



Saving History

Digitising access to our heritage

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Health and Safety: need to practise what I've been preaching. On Friday 19th January I set off with plenty of time, heading south to my daughter's in Levin with a couple of stops planned for on the way, on SH4 south of Te Kuiti on the way to Taumarunui, a road I have travelled many a time and know it's one for caution. Slowed to go over the Ohura River bridge (the approaches need a lot of attention), slowed for the corner right into the bend, only to see someone coming north using my side of the road. Moved left to try to avoid it only NO SHOULDER and into the ditch I go, around the left turning corner, rear makes contact with a fence strainer and I am propelled at right angles into the side of a sheep trailer. Quick 360 and came to rest in the middle of the road, front of the Teana the worst for wear, radio was still going but not the engine. I walked away, probably only doing 40/50 on contact. I live to continue my work for the Federation, and others. It can happen so quickly. A concerned truck driver assisted with moving my car out of anyone else's way and allowed me to climb aboard for the rest of my trip to Bulls. I made it in time for my meeting.

For OUR issues on H&S it is pleasing the take up of the easy guidelines that have been prepared for Small Museums and Incorporated Societies, they are still available if you have not addressed this situation yet. Some have re-invented the wheel with their own and good on you, you at least have something in place, which is a requirement of the revised Act. So please act in your interests and that of your members.

Heritage/Rail Trails: there are over 100 Heritage Trails in existence and they have been around since the early 1990s. Did your Society help with your local trail??? Springing up now, at great expense and in most cases much personal sacrifice are the 2000 Rail/Cycle Trails. Started in the Otago Region they now pepper most locations that have either closed their rail line or running beside them. Are you or your Society involved? I am concerned that we *The History People of the Country* are not getting a good suck of the sausage and our history, or at least your local history, is being over looked and in most cases totally ignored. What do you feel? I realise in the interest of visual pollution we cannot have large billboard type explanations of what was here or why this is a very important site; however we all know there are more modern ways to get the message across, QR Codings for one. Please contact me if there is an opportunity in your area to raise the profile of your community through Historical Tourism. I am working in the endeavour to bring the established Heritage Trails into the current electronic messaging age. WATCH THIS SPACE.

I talk regularly with the Ministry of Culture and Heritage and this was a subject during a two hours session. "We are involved." with Heritage New Zealand and DOC for a Heritage Promotion in one of the feature areas of New Zealand WAITANGI, I obtained a brochure LANDMARKS Whenua Tohunga, Places that tell our stories which indicates 18 in the North Island and 18 in the South although it appears these could be just an artistic impression of both islands with the 18th in the south to represent Stewart. In this brochure the 9 presented are 6 HNZ with the heading Combining awe-inspiring natural landscapes with fascinating history and the invitation to explore as many sites as you can. I welcome comment from our Northland members. Across Otago from Queenstown to Dunedin via Oamaru another has been produced which has 12 sites. Our request for funding keeps falling on deaf ears but like the drip onto the stone eventually...

We don't have enough people! A recurring issue is the seemingly lack of numbers involved in history, "the young ones don't want to be involved" is one of the many cries I hear as I move around our members, and others. What do you really do to go out of your way to make it of interest to them, have you had a Grandparents Day? A programme for growth has been developed (for some time now) under the banner "**Raising the profile of rural communities with small museums through historical tourism**".

Are you involved in your community or just another social community committee with limited attraction? Yes one or two in very small locations can confirm “EVERYONE” knows about us, yes but knowing and contributing are two different things. What do you do to get their contribution, do you go out to ‘market’ your group by getting involved with others and their activities, eg participate in the local market days with a stall? Many have passed a remark we have 1000s of photo that need sorting and putting onto PastPerfect. This could be the makings of a stall in the local mall for a few hours.

“We have newspapers galore that we are trying to put into some order” — again set a few up on a table at the library or use an empty shop to attract interest. Tell people what you are trying to do, you never really know what or who is out there until you ask. A couple of years ago I went south to their Heritage Forum/Week and they had taken over an empty shop and set a ‘Pop-Up’ museum with a display item from those museums and group participating in the big event, a couple of weeks prior. I have and have received a lot more suggestions to assist, you only need to ask.

I am a Host: Do you have anyone who can make that claim? Many small museums cannot be open all the hours they would like, yet you really never know who wants to visit and when. How do you work out the hours you are open? Have you observed traffic flows? Are you in a small town which is a refreshment stop from a bigger city? Shortly when you leave Auckland and head south on SH1 the first town you will come to will be Tirau, known in the past for its antique shops (not now) but that’s where the toilets are in the tin sheep. Around the corner (on the road to Rotorua) is a very intriguing private museum, how many of our readers know about it? What would an overseas visitor know of it and how to get there as they fly between Hobbiton and Waitomo Caves? What I am suggesting is that you must make ‘leverage’ of others and if you cannot be open all hours develop a host system where a visitor can easily contact today’s host who will pop down and give you a tour of our museum.

Digitalisation: I have said it before and I have no hesitation at repeating it here, IGNORE IT AT YOUR PERIL. I am still dabbling with Discover NZ who are yet to complete the four samples (Puhoi, Helensville, Silverdale and Mill Cottage in Henderson) they have been working on for the past year and I do not expect another year to pass before we can all move forward with something positive. Out of QR Coding came a variety of opportunities. STQRY was more for the developers than us when they received overseas funding and moved off shore, however they have left it in the hands of MyTours who I have been talking to in the past and continue to do so. I am pleased with a lot of the work individuals have proceeded with (PLEASE tell me your own stqry), there are a host of government sites including Waikato University Library (out of our league). They have the New Zealand Collection of Digital Resources; a lot are obviously Waikato based. The Kauri Museum has been alive for the past several years with their digital and it extends beyond the web site and their walls. Dexibit have provided a range of Digital Culture Frameworks. One that I did experience last year that has been a while in the making but the end product demonstrates why is the app by Heritage Taranaki on their Land Wars. I recommend for those who can, go to your app store and download this. I look forward to talking with them further on benefits for our members.

As always there is a lot more going on than I can fully cover in a two page newsletter but don’t stop sending through your exploits, I do pass them on when I visit member societies and do my round of talks. Like most of you funding is an issue I am yet to get fully to grips with. There has been no positive answer to the insurance requests, I have passed on some small bits of information for those requiring earthquake strengthening and the like. KIT is trying to keep up with events but can only do so with your contributions. I heard on the radio Cobblestones in Featherston were/are holding a Jazz-n-museum event?? Why not tell us? Waikato HS had a very good presentation on Oral History from their local librarian, and there have been a few more Heritage Walk brochures of varying detail produced. We are in the Tourism Industry — flaunt it.