



Saving History

Digitising access to our heritage

No. 4, March 2017

A project supported by the New Zealand History Federation, Te Kotahitanga o nga Hitori o Aotearoa

Edited by Neil Curgenven

Children in Museums ?

Two questions I have been asked recently, well during my travels,

- 1 How do we get children interested in our history and into our museum?
- 2 When children come to a museum what do you have for them to do?

The first one is a double barrel, getting young people interested in our history. As I promote through the “Administration of Historical Societies” programme, you should at least have contact with your local secondary school history teacher and be aware of the local schools’ history requirements in your area and how you can address them. You should encourage students to help in your museum with things they may be interested in be it computer input of data, research or even adding a bit of ‘glamour’ to your displays (art students love showing off their talents). Have you been in touch with the local schools and advised them of your activities and how their students are welcome to participate? There are a range of University studies for museums these days and the BIG ones, who can pay wages, usually pay well for students with interest shown by previous job experience.

When children come to your museum, is there a ‘child friendly’ area? Do your displays invite hands on? One museum I visited was acknowledging their local scout fraternity and had a great display of information, uniforms and photos of activities, but nothing to do. Suggestions for “What does Scouting do that we could include?” Knot tying (just a couple of pieces of rope and a diagram from the scouting manual required), semaphore (just a diagram chart and a couple of flags) or Morse code (maybe you don’t have a Morse key but a chart with the alphabet will get them tapping on the alpha-bet. Scouts learn braille and a chart would be a start.)

Whilst I have a few thoughts and activities PLEASE feed me yours. We are all in this together and I get great delight in sharing others’ ideas and experiences. YES I do tell them where I got it from.

Children’s Museums

A recent letter to the editor of the Waikato Times was suggesting the now defunct Founders Theatre could have a new life as a children’s museum, not wanting to take too much away from a good suggestion I know the Waikato Museum makes a great effort in welcoming and involving the young ones, as do other BIG museums, but it did give food for thought and at the writers suggestion I googled “children’s museum”, you should too as it leads you on an exciting travel adventure and you could ask “Would we [New Zealand] be a better place with specialised children’s museums?”

Lost the war

In August when the publicity was about over a New Zealand Land Wars – Commemoration Day I, on behalf of the Federation, wrote to the respective ministers (Yes keeping our name out there). Interesting that the only responses where from the respective Private Secretaries with the standard “Your correspondence has been passed on.” Our proposal was based around the day of the laying down of arms in Waikato but no one listened.

Libraries

Does your society or small museum have a collection of books?

Do you know what is in that collection?

In my travels I have found a BIG yes to Q1 and an even BIGGER NO to Q2.

The benefit is to everyone. Many of the researchers who ask us questions, yes we get a couple a week through the web site to pass on to you or your neighbour, would also like to know if a certain publication is available. We all try to help, many times in vain, through lack of knowledge on a simple thing like this. What do you do about your ‘LIBRARY’ I would really like to know.

How are THINGS progressing as we begin 2017?

Administration of Historical Societies

Considering the early concerns from members at regional meetings about falling membership, this has had a disappointing start. I look forward to further contacts.

Calendar.

It is available but like the above is not getting a lot of use

Health and Safety

Pleasing response with several members engaging in this as they understand their need for compliance, some who have H&S in place are reviewing to meet their needs and asking for help in that area.

Earthquake assessment, refer Heritage NZ

Digitalisation

Stqry The QR Coding app that will open the door of the museum when the museum is closed. Funny thing happened when I was following up on this. The app has been taken over by Glen Barnes from MyTours to work. I have had a meeting in Wellington with these people (STQRY) and what looked off the radar is back on so feel free to contact me for your museum.

Funding Figures, no action - yet

Replicas I have found 3D imaging is available in Auckland through the library system so I can provide further details for people in that area. Otherwise I persist with my current approaches and have a couple of samples being worked on to establish the time frames and cost.

Local History Gee this is big, It was great to see the book out from Bulls just before Christmas. If others are out there, SORRY, they have not been brought to my attention. I am working with a Hamilton historian getting her story done before it is displayed at the Waikato Museum in April, also the Matamata Pohlen hospital has been using our services as they head towards the Jubilee. I have been pleased with this while the publication grant has been taken up by a couple of societies more success was just in getting what they had into print.

Marketing : **Activities** the idea is still there, I have seen some good examples for participation while visiting, Stratford Heritage Village is one. If you have something we can use as a guide I look forward to receiving it.

Discover NZ examples were presented at the Auckland Regional Day and whilst not complete indicated the amount of work needed for this as well as the amount that has been put in. There is an opportunity for passive income here and this year we plan to get more on board. Do you want to be one?

Mytours. As mentioned above Glen has taken on STQRY and assures me this will compliment, our meeting is in March so watch this space. In saying that I found Hamilton City library has one up and running and there are those with Heritage New Zealand and Auckland World War One to see how good they can be.

Heritage/Rail Trails Stratford has put their hand up and I am working around Hamilton East, it has been interesting trying to get to the bottom of this and where and when it started. ANY help? I have been to Ministry of Culture & Heritage and as well as chasing this had an interesting talk on small museums in general and their thinking. I am still building the library and will summarise this in May.

STQRY Scouts. These are the feet on the ground I am looking for in your area, starting with one overseer for each of these topics within the Region (13), then down to one each in each Local Authority(62) and then with you in your town. Any takers?