

Celebrating 50 years of The **NORTHLAND NEWS**

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Gratis.

NORTHLAND'S 50TH DANCE

There is a nervous expectancy in the air as we come to celebrate the 50 years of the existence of this Community Hall. Which was built by a spirited community with donations and voluntary labour – something well worth celebrating.

The natural wooden floor makes the Northland Memorial Community Centre a great dance venue, and has been the home of the Harbour City Rock and Roll club for the last 15 years. In that time we have hosted many successful and fun dances here.

By 7.30pm the keen Harbour City Rock and Rollers are beginning to dance, setting the tone and adventure of the evening – You just can't hold them down – If there's music they want to dance.

As the numbers swell its time to get everyone involved so we begin with a Group Participation Dance from Scottish Country called Waves of Torrey – A real fun dance which all ages can participate in and partners are not required. - Ideal



for this situation.

The Northlanders are eager and with a few instructions from the "Dancing Fuehrer" the music starts and the dance begins – The smiles and clapping to the beat tells of the fun all are having and after much dipping and diving the dance ends with a loud cheer and clapping. Then Daniel the Dj puts on music for general dancing.

As part of the proceedings HCR&R have offered to put on a R&R dance demonstration. Tony Clark one of Harbour City's top competition dancers gives a brief history of Rock and Roll dancing and then introduces the dancers as they take to the floor before he also jumps off the stage to dance with them. The Club President Miles Coverdale Sheryne Bebbey and Carlyle Titcombe put on a spectacular display in their triples Routine.

Harbour City complete their section with a group dance called the Clap-Clap – always a favourite at the club – Everyone was invited to take to the floor and with a few instructions from the "Dancing Fuehrer" this easy to learn friendly dance is a great way to meet people and is enjoyed by everybody.

Now back to general dancing and its great to see so many people up dancing and boogieing away.

Many of the ladies have brought a plate and the Northland Community Centre has donated extra money for food – prepared by Noel Bell; there was food for the multitudes.

After supper the evening commenced with a waltz and it was great to see the dance floor full of couples. As the general dancing continued Peter Herbert with his smooth crooning voice stepped up to the Microphone to sing a live version of "You Gave Me a Mountain".

Now a change of scene as Neon Moon was played – Associated to this song is a simplified version of the Cha Cha Cha – Everyone was encouraged to have a go but it is a dance which looks really easy but the speed of it confuses those that haven't done it before. Still a large contingent of HC dancers gave it a good show dancing in unity.

Then followed more general dancing and all to soon it was time to pack up.

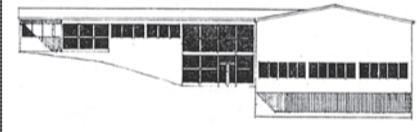
Everyone had a great time and surely that is why the community hall was built for. Its all about a facility that provides a place that people can come together to pursue their interests and have fun together.

Congratulations Northland on 50 years of fun in a fantastic venue.

Happy Birthday

PLANNING THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

In the issue of November, 1948, following the receipt of replies from several organisations, an attempt was made at outlining a building plan making provision for the facilities necessary if each organisation likely to be using the centre was to carry out its functions in a proper manner. The difficulty of planning at that time was the fact that we did not own a property, nor did there appear any reasonable prospects of acquiring a suitable one. However, since then we have purchased, on behalf of the community, a centrally situated site fronting Woburn and Randwick Roads, enabling planning to become something purposeful and real.



A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE WITH LONG TIME RESIDENT ALTON ANGEL

I lived in Creswick Terrace from the year of my birth 1925 until 1983, when I belatedly married and then moved to Wilton where my wife and I continue to live.

My mother told me that the first decipherable word, or part of a word, that I ever spoke was "ta ta". This referred to the construction of the Northland Tunnel, which opened in 1927.

I want to take you on an imaginary 5 minute walk along the Northland Shopping Centre as it was about 1958. Most of the material comes from research by the late Gilbert Hodgkinson who lived for many years in Randwick Road.

On the corner of Northland and Farm Road at number 53 is Wisconsin Burger. As I first remember it, in the 1930's, it was a fish and chip shop run by Mr and Mrs Kennedy who had 7 children. They lived in Garden Road, not in the upstairs of the shop. There was always some doubt as to the availability of fish when the shop opened at 11.30am because Mr Kennedy was likely to be late arriving home on the tram. The shop later had a varied career as a general store and grocery. In 1958 the occupant was Mr Benfield and later names

known to some of you would include Stainton, Lally and Rua Harris.

Next door was number 53A, which was likewise used for a number of purposes and in fact was a chemist from 1948 to 1952 run by Northland's first pharmacist Martyn White.

Next came the butchery at 55 Northland Road first established in 1910 by a Mr Duncan. He was there for 10 years, then sold to Mr Bowles (5 years) and Mr Frost (5 years). Mr Bowles was reputed to have thrown a meat chop at his wife in full view of several customers. In 1958 the butcher would have been George Bannan who some say looked a little like Bing Crosby! Prior to the advent of supermarkets, the butchery was a thriving concern. In Mr Bannan's time he had 2 men working for him full time and customers came from both Kelburn and the nearer part of Karori. The building is now of course Hells Pizza.

Next is the building currently occupied by Northland Fish and Chips and Revolution Cycles. Originally, probably 1910 or 1911 the shop was a single drapery. John Gosling, boot and shoe

repairer moved in 1922 and in 1948 he divided it into two, continuing to occupy one half and letting the other as a drapery. Then in 1952, on the retirement of the boot repairer, it again became one shop when Mr White, the chemist, moved up from 53A Northland Rd, and who was occupying the shop in 1958.

In 1966 came another change when Ken Nelson took over the chemist and the shop was again divided into two, the other part selling books, stationary and toys. Ken at another date had a new shop built as a pharmacy and this is now Dominos Pizza.

59 Northland Road is now the Creswick Foodmarket. The earliest building on the site was Rigardsford's fruit and veg shop which opened in 1921. There was a succession of owners, the longest being Mr Bob Pierson who was there for 14 years from 1929. In 1953, by which time it was known as the Northland Fruit Store, the parents of Doris Wong took over the business and they were there in 1958. David and Doris Wong, known to many of you, erected a substantial new building with accommodation above, and continued to trade, probably with some difficulty,



Mr Alton and Mrs Winifred Angel enjoying the 50th birthday celebrations of NMCC.

while the building was going on.

From there up to the brick church on the corner of Northland and Randwick Roads, there were several private residences. However the post office was erected at 61 Northland Road in 1952, and was sadly closed in 1988. Subsequently it became Pizza Hut.

The church was erected in 1930 and was known as the Ward Memorial Church. It was then sold to the Anglicans and became known under its present title as 'St Anne @ Ward'.

Finally, I refer briefly to the building adjacent to the Harbour View Road steps.

The site of the Creswick Garage at 62 Northland Road was what was the first

Continued page 3...

Northland community preschool (formerly known as community creche) ticks all the right boxes for your early childhood education needs:

We have fully trained teachers.
High adult to child ratios.
We provide a caring, stimulating environment.
We provide a good balance between structured and free-play learning.

And we currently have some vacancies!

Our historical timeline:
November 1987 – a group of interested parents met to discuss childcare needs in Northland/Wilton. From this meeting an action group was formed including Deborah Cranko, Bruce Cheesman, Alison Glen, Jean McArthur, Kate Faulks, Glenis Giles and Marion McKenzie.

February 1988 - a local survey showed 95% interest in need for community child care.

July 1988 – a core group was set up to action tasks such as application for incorporation, health, fire and education department regulations and requirements.

To bring the premises up to the required standards extensive alterations were carried out by local builder, L. Balloch. Work involved excavating a large area to build new toilets, a bathroom and kitchen and storage areas.

Funding and assistance were sought from grants, voluntary labour fund-raising contract work and donations of money, time and equipment. Local community working bees were an essential part of this process.

Later the outdoor area was fenced, levelled and grassed with the help of local engineer Don Thomson and builder Bruce Cheesman. The general planning and set up of the play area was a Hillary Commission plan.

Over the last 19 years, the Community Creche has continued to extend and improve the facility for the benefit of the Northland Community. This year it changed its name to preschool.



On the 3rd of September 1956 Wilton School was officially opened. The head teacher was Mr H.E. Pain and the roll was 83. The school was made up of primers to form 1. By the 3rd term of 1957 the roll was 110 and by the end of the year, 121.

Since that time Wilton School has undergone many changes. Buildings have been moved, added to or altered, playgrounds have changed shape, the roll has expanded, decreased and expanded again. The school has gone from a full state primary with a structure similar to many NZ schools to a full state primary with a structure that is unique in the world – 2 multilevel mainstream classes - our Original strand, two multi level Immersion classes and two multi level Montessori classes – 3 strands that contribute to our one school now called Otari – Te Kura o Otari – a name change that occurred in 1999. The classrooms no longer have numbers – they have names that reflect the surrounding environment – Kereru, Totara, Kaikomako, Tui, Ngao and Pohutukawa.

Unity through diversity is an integral feature of Otari School. There are three authentic strands, each of which stands alone with its own unique features. All three operate effectively within their own philosophies and methodologies. Uniting these three strands are school-wide values, beliefs and teaching practices.

Teachers at Otari School use a variety of approaches to fulfil the vision of the New Zealand curriculum of creating confident, connected, actively involved lifelong learners.

Reflective of the bush habitat, which surrounds Otari School, each strand thrives in an inter-connected environment. Otari School is a dynamic community whose vision is to inspire a love of learning through an education that values the development of the whole child. The aim is to enable each learner to develop physically, academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and creatively.

The City Communities and grants team at the Wellington City Council were extremely generous. Not only did they grant us the money for our mural and historical display, they were encouraging and supportive. The Publication and Design team have also been great. They designed and printed our invitations, and this birthday edition of the Northland News was made possible with their help. In particular a big thank you John Parrott and Helen Young from City Communities, Amie Cripps from Publication and Design, and Katherine McCann and Jenny Rains from the grant team.

A huge thank you to Lesley Anderson (nee Stannard), Ruth Kibblewhite, Lancely Treadwell, Alton Angel, Rosemary Barrington and Cathy Edge for their support in compiling an invitation list, passing on historical details and generally having their finger on the pulse of the community. Alton Angel, along with Donald Laing, also provided invaluable

Tunnel of Trouble

Northland changed forever when its tunnel opened in 1926 - but piercing the hill below Putnam Street wasn't easy. Construction was a chapter of accidents, poor systems and shoddy City Council workmanship. The engineer's design flopped, the carpenter making the wrongly-shaped timber ribs died, the concrete cracked apart. In the end the tunnel caved in and had to be strengthened at a cost of more than \$400,000 in today's dollars. A Commission of Inquiry blamed the City Council, and its shoddy workmanship. But the tunnel went on to serve Northland well.

By Redmer Yska

Northland Memorial Community Centre 50 years

Congratulations Northland on 50 years. It's a significant milestone in anyone's language. A lot has changed in 50 years. 50 years ago the community got together in the post war period to build a lasting and very practical memorial to those who'd served. Northland Memorial Community Centre is a much loved, much valued facility which has been hugely valued over the years. It's been able to do that because of the voluntary efforts of many wonderful Northland people.

Happy birthday!

Cr Andy Foster

Christmas services at St Anne @ Ward

The Anglican Parish of Northland-Wilton Cnr Northland & Randwick Roads

9.30am - Sunday 14 December: Christmas Pageant
A St Anne's tradition – the pageant prepared by our children & young people forms a major part of the service

7.30pm - Sunday 14 December: Community Carols and Lessons –
This year hosted by St Anne's Ecumenical Service (shared with St Thomas More Roman Catholic parish)

7pm Monday 24 December : Christmas Eve Crib & Christingle service
A short service directed at children and the young at heart, to help us all recapture the special wonder of Christmas Eve. A popular service with families as we celebrate Christmas across the generations.

11.45pm Christmas Eve: Midnight Eucharist
The traditional Midnight Service as we welcome the birth of the Christ-child

8am Christmas Day: Eucharist
A quiet & joyful celebration of Christ's birth

9.30am Christmas Day: Family Eucharist
A family celebration of Christmas, as we welcome Christ amongst us.

For more details, contact Canon Deborah Broome, tel 475-9085

Christmas service at St Thomas More Catholic Church

Worcester St, Wilton

7pm Monday 24 December: Christmas Eve Christmas service
Christmas Service is a vigil mass. The children enact a Christmas play. All welcome.

For more details contact Lay Pastoral Leader of St Thomas More Church, Mary-Anne Peetz, tel 475-9513

Thanks from the coordinator...

Pfew, what a busy year! I am still trying to catch my breath. I hope everyone enjoyed the 50th birthday celebrations at the community centre. So many people contributed to the celebrations that I would like to thank.

The City Communities and grants team at the Wellington City Council were extremely generous. Not only did they grant us the money for our mural and historical display, they were encouraging and supportive. The Publication and Design team have also been great. They designed and printed our invitations, and this birthday edition of the Northland News was made possible with their help. In particular a big thank you John Parrott and Helen Young from City Communities, Amie Cripps from Publication and Design, and Katherine McCann and Jenny Rains from the grant team.

Liz Mellish at the Wellington Tents Trust, along with Ann Reweti and Sandra Clarke from the Wellington City Library were so generous with their time. Thank you for your contribution and for taking the time to share your wealth of information with me.

Jo Haywood, Rosemary Barrington, Kate Riddick and Richard Blows also generously contributed a considerable amount of time and energy compiling information for the Memorial Room historical display.

Thank you to my colleague Sil Graham for his patience with me over the past crazy busy weeks, and always offering a hand to help. Thanks to the Northland Memorial Community Centre Council

who trusted me and gave me the freedom to pursue my ideas for the centres 50th birthday. I would like to recognise and thank them for their service to the community by being actively involved to ensure that the centre remains a community run building. It is a pleasure to work with such generous spirited people.

Which brings me to other generous, community minded people who have made this community centre possible over the past 60 years (including 10 years of fundraising before the building was actually a reality). All the past committee members, fundraisers, councilors, user groups, and volunteers; especially those early movers and shakers who had the vision to build a living memorial in Northland. Without their commitment to this community we would not have reached the amazing milestone we celebrated on November 1st.

Last but not least thanks to all the people who turned up to help us celebrate our birthday and make it the success it was.

Have a relaxing and indulging Christmas everyone and be safe.

Angelina Kirk

Memorial Room Historical Display

Pre 1900's

Orangikaupapa and Creswick

1900 - 1950

Here are a few gems derived from the Northland School centenary book published in 2006 that relate to the 2nd panel of the historical display.

Northland on the high hills

"In the early 20th century Northland was experiencing the great suburban boom that was pushing out the narrow borders of Wellington city beyond the Town Belt boundaries. Northland still resembled an isolated country area, with many houses sitting in open fields. It was a place of steep bullock tracks, or raw, wind-hardened clay and unsealed roads. Access to the suburb was difficult. For several years after Northland school opened in 1906 the early teachers had to make the daily climb up Military Track from the final tram stop on Tinakori Road."

The School gets its first donations

Northland school opened on Thursday 9 August 1906 with 48 children on the roll. The next day 51 children turned up for school. It was supposed to have opened on the Monday, but that was the same day as the swearing in of Joseph Ward as Prime Minister, appointed following Richard Seddon's sudden death in June. The Education Board told the first principal, Mr Polson, to delay the opening. The following Monday, 13 August, the school received a number of welcome donations: coal from Mr Gill; wood from Mr Pearce; a bucket, brush and shovel from Mrs Rose, and two boxes of slate pencils, six dozen pencil holders, four quarts of ink and two brooms provided by the committee."

Fire stations in Northland

"Did you know there have been fire stations at two different locations in Northland? In the 1890s the first fire station - a single story wooden building - was on the corner of Northland and Randwick Roads. This site is now the public toilet. In September 1930 the imposing two story brick building further along Northland Road and opposite the shops was opened. Here the fire crew and their families lived on top of the station. The building was decommissioned in the late 1990s, and converted into apartments. Today, Northland has no fire station!"

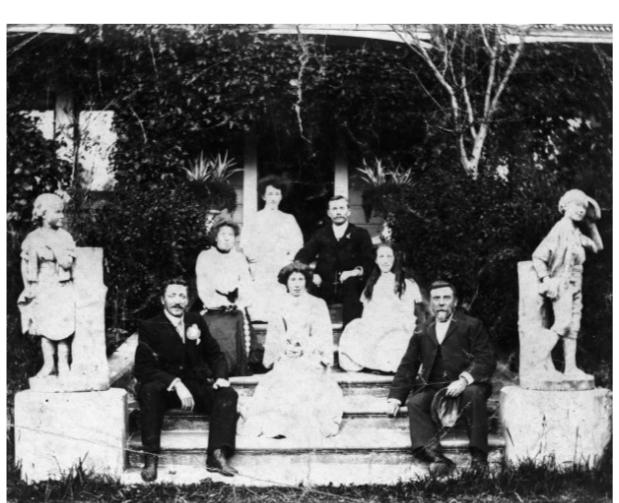


The Prime Minister offers a lift

For a time in the 1930s - 1940s the Prime Minister's residence was located at 66 Harbourview Road, Northland. When Peter Fraser was our war-time Prime Minister (1940 - 1949) he was a regular visitor to the school, and his chauffeur-driven car regularly cruised past the school. Fraser was generous with his car. Harry Reeves-Smith, who continued to live in Northland until the mid-1940s recalls being given a lift into town by the Prime Minister. "I was going for my army medical and I was running. Fraser went past me and told the driver to stop. He got dropped at the gates of Parliament and I got taken on to Buckle Street"

Northland school assists the wars

At Northland school pupils did their bit for the World War I effort. A pupil from 1911 - 1919 recalled hemming khaki handkerchiefs and knitting scarves for soldiers, and singing patriotic songs. Two teachers left the school to go to war. At the beginning of the World War II the 1940 school bazaar raised a total of 32 pounds. Half went to the school pool fund, and the other half to the war effort. The then Prime Minister's wife, Janet Fraser, who opened the bazaar is buried in the Karori cemetery in sight of the school on the Northland hills.



1950 - 2008



The third panel in the Memorial Room history project covers the period from the end of the Second World War up to the present day. The panel celebrates the community effort put into planning and building the Community Centre (1945-1958), and the ongoing efforts since the Centre opened.

The panel reflects a number of important contributions to the creation of the Centre:

The role of the RSA in proposing the idea of the Community Centre as a war memorial, as a financial contributor, and as one of the main organising forces up until 1992.

The government's £ for £ war memorial fund, without which the Community Centre would not have got off the ground.

The financial contributions of the Wellington City Council over the years and ongoing support (including recent essential maintenance and interior repainting).

The role of the community of Northland, the voluntary labour and the long list of fundraising efforts such as bottle drives and carnivals. According to one report, "about £8,000 which has come from Northland people's pockets has come the hard way."

The efforts of local groups over the years such as Northland Scouts in organising the digging out of the lower hall, and the Northland Community Crèche who raised \$25,000 for the lower hall kitchen and bathroom.

The panel also celebrates the lives and achievements of local Northlanders including Elizabeth Viggers (author of 'Around and About Wellington'), writer and gardener Harvey McQueen, potter Doreen Blumhardt, and local personality Edith Angel.

In researching this period of Northland's history, we noted that Northland residents have been active in other local causes besides the Community Centre and its many activities, such as the attempt to stop the closure of the Post Office in 1987, persuading the Wellington City Council to replace the public toilet in Northland Rd rather than build a new one (see the interview with Harvey McQueen in Northland News June 2008), and rallying to save the fire station from demolition in 1993. [Angelina - and add any others!] We didn't have room to write these up for this project but let us know if you have information about these or other Northland protests over the years!

Continued from front page...

A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE WITH LONG TIME RESIDENT ALTON ANGEL

shop to be built in Northland. This was James Russell's general grocery store, which opened in 1904. There were various owners over the ensuing years and for a time the store was part of the Self Help chain. In 1958 it had become known as Harbour View Store and was run by the Barnicotes. The building was demolished in 1965 when a garage and service station was erected by Brian Carroll and Ding Binkhost who moved from 54 Creswick Terrace. There was also an area to the left of the garage and to the immediate right of Harbour View Rd steps which from time to time contained small retail shops. One of them was the San Anita Cake Kitchen, which I think was probably there in 1958.

66 Northland Road you will remember as the former liquor store. It was however a grocery and general store from the time it was built in 1926 and for 40 years operated as Johnson's Store run by two brothers. For most of that time, remembering it was in the days prior to supermarkets, the grocer was kept busy weighing out commodities such as flour and sugar or weighing up biscuits out of big tins bearing names such as Aulsebrooks and Bycrofts. When the Johnson's gave up the store it became the Northland Four Square and later a Betterbuy Discounter.



SCOUTING IN NORTHLAND

The first fifty years

The scouting movement is twice as old as the community centre. The concept came from Africa with Lord Robert Baden-Powell and, very soon after its development in England; scouting was introduced to Wellington in 1910.

The Northland Troop began in 1927 (registered 1930), meeting in St Anne's School Room, which still stands under that name at the top of Woburn Road. Unlike St Anne's, which was staffed from Wadestown Anglican Parish, the scouts were originally associated with the Kelburn Troop. The scouting movement in Northland has since returned the compliment: the Northland Guides that currently meet at the Viggers Centre have this year recolonised Kelburn!

Fifty years underground

Of the founding members of the community centre, the Northland Scout Group is the sole survivor. As originally designed, the community centre made no provision for basement meeting rooms. It was the scouts, including former scouts among the returned servicemen, who dug out the extensive basement that has been the Scout Den ever since.

Any voluntary group must fund-raise. In the late 1960s the committee met at a butcher's

shop in Courtenay Place to bag loose tea from plywood chests. Then bottle drives became a profitable institution until the age of plastic and one-trip bottles. The group turned to collecting paper but woolpacks full of paper were ultimately too hard to handle and store.

Fanned by the post-war baby boom, scouting boomed in the 1970s: there were two Wolf Cub Packs, two Scout Troops. A fledgling Venturer Unit built a tandem trailer that was made available to the community. Leaders were trained to Wood Badge standard at Brookfield, Wainuiomata and Tatum Park, Manakau. The parents of the management committee have traditionally freed the leaders from administrative work and provided transport, maintenance, catering, scarves and flags.

Scouts developed the play area outside the community centre and, with the local progressive associations, planted the Randwick and Cheshire road reserves, and helped develop tracks on the west side of Tinakori Hill. The Gangshow is another satisfying form of community service. Northland Scouts took the stage of the Little Theatre at Victoria University for three Gangshows in the 1980s. We were happy to support the Hutt Valley Gangshow earlier this year.

Outdoor living

Self-reliance and teamwork in the outdoors are absolutes to scouting. Each patrol was responsible for its own well-being, selecting a suitable site to pitch their tent and set their cooking fire. Camps were made in South Karori, Ohari Valley and Morrisons Bush by the Ruamahunga River. Each year the parents were invited to camp to be fed from a hangi prepared by the scouts. Every three years Northland was represented in the Wellington West contingent at the national jamboree. Between the main jamborees there was the "Jamboree of the Air", another way of talking to scouts and guides around the world by radio.

Another fifty years

Among those who attend the preschool that is the main daytime user of the Den, are the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the scouts who delved here fifty years ago. Some of these children will go on to attend after-school care in the Den, and will become the Keas, Cubs and Scouts of the future. They will take the challenge of the outdoors. They will have self-discipline and courage in all difficulties.

By Vic Kent and Ashley Edge

REGULAR DAILY ACTIVITIES AT THE NORTHLAND MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE

Badminton	Dagmar Hempel				6:30-9:30pm			3-5:30pm
Basketball (Northland School)	Shelly Murdoch 475-9091			4pm-5pm				
Children's Dance Classes	Lynley Anne Ward(06)	6-7pm						
Cubs-Lower Hall	Ashley Edge	6:30-7:30pm						
Drop In Centre aged 10-14	Coordinator- NMCC				7-9pm (except 4th Fri of the month)			
Ezee Meals Delivery	Coordinator- NMCC 475-8511			9-11am				
Frisbee Practice	Susan Harper					10-Midday		
Harbour City Rock 'n Roll Hop	Penny Denzel	7:30-10pm			7-12pm (except 4th Fri of each month)			
Keas-Lower Hall	Ashley Edge	5:30-6:30pm						
Kempo Martial Arts - 8-16yrs	Adam Lang 477-6497			6-7:30pm				
Mah-Jong (Memorial Rm)	Kath Kerr 475-8064				1:30-4pm			
Mah-Jong	Sylvia Goodwin		7:30-9:30pm					
Medieval Martial Arts	Martin Forest 475-7079						10am-2 pm	
Moving 2 the Beat 1 - 2 1/2	Jo Hodgson 970-5814		9:15-9:45am					
2 1/2 -3 1/2	Jo Hodgson		10:05-10:35am					
3 1/2-5	Jo Hodgson		10:55-11:35am					
Northland After School Care	Bronwyn Donaldson 972-8567	3pm-5:30pm	3pm-5:30pm	3pm-5:30pm	3pm-5:30pm	3pm-5:30pm		
Northland Community	Diana Johnson	8:30-2:45pm	8:30-2:45pm	8:30-2:45pm	8:30-2:45pm	8:30-2:45pm		
Pilates (Lower Hall)	Katie Haines			7:15-8:15pm				
Playgroup	Rachel Rogers	9:30-11:30am						
Scouts-Lower Hall	Ashley Edge		7-9pm					
Shaolin-Ryuku - 5-7yrs	Adam Lang 477-6497			5:30-6:30pm				
Tinakori Lions	Doug Walklin				5:30-9:00pm	1st & 3rd Thurs of each month		
Total Theatre	Nigel Edgecombe 476-7107	12-2.30pm						
WEA Book Discussion	Shirley Brown				8-9:30pm	2nd Thurs of each month		
Yokusai Karate	Colin Berry 475-9985							8:30am-10am

Where was the White Seat?

Writer and poet Iris Wilkinson, better known as Robin Hyde, moved with her family to 92 Northland Road in 1919.

At that time, the suburb was still basically one big farm, with many of the houses surrounded by open fields. Iris loved looking down on the harbour from ridgy Northland, and wrote a poem about her favourite viewing spot - a 'white seat' 'half a mile from the top' of Tinakori Hill, known today as 'The Trig'. We think it was on the big sweeping corner at the top of the middle section of Orangi-Kaupapa Road where many park their cars on Guy Fawkes Night. Note that the poem also mentions the quarry operating halfway up Garden Road in the 1920s, and the blue horse-drawn cart that ferried metal from it.

Does anyone know more about the white seat?

If you can help to locate it, or know of any other information then please contact Angelina the coordinator on 475 - 8511 or email northlandmemorialcc@paradise.net.nz

By Redmer Yska

The White Seat

Orangi-Kaupapa; there high banks of grasses,

*Heavy with seed; in the darkness,
castanets clicking*

*Where broom-pods burst; white flanks
of the elderberries,*

*Soon turned to wine, sapped through by
the bills of birds.*

*Now lumbering through the darkness,
senses tricking*

*With jingle of bits like bells, the old
horse passes;*

*Drawls the blue cart by the quarry;
the waggoner's words*

*Melt into gloom, like the late, unhearted
cherries*

*Whose petals were brides of the wind,
nor came to ripe.*

*Now on the white seat half a mile from
the top*

*I rest for a moment, lean over a cup of
mist,*

*And the wrinkling harbour water
curdled in moonlight,*

*Milky precipitate of the moon's alkaline
stone;*

*Know that a little higher are pine-
boughs; shake them,*

Pollen flies out, in green and dusty tryst

*With the will of the world; the pine
germs lie on the ground,*

*Stitch their way under and up, thin
stems self-sown;*

*And the hedgehogs run in the grass,
with no more sound*

*Than will scare the sleeping skylarks,
half awake them.*

*Over the wanded bluegums the wild
stars stop*

*Transfixed; wild honeysuckle torments
the night.*

*Peace at my feet sleeps, red-rooved
hives in the gloom;*

*The Southern Cross is nowhere else so
large,*

So large as silver keas flocked to a feast,

So large as a fiery babe in its mother's

*If the White Seat wasn't on that wide,
sweeping bend, where was it? Some have
paced the half-mile from the Trig trying
to find the exact spot. Either way, it would
be a nice memorial to this great bard of
Northland to install a white seat again,
with a few lines from her poem inscribed..*