



**Issue 25**  
December 2023



# Auckland Council Archives

## Auckland begins at the Archives

### Kia ora

Welcome to the issue December 2023 issue of the Archives newsletter. We aim to keep you up to date with our mahi at Council Archives, whilst also sharing interesting stories we uncover working with Auckland's records. We wish you a Meri Kirihimete and a Happy New Year from everyone at Council Archives. We will be closed from 5pm on Thursday 21 December and will reopen at 2pm on Monday 8 January 2024.

#### In this issue:

- Archivist Becky looks at Auckland Regional Council's 0800 Smokey campaign
- Our conservator Aline writes about the NZCCM conference, where she presented a paper with colleague Damen Joe
- James delves into the history of buses in Tāmaki Makaurau
- David Verran discusses his recently published book about the history of North Shore Brass
- Archives is on the move!
- Finally, we welcome Jason to the Archives team and say haere rā to Lene Aiono and volunteer John La Roche.

## 0800 SMOKEY: The campaign for cleaner, more breathable air

This can of Auckland Air isn't like those cute cans they sell to tourists at the top of Mount Fuji. In fact, it's the opposite. This one-of-a-kind vintage from the year 2000, is guaranteed to be 'a powerful antidote to clean lungs and good health' and 'an ideal source of asthma and other respiratory diseases'. The 'Big Brown Extra Toxic Urban Soup' is unique in its guarantee to exceed the recommended daily dose of fine particulates, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide, making it the perfect candidate for those seeking to endanger their health.



Auckland air: Big brown extra toxic urban soup in a can, circa 2000

How can such a can be produced from Auckland air? In 2000, Auckland air was not as easy to breathe as it is now. We had a smog problem, and a serious one at that. The air we breathed was often comparable to London's, which had a population nearly six times the size of Auckland's at the time. At some particularly busy intersections, the levels of pollutants in the air regularly exceeded the World Health Organization's (WHO's) safety guidelines.

Throughout the 1990s the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) had been monitoring the quality of Auckland's air and noted its continued deterioration and in 2000 concluded that something had to be done to make our air safe to breath. But what was the biggest contributor to this dangerous air? Many would assume that it was industries and factories billowing out large amounts of smoke. While they did contribute to the overall pollution of Auckland's air at the time, this only amounted to approximately 3% of the total volume of pollution. Industries were already limited by consents and controls issued by the ARC to regulate anything factories discharged into the air. This gave the ARC the ability to force any industries that breached these conditions to fix the problems, and to fine or prosecute them where necessary. Instead, the biggest contributor to Auckland's air pollution was from vehicles. In 2000, emissions from vehicles made up 80% of air pollution throughout the Auckland region. This became the target of the ARC's campaign to improve Auckland's air pollution problem.



Auckland **Regional** Council

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[insert date]

[name]  
[organisation]  
[address 1]  
[address 2]  
[address 3]  
[city]

Our Ref: [report ID]

Dear Sir/Madam,

On [date] your vehicle was observed in [location] emitting excessive exhaust 'smoke'.

Auckland's air pollution is currently exceeding World Health Organisation safety standards. Vehicles such as your own are making it even worse. A smoky exhaust is a clear message that a vehicle is putting too many pollutants into the air and that the vehicle may be in need of repair.

We strongly suggest you have your vehicle checked and if necessary, repaired. You will find enclosed a list of a number of MTA service centres in the region. Take this letter to any of those listed and you will receive a 'free check' (worth up to \$50) of your vehicle and an accurate diagnosis of what needs to be done to stop it 'smoking'.

Your co-operation on this matter will help your city to breathe a lot easier.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Warren QSO JP  
Chairman, Auckland Regional Council.

**your environment**  
is our concern

ARC letter template for sending to drivers of vehicles emitting excessive exhaust smoke

Vehicle emissions were such a large contributor to air pollution due to several factors. The level of car ownership was high by world standards, with almost one car for every two people in the region. Car ownership was growing at approximately twice the rate of the population. Approximately 78% of Aucklanders drove to and from work at the time as well! Many vehicles were poorly maintained and un-tuned. The increase in popularity of cheap to run diesel imports also contributed to this. There was a lack of legislation to regulate the quality of cars being imported, and quality of our fuel. At the time, the standard for diesel in New Zealand could contain up to 3000ppm (parts per million) of sulphur. In comparison, in Europe it was 350ppm, with a plan to reduce this to 50ppm by 2005.

The ARC's proposed solution? The 0800 SMOKEY Campaign. It was described as a public education campaign to raise awareness of the extent of vehicle emissions and to encourage Aucklanders to tune their vehicles. A multi-faceted advertising campaign began on 13 August 2000 which ran for five weeks.

This included radio and TV ads, large street banners, and billboards. Some of these billboards included mirrors, and signage was placed at bus stops accompanied by oxygen masks hanging from above. All of this to make Aucklanders aware of the emissions from each other's vehicles. This culminated in a website, and the 0800 SMOKEY hotline which Aucklanders were encouraged to call to 'dob' each other in. The messaging was clear: if you saw vehicles coughing out smoke for 10 or more seconds call 0800 SMOKEY and dob them in! Being dobbed in did not lead to fines or penalties, but instead offenders were sent a letter accompanied by a \$50 'free check' voucher to get their vehicle checked at a participating MTA Service Centre who could diagnose the issue so you could get it fixed.

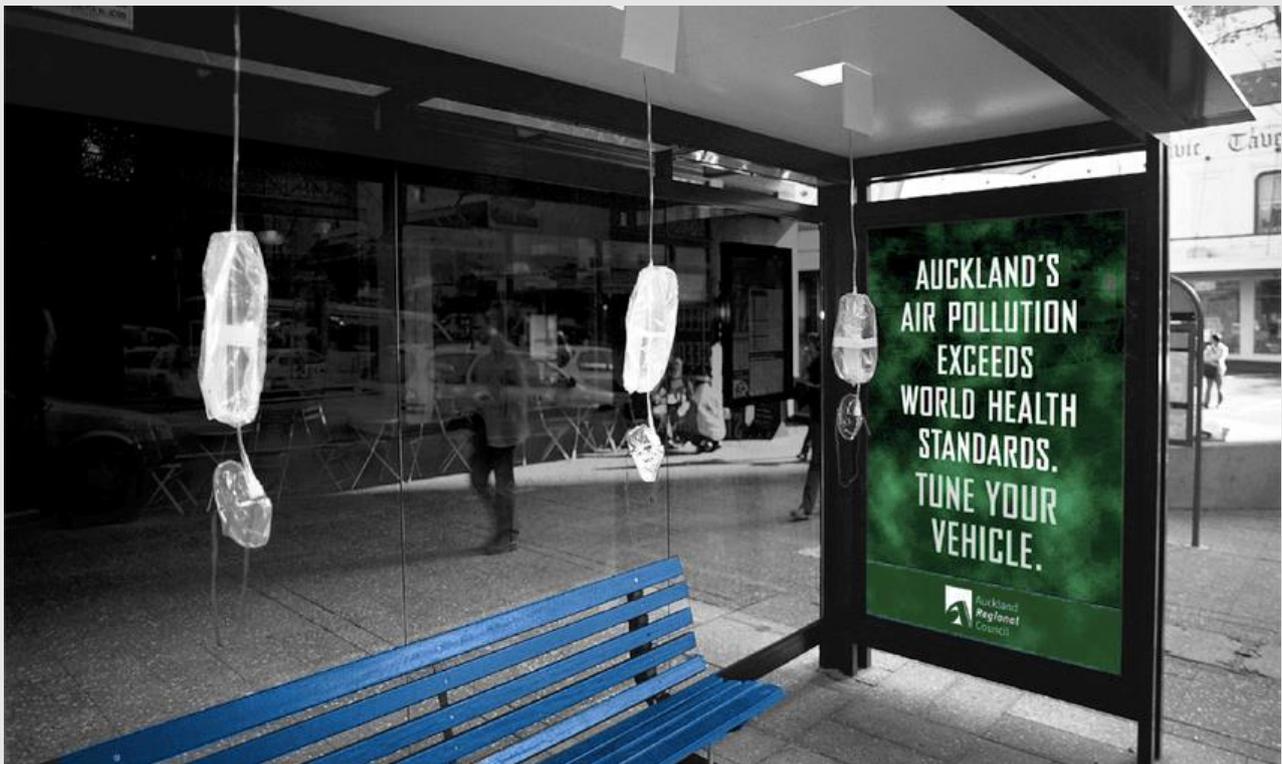


Image: Adams, J. 2020. 'Remembering 0800 SMOKEY, the campaign which turned Auckland into the City of Narcs' The Spinoff. <https://thespinoff.co.nz/politics/21-02-2020/remembering-0800-smokey-the-campaign-which-turned-auckland-into-the-city-of-narcs>

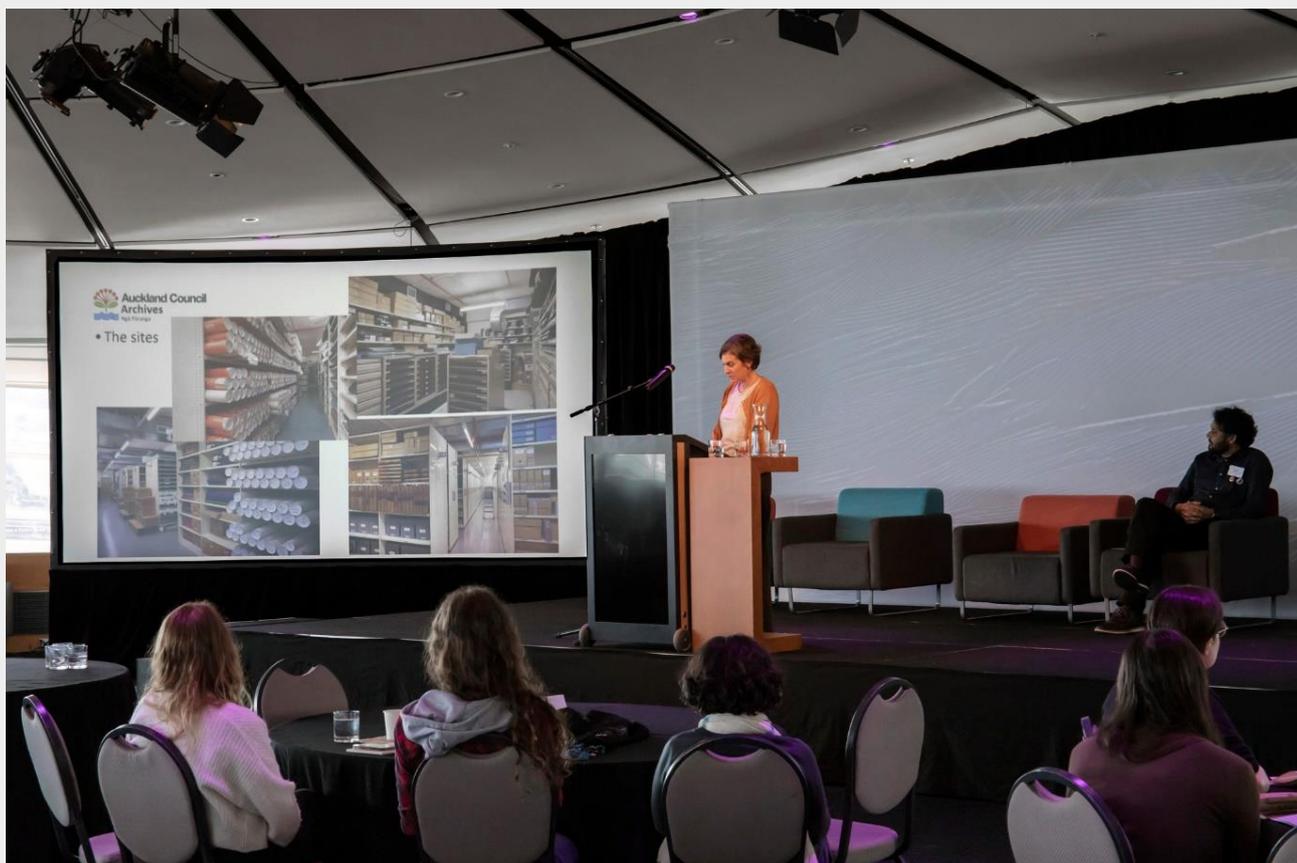
Despite the opinion that kiwis are generally 'anti dob-in' the campaign was a huge success. In the initial five weeks that the campaign was due to run over 28,000 calls were made. Due to its success, it was extended out another five weeks and amassed a total of 43,273 calls by its completion on 27 November 2000. This resulted in 23,153 different vehicles being dobbed in (the worst offender 67 times!) and hundreds of vehicles being taken for their free checkup. Unfortunately, the total checked and repaired was not able to be confirmed at the time. The worst offenders were diesel powered, making up just shy of 60% of the dobbed-in vehicles.

Using the findings of 0800 SMOKEY, in less than a year major fuel companies came to the table and agreed to cut the sulphur content of diesel by 57% and by 6% elsewhere in the country with plans for further regulations to be introduced by Central Government.

In the 23 years since, Auckland's air has improved, vehicle emissions make up just 35% of the total emissions, and we are generally getting more environmentally conscious by the day. While it can be easy to feel hopeless regarding the state of the environment, campaigns like 0800 SMOKEY and this can of Auckland Air remind us of just how far we've come and the change we bring.

## NZCCM conference and visit to Council Archives

The New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Materials Pū Manaaki Kahurangi (NZCCM) is a professional association of Aotearoa conservators. Its members are qualified and committed to follow a Code of Ethics to ensure the good care of and practice towards heritage and taonga. Council Archives conservator Aline Curtis, along with the preservation team from Auckland Libraries, attended the NZCCM annual meeting and conference at the Auckland War Memorial Museum from 17 to 19 October.



Aline Curtis presenting with Damien Joe (seated) at the NZCCM Conference 2023

This year's theme was 'Conservation in Aotearoa: Inside and Outside, Ki roto, ki waho' with the participation of professionals in different roles from multiple institutions or in private practice. Aline, along with Damien Joe, team leader conservation at Auckland Libraries, gave a presentation about conservation within Auckland Council and how it is integrated into the working practices of staff who are not trained in preservation and conservation. Aline and Damien explained how their experiences differed, even within the same organisation. The challenges they face could be similar but were often distinct, just as the overall vision, understanding and profile of the Archives and library's Heritage collections are different.

Following the conference, 20 participants visited Auckland Council Archives. Conservators, registrars, and collection managers were interested to see our storage facilities and learn about the archives. Team leader at Corporate Archives James Armstrong, introduced our collection and with selected items presented further contextual information.

Owen Gordon, senior archivist and Aline Curtis, conservator, guided the visitors around our storage facilities. Owen explained how documents and information are supplied to customers, as well as answering questions regarding our legal obligations and ways to access the archives. Aline presented the challenges and issues faced by staff, as well as the positive features of our storage and how the

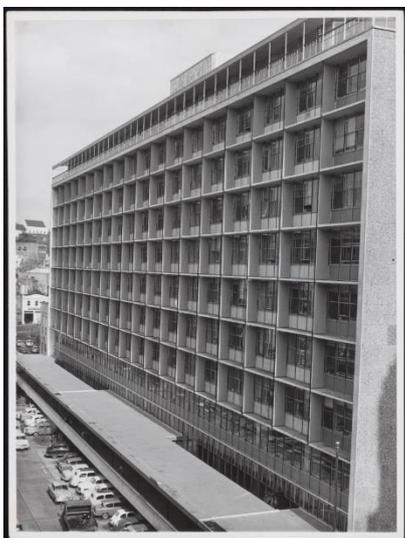
Archives team work to care, protect and share the archives and promote interest in the history of Auckland.



NZCCM attendees tour of Auckland Council Archives facilities and operations

## Archives on the move

Bledisloe House Te Wharau o Horotiu has housed the Archives team for North, West and South Auckland since 2021, occupying three levels of this heritage-listed building alongside colleagues from Council's Records team.



The modernist, glass-fronted office block opened in 1959 and was designed for Central Government services as part of a proposed Civic Centre. This was to have consisted of six identical buildings: a new Town Hall, a Civic Administration building, an Art Gallery, Public Library and a further office block, surrounding a theatre and public square. Of these buildings, Bledisloe House was the only one to have been built as intended. As part of Council's property optimisation programme the building has now been sold, and will be restored as part of a 'vertical village' called the Symphony building, which will feature retail and commercial space and apartments.

Our team members currently based in Bledisloe are now in the final stages of relocating to interim sites in Albany and Papakura while work continues on what will be their long-term home; a purpose-built, single

repository for Records and Archives in Rosedale, due for completion in late 2024.

We'll bring you more information about visiting the Archives' new offices in the coming weeks, but in the meantime please continue to email us with your enquiries [archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz) or telephone us on 09 890 2427.

Image: Bledisloe Building, Wellesley Street, 1960s. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 895-A74179

## Paper bus



Paper model of an Auckland Regional Authority MAN SL202 bus, 1985 (Archives' accession AUC 2012 258)

During preparations to leave Bledisloe House one of the team came across an unusual promotional sheet printed in 1985. A paper model template produced to celebrate Auckland Regional Authority's new diesel buses, it was clearly intended for children, since it advised that anyone making the model would require 'Parental guidance and assistance'. As Corporate Archives had only one copy, our Digital Archives Imaging Specialist Paul Chapman produced a high-quality PDF from which a new copy was printed that archivist Becky Hawes, without the help of her parents, bravely volunteered to cut out and assemble. The accompanying photograph taken by Paul shows the happy result of this collaboration. These new Auckland Regional Authority single-decker diesel buses weighed 13 tonnes and had a maximum speed of 95 kilometres per hour. A little over 11 metres long, 2.5 metres wide and 3 metres tall, the bus could transport up to 62 passengers, though when full, an unlucky 17 would have had to stand. The chassis was manufactured by the New Zealand subsidiary of a West German company MAN (Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nürnberg), which was responsible in the late nineteenth century for making the world's first diesel engine. The bus body was built locally by Coachwork International of Takanini and painted with a white waist band and the authority's distinctive two-tone yellow livery. Auckland Regional Authority proudly reported being 'among the first bus operators in the world to put into service the latest style of City Buses - The MAN SL202'. Advantages compared to other buses included improved brakes and driver's windscreen and a larger front destination sign. Locally produced seats were safer and more comfortable and would 'assist in reducing the high cost of vandalism incurred by the Authority'. Nothing was mentioned about access for those with disabilities. Savings were achieved through ordering the authority's 69 new vehicles at the same time as other local

authority bus operators in New Plymouth, Wellington, and Christchurch. Bus patronage in Auckland continued to rise despite fare increases of between 18 and 20 percent in December 1985.

Public road transport in Auckland began long before diesel buses. Horse-drawn buses first appeared in the mid-nineteenth century. Tramcars that were also drawn by horses and ran on metal tracks began operation in the city in 1884. Electric trams were introduced in 1902 and motor buses two years later. When Auckland Transport Board was created in 1928 it took over the city's trams and many privately operated motor buses that had competed with trams and connected the central city to its suburbs. The last trams ran in 1956.

Auckland Transport Board developed a network of electric trolley buses powered through overhead wires that often followed the old tram routes but had to pull in and out of the path of motor vehicles. The board was taken over in 1964 by the Auckland Regional Authority (predecessor of Auckland Regional Council, created in 1989 following local body amalgamations). The new authority acquired depots, workshops, and a fleet of trolley buses and motor buses and became the country's second largest bus operator. By the end of 1980, diesel buses had replaced all the trolley buses. By 1985, Auckland Regional Authority operated buses on the North Shore, in Mangere, large parts of South Auckland, New Lynn, Glen Eden, Henderson and Titirangi, following the purchase from private bus operators of shareholdings, buses and other assets. Significant service improvements included the creation of bus lanes and dedicated busways.

In 2018, Auckland Transport re-introduced electric-powered buses in Auckland, equipped with rechargeable batteries. This year, purpose-built electric bus depots opened in Panmure and New Lynn. Auckland Transport's Mission Electric programme aims by 2035 to replace all diesel buses with a bus fleet that should be quieter, cheaper to operate and more beneficial to the environment because it will be entirely powered by electricity or hydrogen fuel cells.



Paper bus model construction by Archivist Becky Hawes

#### Sources:

Auckland Regional Authority annual reports, 1985-1986

Graham Bush, *From Survival to Revival: Auckland's Public Transport since 1860* (Wellington: Grantham House, 2014)

Sean Millar, *Buses of the Auckland Regional Authority* (Auckland: the author, 2013)

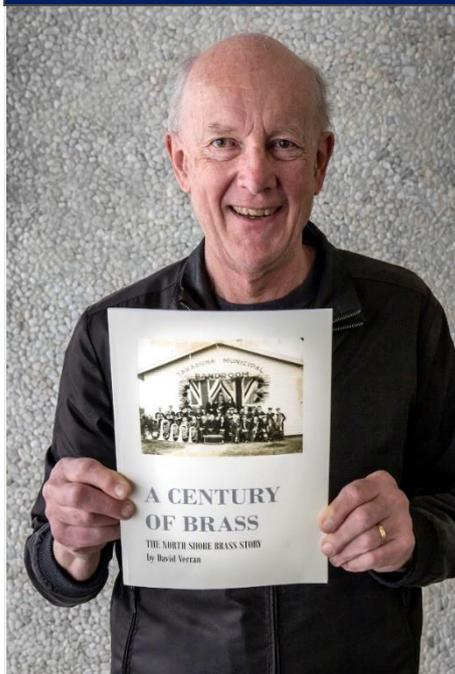
Graham Stewart, *The End of the Penny Section: A History of Urban Transport in New Zealand* (Wellington: Reed, 1973)

[Electric Buses](#)

[Electric Buses to Become Double Deckers](#)

[Auckland Transport's Mission Electric](#)

## 'A Century of Brass: The North Shore Brass story'



This book has just been published by North Shore Brass and I am the author of the 10,000-word history.

North Shore Brass started as the Takapuna Municipal Band in 1923, then became the Takapuna Citizens' Band from 1933. That name change came from the withdrawal of council funding during the 1930s economic depression. The Band returned to being the Takapuna Municipal Band in 1951 and from 1963 was renamed the Takapuna City Silver Band. The name North Shore Brass came in 1993.

One of my immediate problems when starting my research was that the Band's minutes had only survived from May 1955, and correspondence from April 1955. Fortunately, Auckland Council Archives had correspondence between the Takapuna Borough Council and the Band from July 1951 to December 1955. There was also a separate file for grants from Takapuna Borough, and then later Takapuna City to the Band from 1960 to 1976. Both files were very helpful in filling in at least some of the gaps.

Earlier this year, I also used files at Auckland Council Archives for research on the origins of Taharoto Park, Takapuna for my monthly local history column in *Channel Magazine*. That magazine distributes 21,500 copies across Auckland's North Shore. I also recently accessed a file on the Lyon Memorial Hall, Takapuna for a talk I gave there. My thanks to all the staff, especially Harvey Brahne, for making these files available to me.

David Verran [Contact Us](#) | [North Shore Brass](#)

## Staff News

Visitors to the Archives Reading Room may have noticed a new face recently. We welcome Jason Montolalu, who started working with us last month in the position of Archivist.



Jason studied Biological Sciences at the University of Auckland and began his professional career in libraries as Library Engagement Advisor at Auckland University of Technology. In February 2022 he joined Auckland Council, initially as Senior Library and Council Services Assistant, Ethnic Communities, based at Avondale Library.

In August 2023 Jason was appointed to the role of Librarian, also at Avondale Library, where his main responsibilities were in the areas of Community engagement and outreach, programming and events, and the promotion of digital literacy. Alongside his work in Archives, Jason is studying towards a Master of Information Studies (Archives and Records Management) through the Victoria University of Wellington and in his spare time enjoys singing, going to the gym, and learning to play the harp.

With mixed feelings we say goodbye to Archivist Lene Aoino, who was recently appointed to the position of Archivist at Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga.

Prior to joining Auckland Council, Lene studied at the Victoria University of Wellington, completing a Master of Information Studies with distinction. In 2012 he joined Auckland Libraries, initially at Te Matariki Clendon Library before moving to Manurewa Library. There, his role included collection management activities and delivering youth services, in addition to his work as a Public Service Association delegate, Health & Safety representative and Pasifika representative. Council Archives were fortunate to benefit from his creative talents in the form of his imaginative and entertaining newsletter articles, as well as his film making abilities. We wish Lene all the best in his new role.



We also say thank you and goodbye to one of our Volunteers, John La Roche.

In 2007, Sarah Padey (ex-Council Archives Team Leader) approached the Auckland Engineering Heritage Committee, looking for someone to help list a large collection of drawings that had been acquired from WaterCare. Chair of that committee was John La Roche, who had previously worked in the Bulk Water Department at Auckland Regional Authority (which became WaterCare), specialising in design work for water treatment plants and in waste management.



Born in Howick, John studied at Auckland Grammar School and the University of Auckland, before moving to London where he joined Ove Arup & Partners. On his return to New Zealand, John worked in several civil engineering roles, his contributions to the industry being recognised in 2003 with his appointment as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to engineering. Since his retirement in 1992, he and his wife Sue have worked as volunteer administrators for Waters for Survival, a charity providing safe drinking water and sanitation to half a million people in developing countries.

I asked John what he enjoyed about his volunteer work with Council Archives:

‘I greatly enjoyed the atmosphere at Auckland Council Archives where everyone was so helpful... you will be aware of the various books I have published, *Evolving Auckland*, *The Pourewa Valley Story* and *The 1865*

*Tamaki River Bridge Panmure*, all of which involved my using the staff at Archives where my requests for help and information were never too much trouble for staff members.’

Thank you, John. We wish you all the best for your future projects.



Find out more



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