

## Hawkes Bay Branch ANZAC Lunch 26 April 2026

Members were treated to a perfect Hawke's Bay day for their Branch ANZAC Lunch, boarding a bus—some proudly wearing their family medals—to travel to Hygge Café at Clifton. During the trip, members were regaled with a light-hearted brushstroke of local historic highlights.

- **The Lawn, Lawn Road:** William Nelson built *The Lawn* in 1878, naming it after the family home in Warwick, England. It was a grand 32-room, two-storey wooden house set in six acres of gardens. After years of standing empty, William Scrimgeour bought it, dismantled it, and moved it across the Tukituki River using traction engines, horse-drawn lorries, and sledges. The house had a reputation for being haunted, and some believed that crossing water would prevent any ghost from following. Renamed *Tukituki Homestead*, it was destroyed by fire in 1993 during renovations. The Coop family now own the rebuilt homestead.
- **St Joseph's Convent:** Near Mill Road stands a two-storey wooden house that originally served as St Joseph's Convent in Heretaunga Street East. Built in 1901, it housed the nuns for 80 years. Another building from the convent site was later transported to Taupō.
- **Black Bridge:** Built in 1888, this was once the only access to the coastal settlements. At 610 metres long and preserved with wood and tar, it was famously narrow. With just one passing bay in the middle, it caused more than a few tense encounters between motorists who met head-on.
- **Clive Grange:** Joseph Rhodes built the original homestead in 1869, later moving it inland after flooding. Charles and Kathleen Scott moved there in 1921, and their son—renowned architect John Scott—was born in the house in June 1924. He later designed a home on the same property for his son Jacob, a well-known Hawke's Bay artist.
- **Te Awanga Eco Reef:** This impressive structure is 210 metres long and up to five tiers high, made from 1,386 hexagonal interlocking concrete modules. Built for \$800,000 between August and September, the blocks were precast in Hastings.
- **Burden's Motor Camp:** Opened in 1919 by Percival Michael ("Mick") Burden, whose parents first camped there in 1890. During the 1931 earthquake, the picnic area dropped by two metres. Electricity didn't arrive until the early 1940s. From this camp, the well-known Gannet tractor-and-trailer trips began—first as family outings, then licensed for the public in 1952. They continued for 70 years before finally closing.

On arrival at the café, Branch Coordinator Chris King welcomed members into a private room, with tables arranged and completely set with fine china and RSA poppies at each place setting.

After the main meal, Chris challenged members with an ANZAC quiz—questions worthy of *The Chase*—all centred on Hawke's Bay's ANZAC history. Dessert, tea, and coffee followed, and then the answers were read out for everyone to mark their sheets. It proved a genuine challenge and will certainly give many a new perspective when travelling around the city, with much discussion along the way.

Erica Tenquist gave a short presentation on a book she wrote about the Anzac Hall history in Featherston, plus the book she co-wrote about the Japanese Prisoner of War also at Featherston.

Members then had time to wander the gardens and stroll along the beach before Kerry, co-owner of the café, shared the history of the Gordon family, who first settled the 13,500-acre Clifton Station in 1859. The now much smaller station is now farmed by the fifth and sixth generations.

Kerry described the remarkable feat of floating the family's prefabricated teak house ashore after its arrival from India. Indian Army mules hauled the materials and furniture up the bank. The house was furnished with handcrafted teak pieces and a large cast-iron bath. Although the original house was destroyed by fire in 1899, forty workers from the woolshed managed to save almost all the original furniture, which still sits in the current homestead built in 1900. The replacement house remains in excellent condition, complete with seven bedrooms and a walk-in brick safe designed to protect the station's records.

It was a splendid, relaxing day that brought together so much history and knowledge, along with a lovely venue, great food, and stimulating company. Thank you all.

Faye Sherriff