right direction. Visitors to the Museum for the year from March 2022 to February 2023 reached 71% of what they were for the corresponding period of 2019/20. Since overseas tourism recommenced last year, we have had visitors from over 20 countries, from every state in Australia and from more than a dozen US states. While we're not back to pre-Covid levels (in 2019, we had visitors from 36 countries and 24 US states,) we're certainly headed in that direction.

Covid also meant that several important anniversaries slipped past unacknowledged. This was largely a result of the uncertainty over lockdowns making any planning for them all but impossible. Last year marked the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Waiheke Historical Society and the 40th anniversary of the opening of the initial museum building, now day Cottage, in Ostend. However, your committee has decided that these important events should not go completely unrecognised and we will mark them at our AGM (on Sunday, April 30) with a cake and some reminiscences from members who can recall those early days.

Our Team

As with all organisations such as ours, it would be impossible to achieve anything without the efforts of our team of volunteers. For fear of missing someone, I don't intend to name individuals, but on behalf of the Society, I would like to thank all those who have volunteered their time to keep the Museum open and functioning. Whether it was by staffing the front desk, working on displays and or archives, participating in working bees or organising special events, all have contributed to the Museum being able to fulfil its function of preserving our island's heritage.

Of course, we can always do with more volunteers, so if you wish to volunteer or know of someone else who would, please contact me.

Events and developments over the year

Undoubtedly, the most significant event of the year was the publication of a new edition of Dixie Day's book, *Waiheke Pioneers*. With several additional chapters and minor amendments to several other chapters, the book was launched at the AGM in June. It sold so well that by August, a second print run was necessary. There has been a further printing since then. If you haven't yet bought a copy, I would highly recommend it at only \$30.00 a copy at the Museum.

We had intended the Live Heritage Day during Auckland Anniversary weekend to be one of our major events for the year. However, as everyone will undoubtedly know, the weather conspired against us, and we had to cancel it. While Waiheke got off relatively lightly compared to a number of other places in Auckland, the weather was still bad enough to make it impossible to hold a successful event. With the current uncertainty over the weather, the committee is reluctant at this stage to reschedule the event, but the possibility of holding it at Labour Weekend has not been completely ruled out. However, the committee is currently considering several alternatives to holding a single large event; I will return to this later in this report.

The last two President's reports both mentioned the urgent need for maintenance on Champion Cottage, but Covid made it difficult to make progress on that front. However, we now have several quotes for repairing and repainting Champion Cottage to a standard worthy of our goal of heritage preservation. If you read my recent article in the *Waiheke Weekender*, you will already know that we will be facing a bill of at least \$30,000 for the work required. That is beyond our Society's immediate resources, so we have recently submitted an application to a charitable foundation for a grant to meet some of that cost.

However, repairs to Champion are only the start of the work required to ensure that our Museum and Historic Village remain in a condition that makes them both attractive and worth visiting. To that end, we will be looking to make further applications to other charitable organisations to assist with that work as well as initiating a major membership drive and fundraising campaign. It is likely that the latter will be formally announced at our AGM next month.

As already noted, our visitor numbers are rebounding, and these have been helped by a number of very successful visits from both Te Huruhi School and Waiheke Primary School. It can be anticipated that with the increased emphasis on history in the school curriculum, such visits will become regular occasions. The Waiheke Sea Scouts once again visited, and we opened the Museum on a Tuesday evening to accommodate the regular meeting time of the troop. As with the schools, we can anticipate this being a regular annual event.

I've already mentioned the article on Champion Cottage that appeared recently in the *Waiheke Weekender*. You may also have seen several earlier articles that appeared over the Christmas-New year period. These will, we hope, be the start of a regular column to appear every 2-3 weeks and featuring some item from the Museum's collection. Thus far, the articles seem to have been well received, and another is currently in preparation.

Goals for the coming year

Maintenance - The application for a grant to assist with repairs to Champion Cottage has already been mentioned, but as also noted, this is only the beginning of what must, of necessity, become an ongoing programme of repairs and maintenance. It is likely that over the next several years that we will need to carry out similar repairs to Keane Cottage - already we are faced with replacing its disintegrating water tank. This is going to involve similar levels of funding to that we face for Champion. Hence, an ongoing fundraising programme seems inevitable unless, that it is, someone can tap a generous billionaire on our behalf. The committee is considering options for a fundraising campaign and membership drive, and hopefully, we can table details at the AGM for ratification by members. If anyone has any ideas for fundraising, please contact me or any of the other members of the committee.

Refurbishing displays - While our Museum still attracts very positive comments from visitors, we need to be alert to possibilities for refreshing and refurbishing our displays. This is on the committee's agenda for the coming year. If you have any suggestions about possible changes to our displays, we'd love to hear from you.

Working Bees - These will be a continuing feature of our activities this year, and we'll be scheduling several over coming months. Both our drive and parking area have suffered from the recent weather. We are approaching the Council to ascertain what work they are able to do, but it is likely we will still need to call upon members to heft shovels and push barrows.

Live Heritage displays or days? - I've already commented on our cancelled Live heritage Day, and while your committee is considering possibilities for rescheduling this, it is also considering other options. One possibility that has been suggested is a regular programme of live heritage displays and demonstrations at the Museum which might be scheduled, for example, on the first Sunday of each month. Thus, rather than having a day on which there is a range of displays and demonstrations, on each of the designated days, we would have just one; perhaps a weaver or a potter or even a musical performance. Where possible, there would be an emphasis on visitor participation which could be advertised, with an invitation to people to come along and try their hand at the heritage craft or activity featured on that day.

Organised visits to other museums - Reading through the Society's minutes while preparing the *Weekender* article on Champion Cottage, I was struck by how active our Society had been in its early days. There were regular monthly meetings with invited speakers, organised visits to various historic sites both on and off the island and an altogether greater range of activities to involve members. I would like to see us revive this to whatever degree that is possible. To that end, I'd like us to begin by organising visits to other museums with a particular view to seeing how they operate and what we might learn from them. Devonport might be a good place to begin, as it would require little more than a ferry ride and a brief walk. It might even be possible to include the Torpedo Bay Museum as well. I'd be interested to hear feedback on this from members.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their time and support; without their work and effort, there would be neither a Historical Society nor a Museum on Waiheke.

Best wishes to you all,

Logan Moss

Membership renewal – subs are now due for the 2023 year which runs from Jan-Dec

Please pay your subs of \$20 by online banking to the following account.

ASB 12-3011-0960967-00, reference WIHS subs and quoting your name.

As cheques are no longer legal tender, you can pop into the museum with \$20 cash during opening hours.

Have we got your correct details?

If you have any changes, please update and either return this form to us by email or post.

Name:

Address :

Phone No:

Email:

waihekemuseum@slingshot.co.nz



<http://waihekemuseum.org.nz>

The Historic Village and Museum is open year-around on Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday, and public holiday Mondays, 11 – 3 PM, on Onetangi Straight near the Golf Club.