

Tawa Historical Society Inc

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POSSIBLE PROJECTS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TAWA COMMUNITY BOARD AND THE TAWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thank you for the opportunity to present some of our ideas to enhance the community's understanding of our shared history in the coming five years. Our Society's practical aims since we were formed less than a decade ago have been simple:

1. To write books/booklets about Tawa's history, and thus far we have written nine, with two more almost ready for publication;
2. To work with the WCC to bring aspects of our past to general public notice, and thus far the upgrading of the Tawa Cemetery; the heritage structure outside the Library; the plaques placed along the *Old Porirua Road*; the naming of the Charles Duncan Reserve; the placing of a plaque beneath the memorial oak tree outside Tawa School; historical material for the small information board in Grasslees Reserve; and our factual and editorial contribution to the publication of the WCC's *Northern Suburbs Heritage Trail* booklet; all these have been successfully put in place;
3. To make a contribution, at our own expense, to bring Tawa's history to everyone, and thus far we have established a comprehensive historical website accessible to all; we sponsor an annual *Tawa History Week* in conjunction with the Tawa Library; we provide simple maps and a commentary for a northern and southern Tawa heritage walk, available free from the Library; we provide lecturers on Tawa's history to U3A members; and, with Rotary leading the way, we will shortly be involved with the community walk to the Tawa Lookout on 20 February.

Bearing in mind the above, we have the following suggestion for further enhancing the general public's knowledge of our past. We suggest that an **information board, or boards, be placed in Willowbank Park**. The general area around the park is full of historical interest, and information board(s) could bring to notice:

- The Maori connection, and the origin of the name 'Takapu';
- The history of Takapu Valley, and of Takapu Road;
- The Earp family, their farm, *Boscobel*, their orchard, and the Bucket Tree;
- McCoy's Stockade;
- *The Old Porirua Road*, of which Boscobel Lane forms a small part;
- The Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company's line, built in the mid 1880s;
- The Tawa Deviation, opened for passenger transport on 20 June 1937, on which date the Takapu Road Station, and the new Tawa Flat Station were also opened.

Aims of the Tawa Historical Society

- to encourage study of the history of the Tawa district
- to encourage research into the history of the district
- to foster an appreciation of the achievement of all the inhabitants of the Tawa district
- to advocate for the conservation of sites or documents of historical interest

Secondly, we would like to suggest that the Community Board strongly supports the upgrading and renovation of the **Tawa Railway Station**. This building, 74 years old this year, has been badly neglected by its various corporate owners over the past 25 years, and is in need of attention. Cladding has deteriorated, but is reasonably sound; the roof is beginning to rust, and probably needs renewal; the verandahs leak; the flooring needs levelling and attention; and a correspondent to us has noted that it *"has all the marks of a considered intention to present a convincing case for the demolition of a building that is 'beyond repair'"*. Having said that, once repaired, the station would offer a significant space for community or business activity, and a local icon would have been saved for the future.

Very few stations of this style and age now survive. On our Paraparaumu Line, those at Porirua and Paremata are long gone; Pukerua Bay, similar to Tawa, was demolished some years ago; only Paekakariki and Plimmerton remain. The Tawa Railway Station may well be the oldest commercial building in Tawa. If it is lost, it will never be replaced.

It could have a renewed commercial use, particularly if the Tawa Station became the centre for 'Park and Ride' in our valley. It certainly has land adjacent to it that would allow such development. It attracts more 'custom' than Plimmerton, which has recently been renovated, has a tenant, and is very attractive. The old waiting room would lend itself to historical displays.

Perhaps a call for a public meeting to gauge support, followed by the establishment of a committee to gather thoughts and plans would be helpful. Ultimately, the establishment of a Trust to take charge of the restoration project, obtain local body consent and support, raise funds, obtain expert advice, and oversee the project, would be necessary. The support of the Tawa Community Board would be vital if such a proposal is to be successful.

Thirdly, with our railway heritage in mind, we would suggest that the Community Board should support the erection of an **information board** on Duncan Street on the site of the original **Tawa Flat Railway Station**, built in the mid 1880s. The station building was removed in 1937 to become a two-roomed Sunday School area beside the Tawa Methodist Church!

Fourthly, we would invite the Community Board to be involved in the **launch** of our upcoming publication, ***Arthur Carman's Suitcase***, particularly because of Arthur's long involvement in local body politics in Tawa (Flat) and Wellington.

Lastly, we understand that there are plans for upgrading/developing **Grasslees Reserve**. We would be pleased to offer historical input, given the association the reserve has with Elsdon Best.

Bruce Murray
Chairman,
Tawa Historical Society.

February 2011.

TAWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 14 SEPTEMBER 2010, IN THE TAWA COMMUNITY CENTRE.

INTRODUCTION

I have the honour of presenting the ninth Chairperson's Report for the Tawa Historical Society. Since the last AGM on 7 September 2009 your committee has met on six occasions, in the Tawa Community Centre.

CONSTITUTION

There has been no change or amendment to our constitution during the past year.

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

We continued with our stated aims, which are:

- To encourage study of the history of the Tawa district;
- To encourage research into the history of the district;
- To foster an appreciation of the achievement of all the inhabitants of the Tawa district; and
- To advocate for the conservation of sites or documents of historical interest.

At this stage in the history of our society, and in conformity with these aims, we are concentrating on getting as much as we can of Tawa's history written and published in an interesting and attractive form.

INFORMATION BOARDS

The heritage structure outside the Tawa Library, for which we provided information to the Wellington City Council (WCC), was finally erected in September 2009. We are pleased that the vandalism which resulted in the destruction of one of its panels was repaired promptly, and that there has been no further damage.

We are continuing to work with the WCC with the aim of having an information board erected in Willowbank Park.

WRITTEN MATERIAL ON TAWA'S HISTORY

In pursuit of the aims listed above, and for the record, the Society has published the following material since 2005's AGM:

- **The Streets of Tawa** 2005
- **An Historical Atlas of Tawa** 2006
- **Best of Tawa Volume 1** 2007
- **Tawa Historical Series No 1, *The Ammunition Bunker, Takapu Road*** 2007
- **Lest Tawa Forgets** 2008
- **Rails Through the Valley** 2008
- **Best of Tawa Volume 2** 2008
- **Tawa Historical Series No 2, *The Tawa Flat Cemetery 1861-1978*** 2009

- **Best of Tawa Volume 3** is currently under preparation, and due for publication in 2010.
- **Bartlett House, 26 Oxford Street**, No 3 in our Historical Series of booklets, will be ready for publication in the next few months.
- **Arthur Carman's Suitcase**, a book outlining the life and times of A H Carman, should also appear in 2010.

We are beginning to gather information on the following with a view to publishing in our Tawa Historical Series:

- The Tawa Town Hall
- The Old Mexted Farmhouse, in Rewa Terrace

We are considering publishing a Tawa Historical Calendar in 2011 for 2012.

THE WEBSITE

Again I note that this informative and very professional website was established and set up by Richard Herbert and contains much useful information about the Society and about Tawa. We receive queries and orders for books from all over the world via this site. We are very grateful for the wide exposure Richard's work has given to the THS. It is clear that the site is well used. It is hoped that the website can be progressively expanded. A recent addition to the website was a summary of the most interesting talk given to the 2009 AGM by Brian Mexted about Tawa Flat in the 1930s.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

I am again particularly grateful to Councillors Ngaire Best and Hayley Wain for listening ears, advice and guidance on matters we bring to them. Robert Tredger and members of the Tawa Community Board have been very supportive of the aims and objectives of the Society, and have demonstrated that support in practical ways. We are pleased that the Mayor, Kerry Prendergast, continues to be our Patron. We acknowledge the work of Council Officers and thank them for their helpfulness over the last year. In particular, we are thankful for the practical support given to us by WCC officers who, at our suggestion, had a 'park bench' placed in the Tawa Cemetery. It will be welcomed by any visitors who want to rest or sit a while.

We are grateful for the support of the Tawa Community Centre Coordinators. We are very grateful to WCC's Tawa Library for their great cooperation in the third **Tawa History Week**, held in the Library from 8 to 11 June 2010. We are also grateful that Library staff is willing to sell our publications. We continue to rent space in the Tawa Community Centre. Our rental costs in the past year were \$1088.

NEEDS OF THE SOCIETY

There is a real and urgent need for someone to take on the role of cataloguing and recording material (written, illustrative, photographs, maps and other items) we have acquired or been given.

PERSONAL

I continue to be very grateful to our Executive for their support. Though small in number, our Executive and our Society have more of an impact on our district than could be expected. We are very glad that Bill Hinkley has returned to the role of Treasurer, and value his expert advice. Thanks also should be expressed to Phil Harland, Deputy Chairman, for his constant support; to David Wood, our Minute Secretary, and editor of manuscripts for publication; to Richard Herbert for his layout expertise and presentation of material for publication, and as webmaster; to Steve Avery who has provided a helpful link with Tawa College; and to members David Parsons, Michael Steer and Pat Waite who make most useful contributions to our committee, and the work of the Society.

Karol and Miriam de Raad of *Porirua Print* continue to be responsible for the printing of all our publications, and they do a fine job indeed. They are also members who look for ways in which they can help us. Advertising posters, membership cards, letterhead stationery, and

cover design for our books are some of the ways they assist us freely, and their advice about printing is very helpful. They are generous supporters of our Society.

Again, we thank Andy and Audrey Fenton and their staff at *N Z Micrographic Services* for the professional help and guidance they give us preparing illustrative material for publication.

Finally, our thanks are due to our members. Not only do you keep buying the books we produce, and paying your annual subscriptions, but you give encouragement and support in many other ways, and we of the Executive are very grateful.

CONCLUSION

2009-10 was a somewhat slower year than previously, probably because we were unable to have a major publication ready by the end of 2009 to catch the Christmas market. Nevertheless, we have projects continuing and almost ready for the press, sales are continuing, and our financial base is sound. New proposals are also before us. We can look forward with some confidence to the new year.

Bruce Murray
Chairperson
Tawa Historical Society