

WATERWHEEL HERITAGE PARK

WATERWHEEL HISTORIC TRUST



NEWSLETTER

The History Issue

April 2010

Snippets

- The original Waterwheel was the first power unit in the area.
- The Waterwheel collection is the culmination of more than 20 years' effort by a group of dedicated local volunteers who, since 1989, have wanted to gather up and restore what was left in the area, and display it for the public.

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The Waterwheel Heritage Park

A huge replica of an 1860 waterwheel is the central feature at the Waterwheel Heritage Park in Spencer Avenue, Kawerau.

The new wheel at 6m (20 ft) diameter and 1.5m (5 ft) wide is a copy of the original which was an overshot built of kauri rim and spokes with the hub of puriri and a weight of approximately 3-3.5 tonnes. It drove a flour mill and later on drove flax stripping equipment as well. The wheel ran until

the late 1920s when the mill buildings were destroyed by fire; however it continued to turn as water was still running over it.

The Waterwheel Heritage Park will showcase historic equipment, and provide a training workshop.

The park is being built in stages over three years.

The Waterwheel Museum's initial buildings

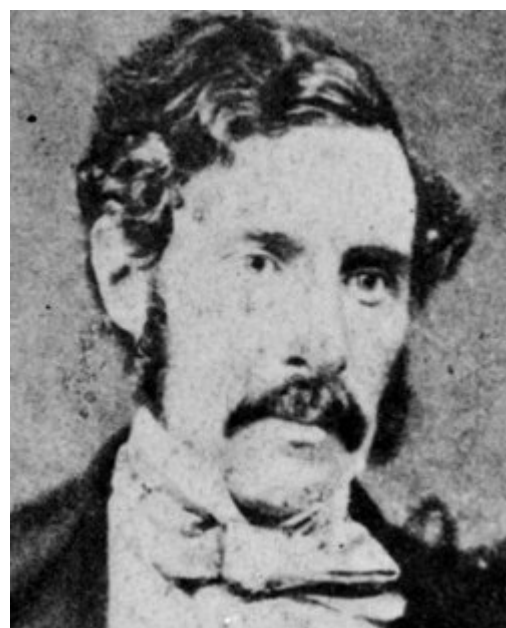
are due for completion by late-2010, followed by the addition of a museum atrium, landscaping and full public access and facilities, and finally, workshops and pre-trade training, local craft industries, historic buildings, model railway, and picnic facilities, etc.

Information provided by Stan Fretwell; Park Founder, Trustee, and builder of the replica Water Wheel.

Origin of the Waterwheel

In 1860 Governor General Sir George Grey ordered a Waterwheel to be set up at Braemar Road on a subterranean stream that flowed out from Lake Rotoma. The stream's water supply was constant.

The wheel drove a flour mill so local produce would not have to go to Auckland by coastal boats and back again. It was also hoped the wheel would bring together local people and tribes to help each other and to share the resource.



Waterwheel Park Development

"The Trust members are very excited that the actual waterwheel is now complete thanks to the hard work of founder Stan Fretwell." – Janet Fookes, Kawerau Community News

The planning of the first buildings has started with a beautiful museum and training centre to be developed. The Park will be a unique style of museum, showcasing hundreds of relics that founder Stan Fretwell and others have gathered over many years, rescuing implements which reflect the industrial, agricultural, domestic life and transport in the Eastern Bay of Plenty last century. This

will be a "hands on" museum, doubling as a skills training ground for young and old. It will be an historic working village with live machinery, transport and domestic equipment, paying homage to times past whilst preserving skills for the future, something akin to Shantytown near Greymouth.

So far 70,000 hours of voluntary labour have

gone into this project, which is operating on a shoestring budget. More labour is needed to continue the restoration of old machinery and vehicles and donations of paint would be much appreciated. Membership of Waterwheel is just \$25 per annum and this support, sponsorship and fundraising is needed.

By Janet Fookes



Some of the heritage items now in temporary housing.

Membership and funding hastens the Dream

Some of the rescued and restored items are currently being kept in temporary housing in Kawerau.

The sooner these items are transferred to the Heritage Park to be viewed, enjoyed and used by visitors, the better.

If you can help in any way to hasten the dream of bringing a completed Park to fruition, especially by becoming a member, please call Helen Stewart at the Kawerau Enterprise Agency, ph 07 323 7377.

If you or someone you know wishes to become a

member, there is a membership form on the last page of this newsletter.

Heartbreaking loss of Waterwheel Pieces

It was fire that destroyed the original waterwheel in the late 1920s, and on Thursday 14 January 2010, fire again wreaked havoc for a number of historic artifacts.

Deputy Trust Chairman Owen Rivers received news as he returned from holiday that a barn on his property, which housed large numbers of priceless relics for the museum, had burned to the ground.

After the scene had been examined by the fire inspector, Owen began picking through the mangled mess, salvaging precious items which he hoped might be restored.

With a philosophical attitude, Owen is grateful that the rare old fire truck hadn't yet been moved into the barn, but he also ruefully noted that all the old items had been close to being moved into Kawerau to safe storage when the fire hit.

The barn had been storing mainly household pieces, such as an old wheelchair, early aluminium chainsaws, sewing machines, record players, etc., and farm implements. The lost items had been collected over many years.

"They all really belonged to the community because they were destined for use in the Waterwheel

Heritage Park on Spencer Avenue," says Owen.

The cause of the fire is unknown. Although some grinding had been carried out there 24 hours previously, the area had been dampened down before and after the work.

The fire was discovered by a visitor who called around when nobody was home, and she alerted the fire department. Four engines attended the blaze, bringing it under control and saving further vintage implements and vehicles from being destroyed. Several modern tools and instruments were also lost in the fire.

By Janet Fookes

Disaster: Fire strikes again, 150 years on. Owen Rivers, Deputy Trust Chairman, surveys the ruins of many priceless implements.



Excerpt from letter published in the Kawerau Community News.

A huge thank you to the Fire Service and all those people who raised the alarm and stopped to help put out the fires.

Much was saved due to the prompt response from so many. Your wonderful efforts were greatly appreciated and without your quick action far more damage would have been sustained to the properties involved.

Also, thank you to all those who have offered items and collections to the Waterwheel Trust since the fire. Your generosity is magnificent. We look forward to starting to display items in 2010.

**John Galbraith
Chairman**

Heritage Park launch 5 June 2010

The Waterwheel Heritage Park will be officially launched on-site at Spencer Avenue, on Saturday the 5th of June.

The launch will provide fun for all the family with lots to see and do and a sausage sizzle. Entry is a gold coin donation.

We will have heritage items on display and visitors will have the opportunity to experience and play with some items.

Check out the Kawerau News for more information closer to the time.

Working Bee: 8 and 9 May

To date, the Waterwheel Historic Trust has held a number of working bees.

These have been very successful and a willing band of helpers has turned up on every occasion to lend a hand to move items and begin restoration, preservation or conservation.

The next one is planned for 8th and 9th May at Owen Rivers' property. At this point, the idea is to move some more items into storage and to evaluate items damaged in the January fire.

Achievements in 2010

* Waterwheel installed, pond dug out, walkway around pool under development.

*Wheel turning and water being pumped around.

*Items were moved into storage following the fire in January 2010.

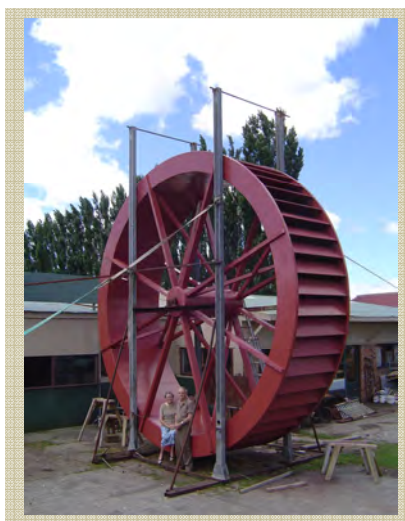
*A compound was set up on site and a number of items moved into this area.

*The site has been mowed and a number of the plantings have been "released" from the encroaching vegetation.

*Several working bees have been held – another is planned for the 8th and 9th of May.

*A number of donations and some sponsorship have been received.

*Great support from local individuals and businesses.



Stan and Phyllis Fretwell beside the new Waterwheel – a replica of the 1860 original.

Waterwheel Historic Trust

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.waterwheel.org.nz>

Acknowledgements

2009 was an important year for progress for the Waterwheel Heritage Park vision, culminating in the installation of the wheel as centrepiece, 150 years since the original wheel started turning!

It was great to see the well-earned media recognition for Stan and Phyllis Fretwell.

Thanks to two committed locals (you know who you are), who provided the drive, money and drive to make the installation happen.

Special thanks to staff at KDC for organising the Christmas Parade, and facilitating the consents and building arrangements.

Thanks to all the Trustees, supporters, advisers and KEA, who worked and contributed to get us this far.

The focus for 2010 will be to get the funds and build the Stage One museum buildings.

John Galbraith, Trust Chairman

The Trust also wishes to Thank ...

The Waterwheel Historic Trust wishes to acknowledge Brett Taylor of EarthArt Landscaping, Whakatane, who generously donated his time to advise on and illustrate a number of concepts for the Park. These concepts were considered by the site development workgroup,

headed by Lee Barton. The Trust gratefully acknowledges the wonderful work done by the many volunteers who turned up to help at our Working Bees. Without your support, this Park would be much further from completion.

We also thank our

members, whose support helps to secure the future of the Waterwheel Historic Park.

The Trust has been very fortunate in receiving a number of items to add to its collection and also money and sponsorship from a number of locals and businesses. We thank you for this.

Membership application forms have been mailed out but in case you know someone who has missed out, please complete the following form, tear off, and send in to the Waterwheel address above.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP Annual Membership is: \$25 per family

Name:

Address:

Tel: Mob: Email:

Do you want to receive a Newsletter?	Yes/No
By Email	Yes/No
By Regular Mail	Yes/No

You can also help by: - *Please tick*

Making a cash donation \$

Offering your time to help carry out restoration or site development

Donating items

Charitable Status: The Waterwheel Historic Trust has secured Charitable status and will provide receipts for donations for tax deduction purposes.