



Oratia Church, Heritage Hall and Grounds are the venue for a great many community and family activities. Set against a generous background of beautiful native bush, this is the place for outdoor and indoor events - including those illustrated in the following pages . . .



What a December Celebration! A great turnout for our 2015 Community Christmas 'Picnic in the Park' (300 sausages consumed) on a beautifully fine night for a change - followed by a record choir and audience for the Carols - with a visit from 'Santa-on-a tractor' for the young fry.



The Church and Hall's backdrop is of 4.8 acres of regenerating native bush, making a beautiful setting for family photos following weddings, baptisms or thanksgivings for a new child. The bush is of mature manuka, ferns and rimu. The spindly tree at the right of the photo is one of many kauri seedlings growing up there these days.



Anzac Day, Mothers and Fathers Days, the Rugby World Cup, the Oratia Craft and Spinning Group - just some examples of community and national occasions celebrated through the use of our grounds, church and hall - as well as the Christian Festivals and special occasions.



Some of these and more are on the pages following

Celebrating Mothers' Day

Mothers' Day is a major event at the Oratia Church. A very special all-ages Family Service features tributes to mothers by their spouses - with readings, reminiscences, and music.

Fathers and offspring all take part, with presentations of flowers, cards and sometimes artwork from the youngsters. On some occasions, it may also be a grandmother being honoured by a son or daughter.



Telling about what we made for mother today



Left: "My mother."



Above: Children designing their own tributes to 'Mum'



Right: Young Holly gives a flower and home-made cookie to the senior grandmother present. And, as usual, all enjoyed morning tea over in the Hall.



The Oratia Spinning and Craft Group

Notes from Desley Gash.

Meeting in the Church Hall, the group was started in the early 1980's by Mary Hight when she was asked to teach spinning to a group of about five women. Beginning as the Oratia Spinning Group, it later became 'The Oratia Spinning and Craft Group' because as more people joined, there was a more diverse range of craft.

Today there are Knitters, Weavers, Felters, Crocheters, Embroiderers, Tatters, Sewers, Card Makers, & Lace Makers. And - at least 2 of the ladies are over 90 & still do beautiful knitting. Currently, of 45-50 members some 35-45 gather every Monday morning from 10.00 am to 12 noon, contributing \$2.00 each day, taking four items for morning tea.



Outreach

- ▶ Teddies and blankets for Starship Hospital.
- ▶ Baking, blankets and capes for West Auckland Hospice.
- ▶ Knitted clothes and blankets for Waitakere and 'Kids First' Hospitals.
- ▶ Beanies for schools.
- ▶ Plenty of knitting & sewing for Te Whare Ruruhau O Meri (Anglican Maori Social Services) in Northland and South Auckland.
- ▶ Our trading table raises money for the local Foodbank.
- ▶ Earthquake Relief: Knitted jumpers, beanies and toys for children following the disastrous earthquakes in Christchurch and Nepal.



'Auntie Aggie' of Kaitiaia, distributes to Northland families in need, holds a child's blanket made by a member. Contacts at the local hospital and churches ensure gifts go always where most needed.

This is a lovely friendly group whose members help each other through exchanging patterns and the showing of our craft-work. Some enter competitions - especially the spinners who have had lots of winners. Interested? Contact Leader Bev Latimer on ph 09 835 3237.



Craft Group put on a show - and - two examples of one member's creation's

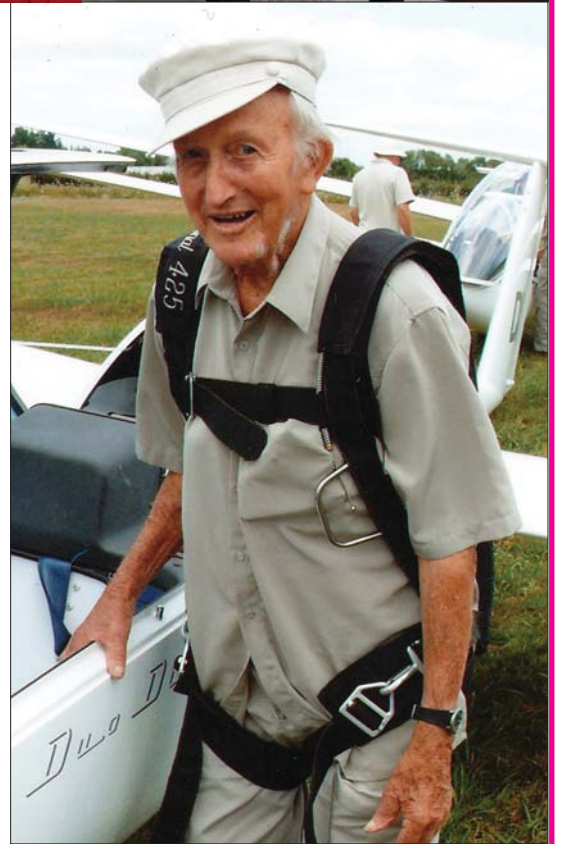




9.30 am on the Sunday following Anzac Day is when we remember, with thanksgiving, all who from this district served in the armed forces in a time of conflict.

The late 'Rusty' Gash (right) was posted to the Pacific Islands during the Second World War, while several others served in various theatres during World Wars I and II. Some gave their lives.

At the time of Anzac, we remember their sacrifice. The poppies are made, flags are hung, with displays of memorabilia and photographs covering more recent conflicts as well. In our memories, thoughts and prayers, we remember them!





Drama



Over the years, many kinds of shows have taken place in the Oratia Church Hall. Dramas, Comedies, Children's Events, Concerts. Some have been fund-raisers to support contemporary issues. Others have been community and or domestic church events, while others were purely family affairs.



Filming too. Below, Director, Sound and Camera Crew await an elderly Holden to hurtle around the corner of the West Coast Road - a scene of the third series of The Brokenwood Mysteries. This was one of a number of TV dramas to be filmed here - including the earlier 'Outrageous Fortune.'





Harvest Festivals + Foodbank

. . . a very real connection . . .

Oratia is still a place of vineyards and orchards, although sadly, these days one needs to travel to Marlborough to find our own tall 'Oratia Beauty' apple trees. At the Church, Harvest Festival is celebrated every year on the second Sunday in March.

Pictured above are children carrying donated food to be displayed at the front of the Church, while around the altar are fruit and vegetables from members' gardens, home preserves, sauces and jam - along with bags of spuds and cans of food items bought at the supermarket.

Above on the right, Victor Davies from Foodbank is quizzed by young people as to the needs of the people he deals with daily. "Sadly," he said, "Many of our 'customers' are not unemployed, but with huge rents to pay, and working restricted hours on low wages, mean they simply don't have enough cash to buy good food."

In a way, every Sunday is Harvest Festival. Here is young Daisy Barnett looking for help in carrying some of the 'harvest' destined for Victor and Foodbank from a Mothers Day congregation.





Drama: "Queen Elizabeth of Hungary and the miracle of bread and roses." Flowers displayed - ready for delivery beyond the Church

The Flower Festivals

Just one way of reaching out with love . . .

For many years now, an annual 'Flower Service' has been arranged - usually in the month of November while roses are in bloom. Bunches and bouquets of flower are brought to the Church, displayed in the sanctuary at the front, and afterwards taken to those who were bereaved during the year past, known to be ill or are now elderly.

Flower lovers tell the congregation of the natural beauty flowers bring. Charlene (below) shows off flowers of 'weeds' presented to her by granddaughter Sophie.

Even the very young children work on colourful cards to accompany these precious gifts as they are taken to homes, hospitals or retirement villages.

Hard Left: Young people collect bunches of flowers for delivery following the Church Service.

