

Hawke's Bay Branch Mystery Trip - May 2024

May 16, 2024

On a beautiful sunny autumn morning, 46 members enthusiastically boarded the coach, for their annual Mystery trip. This, sadly, will be the last Mystery trip organized by Paddy and Richard Bayley. They plan to step down at the end of this year when the NZ Founders Society new Constitution comes into being on January 1 2025.

Leaving Havelock North, we travelled along Middle Road, one of the first local roads of any length connecting Havelock North with Central Hawke's Bay. It runs close to the route of an ancient Maori foot track from East Clive to the south. In her commentary, President Paddy informed members about the following Historic areas on Middle Road:

Lucknow Lodge, built in 1895 by W A Beecroft was the original site of a stopping place for bullock drays, since around 1855, freighting wool bales to ships anchored off the Tukituki River mouth and later to the Port of Napier.

· Birdwood's - Gallery, Cafe, Sweet Shop & Sculpture Garden. Originally St Peter's Church hall (circa 1890) in Waipawa, was moved to the present site in 2004, renovated and opened in 2005. Adjacent to the gallery is Birdwood's "old worlde" Sweet Shop,

· A television transmitter was commissioned on Mt Erin in 1966, broadcasting Wellington's WNTV1 channel. Television arrived in the Hawke's Bay in 1963 with a private translator at the top of the well-known landmark Mount Kahuranaki.

· Mount Kahuranaki is the first mountain in the country to be registered with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Members were amazed at the new Iona Havelock North housing subdivision. It is one of the largest property developments in Hawke's Bay and will transform the site of a Havelock North landmark. The bull sculpture, from which the reserve gets its name, "Bull Hill". is at the centre of this development. It is fashioned from chains found at the Whakatu freezing works by the late artist William Jameson, and fortunately will remain untouched. An eventual 300 sections will house between 1000 and 1500 people.

We travelled on through the beautiful countryside, in all its autumn splendor, with magnificent views of the Tukituki River and surrounding area. Nearing lunch time, our members thought we would be stopping at the Patangata Tavern, but no, Richard had other plans! We drove on through Waipawa, the oldest inland town in Hawke's Bay, founded by run holder Frederick Abbott in 1860. Originally named Abbottsford, settlers preferred its Māori name, Waipawa. Our lunch stop was at the Waipukurau Club. Members had no idea this club, established 111 years ago, existed.

Following a delicious buffet lunch, we travelled off the main highway through Takapau, out into the Central Hawke's Bay countryside to Ormondville. The Railway Station, built in 1880, this is one of the last country stations left in New Zealand. Members were delighted to see the restored Cattle wagon on the track.

Ormondville Rail Preservation group was formed in 1986 to save the station precinct after closure. It has a Category Two listing with the New Zealand Historical Places Trust. Restored to a 1950s theme, by the Ormondville Rail Preservation group, it has on-site accommodation for tourists travelling through. This building is furnished with railway artefacts and fronted with a graceful wrought iron verandah.

Our final destination was Norsewood, a very unique settlement, established in 1872-73. Travelling through Lower Norsewood, we stopped at Upper Norsewood. Here we wandered along their very historic interesting Museum, Norseman blacksmith shop, and Johanna's World. This is a Memorial park with trolls. It has the only replica in NZ of a Stave Church from Norway. There is also a replica of the log cottage left by Johanna and her family in Norway in 1873. The book "Johanna's World" was available for purchase. This book tells the real life story of one of the families that came from Norway, to settle in Norsewood,.

All too soon it was time to board our coach for our homeward journey. Richard produced the song sheets for the usual "sing along", a wonderful happy end to our day out.





