



## THE EPSOM & EDEN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

President: Christine Black, 11 Epsom Ave, Epsom (630 5554)  
Vice-President: Helen Laurenson, 14 Corbett Scott Ave, Epsom (630 3850)  
Secretary: Natalie Taplin, 52 Margot St, Epsom (524 9249)  
Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Jeanette Grant, 662A Mt Eden Rd, Mt Eden (638 8566)  
Website: [www.epsom-eden.org.nz](http://www.epsom-eden.org.nz)

### **NEWSLETTER : SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006**

#### **Note Change of Venue for October Meeting**

The next meeting of the Society is to be held  
in the **Epsom Community Library**, 195 Manukau Rd, Epsom

**Monday 2 October 2006 at 7:30 pm**

This special meeting is to celebrate the publication of the *History of Epsom*  
and is open to all Society members and Epsom residents.

Editor, Dr Graham Bush, will address the meeting and copies of the book will be  
available for sale and signing.

Refreshments will be served prior to the meeting

The evening to conclude at 9pm.

#### **RSVP by Monday 25 September**

For catering purposes, those interested in attending are asked to  
please notify the Library (Tel: 374 1312)

**September Outing** - as September has been an exceptionally busy month the Book Launch on 14 September is to be regarded as the September outing; however, on the Sunday when the Society would normally be having an outing, two of the many activities provided by the **Auckland Heritage Festival 16-24 September 2006** may be of interest:

#### **Sunday 17 September**

- Free - **CBD Heritage Buildings Walking Tour** : 1pm to 2pm  
Join George Farrant on a guided tour of the CBD's historic and noteworthy heritage buildings. Bookings essential – phone the Festival Booking Line on 353 9391.
- Free - **Discovering Epsom's Past** – talk by Dr Graham Bush : 2pm – 3pm  
In 2002, the Epsom & Eden District Historical Society began recording the history of one of Auckland's oldest suburbs, Epsom. The editor, Dr Bush, will present a selection of the fascinating findings about Epsom's past. Book in person at the Cornwall Park Information Centre, phone 630 8485 or email [hui@lodge@xtra.co.nz](mailto:hui@lodge@xtra.co.nz)

**AUGUST MEETING (AGM)**

***Constance Frederica ('EKA') Gordon-Cumming (1837-1924)***

We had the delightful experience of being introduced to "Eka" Gordon-Cumming, one of a small group of Victorian women who went where no woman had gone before. Professor Hugh Laracy described her as a tall, plain woman with no tact but "of independent mind and means". When offered the chance to accompany her married sister to India, she accepted with delight the opportunity to "escape from domestic disruptions". She had aristocratic "connections, not cash", and while "indifferent to race, was sensitive to class".

Between 1868 and 1880, she travelled to India, California, Fiji, New Zealand, Japan, China and Honolulu. She found she loved to wander the world – to see things – and to paint them. She was an excellent and prolific painter but never had enough money to set-up a gallery so today her paintings are widely dispersed and not well-known.

She came to New Zealand on holiday, stayed with Governor Grey and described Auckland's volcanoes as "insignificant little hills". In an Indian and Colonial Exhibition in England in 1886, she displayed 66 paintings of New Zealand.

Back in England she became a prolific writer of unusual topics such as comparison of the funeral customs of Samoa and the Highlands. She was a pioneer advocate of cremation which was made legal in 1884. When she died in Scotland at the age of 82, 'Eka' was working on a system of Braille for use in China.  
(Contributed by Jeanette Grant).

## DIARY DATES

### NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES INC

On behalf of the Federation, the Epsom & Eden District Historical Society is hosting the next **Auckland Regional Day** which is to be held at  
**St Andrew's Church Hall, St Andrew's Rd, Epsom**  
**Sunday 15 October 2006 at 1:30 pm.**

A programme has been arranged which, following the Welcome and Roll Call by the Federation President, will allow time for the various historical societies to tell of their experiences since last meeting at Parnell.

Dr Graham Bush will also give an address following the launch at Government House of the  
***The History of Epsom.***

Afternoon-tea followed by a guided tour of the 160-yr-old St Andrew's Church and equally historic churchyard will conclude the afternoon.

*All members are invited to join with other historical societies  
in this afternoon of fellowship*

### CIVIC TRUST AUCKLAND

#### **Proposed Heritage Walk : Saturday 28 October 2006**

The Civic Trust extends an invitation to all members to take part in a Heritage Walk in the Epsom area on Saturday 28 October. Members should meet at the **Epsom Community Centre**, 202 Gillies Avenue, Epsom, at **9:45am** for a **10:00am** start.

The route will be a circular one, taking in a number of notable buildings and heritage sites – and drawing on information contained in the newly-published ***History of Epsom.*** The editor of that publication, Dr Graham Bush, who is also a member of the Civic Trust, has agreed to be a leader on the walk. It is expected that the walk will take approximately **2 hours**, after which members may wish to stop-off for coffee or lunch at one of the several excellent **cafes** in the area.  
(Submitted by

*Margaret Barriball, Organiser)*

*We are saddened to advise members of the death of Robert Rees on the 11th of September. Robert was a valued and loyal member of the society. He was a teacher of music at Kings School for many years and was also President of the Eastern Suburbs Organ Society. We will miss this fine gentleman.*