

CIVIC TRUST AUCKLAND



NEWSLETTER NO. 1, May 2010

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Secretary/Treasurer: Gary Russell

This is the first newsletter for the current calendar year and a good opportunity to introduce two active and capable members who joined the board at the last AGM and have already shown a keen and active interest in many aspects of Trust affairs.

AUDREY VAN RYN

BA (English), Dip Tchg

Audrey trained as a secondary school teacher and is currently a technical writer. She is a member of the CBD Residents' Advisory Group and editor of their e-newsletter. Her interest, as far as Trust activities are concerned, is focussed on CBD issues, including smoke-free public open spaces.

In 2009 Audrey created the Auckland Peace Heritage Walk on behalf of the United Nations Association of NZ (Northern Region Branch). She is interested in environmental issues, especially trees, is a member of the Fragile World team and was a former secretary of Auckland Bicycle Association.

PETER MACKY

LLB – Auckland University 1977, LL.M – New York University 1991, MCL – Auckland University – 2008

Peter has been a life member of the Historic Places Trust for over 30 years and has always taken a strong interest in the activities of the Historic Places Trust and heritage in general.

Peter's professional and general interests are mainly in law and rugby league. He has been staff solicitor, then partner in various law practices (currently a consultant with Macky Robertson), Chairman of the Ponsonby Rugby League Club for 30 years where he is a life member, also Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Auckland Rugby League and a past Chairman of Auckland Warriors Limited. His legal affiliations are Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand and Member of the New York State Bar, New York, USA. He is a Member of the Northern Club.

Peter published his book "Wartime Correspondence" in 2007 and is co-author of "Coolangatta - a homage", eagerly awaited and due to be published on 20 June, about the arts and crafts Noel Bamford designed home demolished in 2006. It is much more than a book about the house, being also about Auckland's heritage in general. The book will be available to Civic Trust members at a discounted rate of \$60. (The retail price is \$80.) Please let Peter know, via the secretary, if you would like a copy of this book, which is lavishly illustrated and in hard back.

Board Members 2010

Munroe Graham (president)

Allan Matson (vice-president)

Roy Clements

Margaret Barriball

Jim Mason

Audrey van Ryn

Peter Macky



Audrey van Ryn



Peter Macky

January/February: Submission on ARC Regional Public Transport Plan

Audrey drafted a comprehensive submission, with some additions by others, and she supported it verbally at a hearing in February. Board members Jim Mason and Allan Matson also attended the hearing, Jim submitting a case for ferry improvements and Allan giving a slide presentation on his transport network ideas.

Transportation is becoming increasingly important as Auckland moves from a population of 1 million to 2 million. Almost everywhere except Auckland, urban motorways have been scaled back or abandoned and even in Los Angeles (where Auckland's motorway oriented De Leuw Cather Report was composed decades ago), there is increasing expenditure on trams, Metro and other forms of public transport.

Audrey also presented a written submission on the ARC Regional Parks Management Plan and an oral submission at a hearing in March, and wrote a letter of support to the Tree Council for tree protection (opposing the ACC relaxation of protection regime).

February: Garden Party

A pleasant party took place at Kinder House when the 40th anniversary book was finally available for handout. Audrey van Ryn and Wendy Clarke entertained with their flutes.

Scenes from the Garden Party



March: Newmarket Park Chainsaw Massacre

Newmarket Park is a largely treed reserve located on the southern side of Ayr Street, just down the hill from Civic Trust Auckland headquarters in Kinder House. In early March there was great commotion when bulldozers and chainsaws began a widespread tree clearance programme. A local action committee immediately convened and Civic Trust Auckland was asked to intervene in an effort to stop what appeared to be a shocking case of Council action, taken without informing residents within the local community or interested parties within the wider community.

Civic Trust Auckland could do little without investigating the matter in some detail, particularly the allegations that the work was unnecessary and that there had been either nil, or insufficient consent notification. In the event, a letter to the Herald from our board member Audrey van Ryn produced an immediate response from Council, detailing the existence of a report dated July 2009 from Tonkin and Taylor Ltd and setting out the extent to which notifications had been made and signage placed on the site. Nevertheless, Civic Trust Auckland had been completely unaware of the proposal and many neighbouring property owners claimed to have not been informed.

Streamlining of processes under the Resource Management Act made by Government last year have left it largely up to local authorities to decide who might be "interested parties" and which applications need to be publicly notified. It would appear that as a result, stakeholder organisations and even adjoining property owners seem to have lost many rights to have a say in matters of property development which have repercussions within local communities.

A New Flag and Logo

What is it about the late summer air that causes such rushes of blood to the head? Firstly the NZ Herald instigated yet another new national flag touting process, then the Transitional Authority, somewhat prematurely it would seem, has called for designs for a new Auckland logo. It will be recalled that the current Auckland logo (an unstable floppy triangle) cost a small fortune to produce and predated the collapse of that particular institution by just two years. Furthermore, it had rather more in common with a certain TV station than with any particular element of the Auckland scene. Hopefully Aucklanders can do better, although no doubt many committees stand between any original race horse design and the ultimate camel. Actually, what was wrong with the previous Auckland "City of Sails" logo?



Newmarket Station



Newmarket Station a Planning Shambles?

The Newmarket Station has now opened, with its planning, operational, financial and design faults readily visible for the public to observe up close. The station is of course placed in totally the wrong position and should have had platforms providing access to both the southern and western lines.

It is now evident that in order to speed up train operations it will be necessary to reopen another station in the same position as the temporary station, situated at Kingdon St. In the ultimate of fiascos, the temporary Kingdon Street station, which cost \$750,000 to build, has, for no particular reason, been hastily demolished.

Will this fiasco be repeated at Penrose?

Party Central – is the last episode finally being written?

Aucklanders were pleased when Queen's Wharf was purchased from the Port Authority in order to guarantee public access to the waterfront. What was not anticipated was that the wharf would need to be used for port purposes for the foreseeable future, particularly, expanded facilities for ferries, which are certain to increase their transport role in the years ahead, and possibly as a passenger terminal for cruise liners. Who is to pay for the necessary future port infrastructure? Is it now to be the unhappy ratepayer? In another bout of madness from politicians in Wellington, the wharf was designated "Party Central" for the Rugby World Cup and the suggestion was made that up to \$100 million should be spent on the site, without, of course, indicating where the money would come from. Like the previous proposal of a waterfront stadium, it appears that thankfully that proposal has been quietly shelved and now that a bit of common sense has been applied to the matter it would seem that the best location for a cruise ship passenger terminal would be the adjoining Captain Cook Wharf. Hopefully both ratepayers and taxpayers can rest comfortably in their beds for a while, but don't bet on it.

Historic Places Trust to be centralised

For reasons which are yet unclear, the Government has decided to centralise the Historic Places Trust in Wellington and do away with local branches throughout the country. Legislation is currently underway and Civic Trust Auckland is attempting to discover the reason behind this move.

Donation of Rotoroa Island

Neal and Annette Plowman have generously funded a trust to create a conservation park on Rotoroa Island in the Hauraki Gulf. The 82-hectare island was the site of a renowned Salvation Army alcohol and drug addiction rehabilitation centre, closed in 2004. The island, leased to the trust for 99 years, will be opened to the public next February and it is hoped that it will become a tourist attraction.



Rotoroa Island

Super City Legislation

Mayhem caused by three mayors (of whom only one remains in office) triggered the Government response of total amalgamation of all the local authorities, together with the Regional Authority and has been news for the last two years. Civic Trust Auckland presented its own submission to the Transitional Authority when it became known that total amalgamation was inevitable. Nevertheless, there is simmering discontent throughout the region at the seeming lack of democracy and transparency in the process, which has proceeded with unseemly haste. By comparison, when the last round of amalgamations took place in 1989, the process had been underway since the early 1970s. This time there has been no effort to call for any referenda and there is a widespread belief that submissions are pointless, as the government has its own agenda which is being followed. Under the final round of legislation, people throughout the region are now horrified to discover that ownership and control of at least 75% of Auckland's public assets and services are to be in the hands of unelected Council controlled organisations, any of which can be spun off to the public sector, with foreign ownership of the ports, airport and water supply a distinct future possibility.

March: Hui

Your board spent the afternoon of 27 March in a hui to discuss aspects of the future direction for Civic Trust Auckland. Details of the various matters discussed and agreements reached will be the main theme of the next newsletter.

April: Submission on the Victoria Quarter

Audrey, with assistance from Allan and others, produced a submission of views on the action plan and the Victoria Quarter environment.

Much more has happened that cannot be fitted into this first 2010 newsletter, but it is already apparent that the year is full of challenges which your board is attempting to tackle.

- *Munroe Graham*