



# Waiatarua Community News

850 copies

August 2022

## DISASTER!

### CATASTROPHIC WRRRA COMMITTEE COLLAPSE

Ah! Now that I have your attention...

#### Committee Vacancies

**HELP! WE ARE GETTING DESPERATE!** We STILL require the services of two more volunteers to fill the positions of President and Treasurer – if you would like to become involved with your community then please contact us via email: [secretary@waiatarua.org.nz](mailto:secretary@waiatarua.org.nz). We would certainly appreciate your input. Details of these two positions have been outlined in previous newsletters, which are available on the website: [www.waiatarua.org.nz](http://www.waiatarua.org.nz).

It is not too extravagant to say that this is a crisis for the WRRRA. If we don't get people to stand for election to the committee there is a real danger that the Association will have to go into recess. This would be a disaster for Waiatarua, because;

- We would no longer have a voice with Auckland Council;
- We would have no means of running the Community Hall;
- The newsletter would disappear;
- The Community Library would probably continue, but be thrown totally on its own resources as far as administration, maintenance etc. is concerned; and
- There would be no-one organising social events – community breakfasts, quiz nights, debates etc (more on events below).

A special word to members of the community who have been on the Committee in the past — please consider whether you would like to do it again. We could certainly use your experience.

We have a great community here and we are lucky to live in such a beautiful area. If we want the WRRRA to continue we need people to work on the Committee. Please, if you care about our community, want it to stay as the beautiful place it is now and have a bit of spare time, contact the Secretary now and offer your services.

## Notes from the WRRRA Committee

### Events

We have received a number of suggestions from a resident that include a group gathering at the hall where locals could come and chat and carry out some form of creative crafts, e.g. cross-stitch, knitting, quilting, painting, etc. Kids and/or grandkids could make pom-poms or build a hut out the back of the hall (weather permitting). The kitchen could also be open for a sausage sizzle, items could be brought in to sell or give away as could any excess produce, herbs, seedlings, etc.

**These are all great ideas—HOWEVER—as with any event, it doesn't just magically happen. If the community wants these types of gatherings, we need volunteers to help organise and run them (most of the current Committee work full time and there aren't many of us, so help is needed).** If you would like to assist then please let us know. Email the Secretary on [secretary@waiatarua.org.nz](mailto:secretary@waiatarua.org.nz).

### Local Body Elections

Candidates will be finalised in August and once they are confirmed we will arrange a date for "Meet the Candidates" evening, most likely in September.

### Roading Issues

A letter from the WRRRA Committee was sent to the CEO of Auckland

Transport regarding the lack of general maintenance in clearing our roads of forest debris, etc. as indicated in the previous newsletter. We have had a response from AT providing us with a Case No. and a Case Manager – alas, to date, there has been no further direct contact with them. However, we have received considerable support from Councillors Shane Henderson and Lynda Cooper, as well as Community Board members, Ken Turner, Greg Presland, Michelle Clayton, Mark Allen and Sandra Coney. The outcome is a meeting being organised with a number of representatives from Council, Community Board and, hopefully, AT together with three of the Committee; the object of this meeting is to inspect the roading issues and discuss what can be done. We are hopeful of action being taken to make our roads safer! If you have issues in your area then please let us know.

### Membership

All paid up membership cards have now been sent out, together with those where addresses were missing. Thank you for letting us know! If you are not a paid up member of the Association, we would certainly like to have you join – all relevant information is regularly included in the newsletter or can be found on our website by following this link: <https://waiatarua.org.nz/waiatarua-ratepayers-and-residents-association/wrrra-annual-membership/>

### Community Health Newsletter

This was received in our mail and a link will be placed on our website for residents to access. It includes quite a lot of health information that may be useful to all.

*Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or the Waiatarua Ratepayers and Residents Association*

Contact  
Us

**Editor:** Erin Kingsleigh-Smith Phone: 021 355 009 Email: [editor@waiatarua.org.nz](mailto:editor@waiatarua.org.nz)

**WRRRA President:** TO BE ELECTED

**Community Hall and Library:** 911 West Coast Road. Phone: 814 9353

**Hall hire bookings:** Matt Smith Phone: 021 059 3467 Email: [hallhire@waiatarua.org.nz](mailto:hallhire@waiatarua.org.nz)

**Library hours:** Thursday 10.00am–12.00pm

Friday 7.00pm–8.00pm

Saturday and Sunday 11.00am–12.00pm

**website:** [www.waiatarua.org.nz](http://www.waiatarua.org.nz)

## A little local history

### Mary Bendall and the Bendall family – original settlers

Mary Bendall was the only woman amongst the original Crown Grants awarded for settlement at Waitatarua. Mary's land – which eventually amounted to 264 acres – was at the junction of West Coast Road and today's Scenic Drive and ran westwards over the hill to today's Quinns Road.

What distinguishes Mary as a settler was not just that she was the only woman, but that she was a widow with four children aged between 11 and 19 years when she emigrated and chose this remote high point of the Ranges as her new home.

Mary was born Mary Fatt in 1836 in Wiltshire where her father was a farmer. By the time she married in 1861 she was described as "proprietress of house" suggesting she was a landlady. Her husband James Bendall was a qualified surgeon and chemist, five years her junior. They set up house near Taunton in Somerset where they had three servants including a groom and a nurse to help with the children.

James Bendall died in early 1882 aged only 49. Whether the couple had been intending to emigrate we don't know, but Mary bravely decided to come to New Zealand. Arriving in Auckland, Mary and her family went to live in a cottage owned by John Taw in Oratia, later known as Captain Theet's cottage. In 1884 Mary obtained a position as sewing teacher at Oratia School which she held until 1889. Her youngest boy, William Nathaniel Addington "Willie" Bendall, was a pupil at the school. Mary's daughter, Alice Mary, would have kept house, and the two older boys, Edward James Paget



"Ted" Bendall and John Whittaker "Jack" Bendall, both in their early teens, would have set to work cutting timber on the Crown Grant to build a house for the family and earn a living. Coming from the gentle pastures of Somerset, these would have been skills they had to learn from the timber milling going on around them in the Waitakeres. In time the Bendalls became known for their bullock teams, and would have taken logs down to the mill in Henderson. They also picked up work at other milling operations such as the Nihotupu mill of Mander & Bradley, or working on the roads.

We do not know a great deal about Mary Bendall, but she must have been a determined, competent woman. The minute books of the Waitemata County Council record her many efforts, in person and in writing, to get improvements to the road to her property. A bridle trail opened from her property to the Henderson rail station in about 1887, but the route, its state and whether it was a priority,

greatly exercised the council and the local settlers. A correspondent to the *Herald* wrote that "the road near Bendall's is like a ploughed field". In the 1890s the blame for this was put at the door of Mander & Bradley's traction engine, used for pulling logs from the bush. By this period there was increasing talk of tourism and the need to get visitors to public parkland at Nihotupu and the attraction of the Nihotupu Falls. The idea of a scenic ring road was floated and in this connection it was explained that Mary Bendall kept an accommodation house for tourists and travellers.

Mary died of "inflammation of the brain" in 1896 at her home on the West Coast Road. This could have been encephalitis or dementia. Of her children only Ted married: he settled in Glen Eden where he was a foreman on road works for the council. Alice Mary continued to keep house for her brothers. Willie worked in a quarry and enlisted for the First World War and fought at Passchendaele. In early 1918, he was discharged because of illness. He suffered from tuberculosis and heart disease and was nursed by his sister before taking his own life in 1933.

According to WE Allen who wrote a history of Oratia "Jack was a gentleman. He gained respect as 'the only bullocky around who didn't swear at his team'." Jack got contracts to metal the West Coast Road from Waitatarua to opposite the Nihotupu Auxiliary Dam (Ian Wells Track). Allen says "he was a good boss, but a tiger for work". Jack Bendall died in 1936.

Alice Mary Bendall stayed on in the old Bendall homestead and was very involved in the interdenominational church in Forest Hill Road. Around 1940 she moved to live with Ted and his wife in Manukau Road. She died in 1943. All the Bendall children are buried with their mother in the Wesleyan section of Waikumete Cemetery. This is a substantial grave with an obelisk and Willie's military headstone.

The Bendalls are also commemorated in Bendall Lane, off West Coast Road, and Bendall Esplanade Reserve, abutting the regional park at the end of Bush Road. Willie's name is on the WWI memorial gates at Oratia School. The family homestead was remodelled around 1920 but still stands in West Coast Road among oaks said to have been planted by Mary from acorns which she brought from England. Most of Mary's original Crown Grant is now part of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park and can be seen on the east side of Scenic Drive approaching the corner of West Coast Road from the south. The small lookout near that corner gives a good view over the former Bendall land which is now entirely forested. There is a Bendall Creek in this catchment which flows into Oratia Stream.



*Sandra Coney*

*Above: An early photo of the Bendall homestead in West Coast Road.*

*Left, above: The Bendall men tackle a giant kauri in the Waitakere forest. Photos Auckland Libraries*

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# Waiatarua Community Patrol News

Criminal behaviour has been a hot topic over the past months and sadly some of our local businesses have been directly affected with both the Oratia Dairy and Kenlock Motors (Mobil) being subjected to break ins. Our thoughts are with the business owners and staff, as this is a very unnerving and frustrating time for them.

As a result, our team have been conducting a number of night-time patrols in the past few months and have reported several instances of suspicious activities to Police. Our patrol has come across vehicles (and people) acting in a questionable manner, who have quickly departed on seeing our patrol car. This is immediately reported to Police Comms and all details recorded. What we do can make a difference.

It is also timely to remind everyone to secure their vehicles, and ensure that you do not leave anything valuable in them – especially if parked at a walk or beach carpark, as vehicle break ins have recently been reported at these locations.

Our AGM will be coming up in August – details to be announced, all welcome.

As always, we are very grateful to our volunteers for all that they do – and welcome new recruits and supporters.

Stay safe ... keep warm (and dry—if that is possible at the moment!) and look out for your neighbours.

Contact Sue Dell, Patrol Leader ([waiatarua@cpnz.org.nz](mailto:waiatarua@cpnz.org.nz) / 021 681 207) for more information.

## Police Contacts – a reminder:

111 – Emergency

105 - non-emergency (incident already happened and don't need urgent assistance). Or online [105.police.govt.nz](http://105.police.govt.nz)

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111 – Report crime anonymously, or online [crimestoppers-nz.org/report](http://crimestoppers-nz.org/report)

\*555 (from mobile phone) – urgent but not life-threatening driving incidents

Sue Dell

## Elevation Open Mic Night

Elevation Open Mic Night is held on the third Friday of every month from 6.30pm to 10.00pm and is organised and hosted by singer/songwriters, Fiona McEwen and Paula Feather. Our next event is on **Friday 19 August 2022**.

Two prize draws for the performers, with prizes sponsored by Asahi Super Dry and Adam Humphris from Ray White. Elevation Brasserie provides a fabulous performance space for a variety of mostly local, mostly original, musicians, bands and artists, and a great lineup of entertainment is guaranteed on the night. Enjoy listening to live music whilst dining on meals or pizza from the delicious menu, and take in the panoramic views from the restaurant or deck out over the Waitakeres and West Auckland. There is even a roaring log fire to keep you warm on nippy winter evenings!

Free entry. Food and drinks specials.

Table bookings are essential - our events are usually booked out - email [info@elevationbrasserie.co.nz](mailto:info@elevationbrasserie.co.nz) or phone 814 8727 or 021 0839 6288

We are a pre-booked open mic night - to book a performance spot, please email [elevationopenmic@hotmail.com](mailto:elevationopenmic@hotmail.com)



## Advertising & Community Notices

Commercial advertisements are welcome and can be arranged by contacting Erin Kingsleigh-Smith, [editor@waiatarua.org.nz](mailto:editor@waiatarua.org.nz), ph 021 355 009. Community Notices are free to current financial members.

**Doers Networks:** local, fast internet providers [info@doers.net.nz](http://info@doers.net.nz)

**Handyman Out West:** Any work undertaken. House and property maintenance, renovation and decoration eg gutter cleaning, water blasting, deck building, tree felling, painting etc. Reliable and friendly. Ph Mike 814 9708

**Indoor Bowls:** every Thursday at the Hall 7pm for 7.15pm start. No experience needed. Coffee and tea provided. \$3 donation to CPNZ. Ph Cecilia: 814 9660

**Lawn mowing, ride on work only:** Ph Grant at Top Grass Ltd. 814 9493 mob 021 024 75610

**Oratia Community Church:** On the corner of Parker & West Coast Rds. Fellowship meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 1pm in the church hall. Ph 813 9869 for information.

**Plants, crafts etc:** Various plants, shrubs and bromeliads. Assorted crafts, scarves, net fruit bags \$2, occasional cards, knitting, sewing, second hand books. All proceeds to Nepalese Educ Trust for Tertiary Scholarships. Phone Margaret 814 9859.

**Table Tennis:** every Wednesday in the Hall, from 7pm. No experience needed, all equipment supplied. \$2 per week Contact Tony 814 9860, email [tony.bacon@sthw.co.nz](mailto:tony.bacon@sthw.co.nz)

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**Work To Do:** Sort out that 'To Do' list for your House, Garden or Property. Clean Ups, Maintenance, Simple Repairs, Tree Trims, Window Cleans, Painting etc. Local and Reliable. Call Chris 027 600 3977.

**Yovi's Topstitch:** Alterations or sewing projects I can do at your budget, from cushions, squabs etc. Contact Yovi 021 084 36450 or [yovistopstitch12@gmail.com](mailto:yovistopstitch12@gmail.com)

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Copy needs to be with the Editor by 5pm on FRIDAY 12 AUGUST



**Quiz Night**  
Every Thursday  
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# DON'T READ THIS

*See below.....*

# DON'T READ THIS EITHER

*Gotcha.....*

Just like you, around 2,000 other Waiataruans are reading this newsletter. And many will come back and read it more than once...

The fact is that people do read print publications.

More often than not, their search for a specific product or service starts with something that they have read somewhere. And even if they do additional research and make their eventual purchase through some digital platform, their choice will still be shaped by what they have seen in print. In addition, the same information is also available on our website: [www.waiatarua.org.nz](http://www.waiatarua.org.nz)

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## Winter Warmer

### Savoury Lamb Leg Chops

*Serves 3-4*

500g lamb leg chops  
1 cup water  
2 tb vinegar  
2 tb brown sugar  
1/2 tsp mustard  
1/4 cup flour  
1/4 cup tomato sauce  
1/2 tsp ground ginger  
1/2 tsp curry powder

Trim fat from chops and place in a greased casserole dish. Mix the remaining ingredients to a smooth mixture in a saucepan.

Bring to the boil and pour over the chops. Cook for 2 1/2 hours in a moderate oven (approximately 180 deg C conventional). Turn chops occasionally.

*Thanks to Kelly Creaghan for this recipe*



## Library News

We have just received a great new selection of books from the Auckland Library. Come and have a look, there's sure to be something for you.

We have also purchased more books for your reading pleasure. Here are a few of them:-

Wilbur Smith	<i>Storm Tide</i>
Stuart Macbride	<i>No Less the Devil</i>
Deborah Challinor	<i>The Leonard Girls</i>
John Grisham	<i>Sparring Partners</i>
James Patterson & Dolly Parton	<i>Run, Rose Run</i>

**We need more volunteers for the library!** If you are interested phone us on 814 9353 or, even better, come and visit us on a Thursday morning between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon and find out more about how you can help. We would love to see you.

*Barbara Field*

## Waitakere Forest & Bird

Talk by Greg Holwell, University of Auckland  
Thursday 18th August, 7.30pm

### *"Camouflage and Competition"*

Associate Professor Greg Holwell is a naturalist, zoologist and behavioural ecologist in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Auckland. Over the last 15 years, he and his students have investigated the fascinating behaviour and biology of Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau's neglected insects and spiders. In this talk, Greg

will introduce a range of species and focus on two active areas of research. The first is camouflage and the extraordinary colour patterns and behaviours that local insects use to avoid predation, and the other is competition over mates, highlighting the spectacular and extreme weaponry that male invertebrates employ to win fights with rivals and maximise their mating success.

As we will still be in the orange setting this will be a webinar via zoom. To access the link go to our Waitakere Forest & Bird website and click on "Events programme". For further information email [lizanstey@hotmail.com](mailto:lizanstey@hotmail.com) or 0274 762 732

Meeting ID: 879 1389 3614 / Passcode: 022337

## From the Editor

Rain, rain, and more rain! It feels like it has done nothing but pour down since the last newsletter. Everything is just so wet and this sort of rotten weather is a real challenge for parents with young children during the recent school holidays. My garden is so neglected, I really need to get out into it, but the weather puts me off. I suppose it is the middle of winter, after all, and wet weather is to be expected but it just feels never ending. In the recent very heavy rain we had a stream running across our driveway and water coming in under our front door and flooding part of our downstairs hallway. It isn't the first time this has happened unfortunately but we thought we had finally sorted the problem with proper drainage being installed. Turns out this time the drain was full of debris and gravel. Just goes to show that it pays to check these things if you know bad weather is coming. Thankfully the flooding was fairly minimal having caught it just in time.



Our home renovation has ground to a halt due to issues and delays which is incredibly distressing and frustrating and the wet weather just makes it feel even more miserable. It's enough to make me want to pack up and move out and return when it's all done, but at the rate everything is going that could be for months which isn't really an option.

Did anyone see that there was also a whopping tree down on Scenic Drive, shortly after West Coast Rd, heading towards Arataki (see photos). You can see just how large it was with the close up photo of the cut trunk. The road has also cracked and is starting to slip along Forest Hill Rd. It really does feel at times that our roads are totally neglected up here, hence the WRRRA Committee's recent letter to Auckland Transport (see the front page of this issue for more on that). I don't know what's worse really, torrential rain and flooding or 40 degree heat and wildfires which have recently been experienced in parts of Europe and the UK. While the houses in the UK are extremely well set up for the cold, they unfortunately are not set up for extreme heat, with not many homes possessing air conditioning.

*Cheers, Erin*

*Photos courtesy Jo White*

# The Waiatarua Tunnels

*After a brief hiatus of the above topic in the newsletter due to lack of space, here's a little more information kindly supplied by Wayne Edwards.*

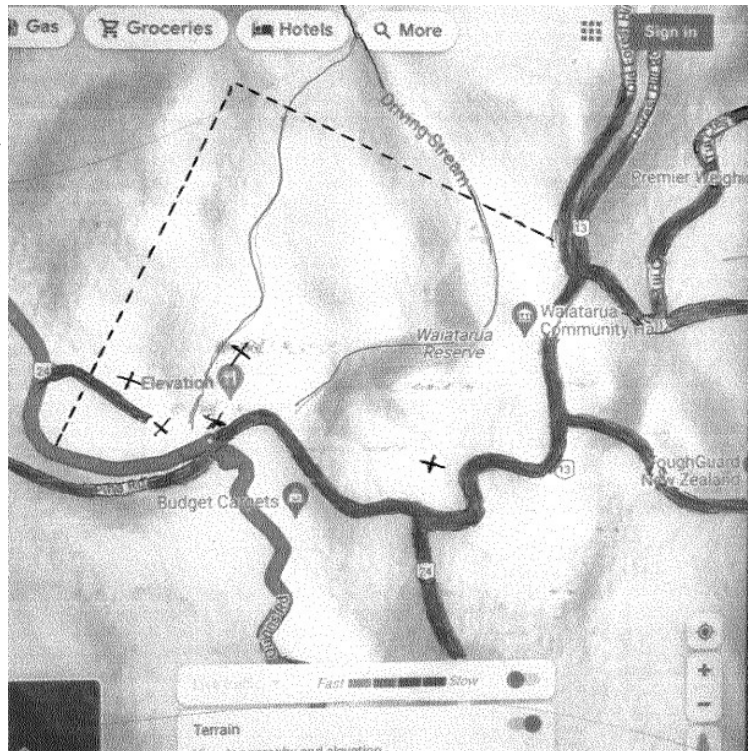
The distribution of our newsletter must be effective and widespread (congratulations Tony Bacon). Since my letter in the March newsletter about mystery tunnels found in Waiatarua I have been contacted, from Waihi where he now lives, by Peter Beveridge, son of Bill Beveridge. Bill was a park ranger between 1970 and 1990 who, in recognition of his extensive knowledge of all things relating to the Waitakere Ranges became colloquially known as "Mr Waitakere".

Peter lived as a child in a park rangers house on the flat grassed area of land on the summit that now has several radio masts on it above Elevation Brasserie (this house has since been demolished). Peter advised that during his childhood explorations in Waiatarua he discovered two further tunnels. One is on the hillside above Elevation and the other down a driveway a couple of properties along Scenic Drive to the north of Elevation. This second tunnel is apparently quite long, was full of rubbish and too dark for young Peter to explore.

Peter recalls that when he spoke to his father about these tunnels, Bill told him they were the work of one of Waiatarua's early settlers, Fred Judson. A little research revealed that Fred owned the land on the city side of Scenic Drive between Piha Road and West Coast Rd. On this land he built the Waiatarua Boarding House. This later became the very popular Dutch Kiwi Restaurant which

operated until it burned down in 1970. Fred lived his last days in a cottage, removed in recent years on 475 Scenic Drive. The Waiatarua Tearooms, now replaced by Elevation, were later also built on what had been Fred's land.

So we have at least a dozen newspaper reports between 1869 and the early 1900s reporting gold finds and the frenzied digging of exploratory shafts around the headwaters of Driving Stream. We know Fred Judson purchased his land in 1903 and both the upper tributaries of Driving Stream were on his property. On the map pictured the two arrows reference the location of our community hall and Elevation. The broken lines are the boundaries of Fred's property and the crosses are the appropriate location of the tunnels



discovered. All the tunnels are on what was his land. *Editor's note: As the tunnels are on private property the owners' privacy should be respected.*

I think there is a pretty convincing case that the Waiatarua tunnels, long rumoured to be military tunnels from the 1870 / 80s Russian invasion scare, were actually the work of gold prospectors including Fred Judson. That said, I find it surprising that Jeanne Wade mentions nothing about the gold find and subsequent prospecting in her wonderful book "Song of Two Waters". Judging by the number of newspaper articles and reports this was a high profile event at the time yet neither does Sir Bob Harvey mention our "Eldorado" period in his writings on the history of the ranges. In fact Sir Bob mentions nothing about Nihotupu/Waiatarua's long history of settlement which also included several guest houses for people "to take the mountain air", restaurants and tea rooms, a staging post, several stores, an early school, a church, post office and even a couple of night clubs (e.g. Back of the Moon).

Quite a substantial and bustling community.

Wayne Edwards

