



# BOOKLINE

June 2026

Newsletter of Friends of the Tauranga City Libraries Incorporated

Chairperson: Jill Best

Patron: Bill Holland

## NEWSLETTER FOR JUNE 2026

**Greetings** –the last couple of months have had plenty of rainy days which gave ideal conditions to stay inside and curl up with a book. But now, at the time of writing, it's warm and sunny so it's time to head off out to the library. They have new books on their shelves all year-round year, so pop in or go online to reserve new titles for the wet winter months ahead.

### WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

In March I noted that the range of library programmes for adults constantly expands. How quickly things can change! Due to a very sudden decision from Council, the proposal is now to remove most of the digital assistance classes and reduce the number of the team by two people. Thank you to all those who have already protested to Council.

On the plus side, although the same proposal included closing the Greerton and Papamoa Libraries on Sundays, this has now been dropped “due to public feedback.” Well done Friends and others!

I spoke to Mayor Mahe at the Papamoa twenty-year library celebrations on Monday, and he told me how much his children enjoyed visiting the Papamoa library (did they lobby too?) There were lots of speeches and a huge cake. Staff were dressed as book characters. I was served at the counter by Red Riding Hood and Harry Potter. It was a happy day. Councillors Herb Schuler and Steve Morris were also present, and supportive of the library. They told me there are definitely new libraries planned for Papamoa East and Tauriko in the Ten-Year Plan. With past experience making us a little cynical, we will keep an eye on these plans....

Jill Best.

### LIBRARY VISITS

The committee visited The Mount Library in May in place of our own committee meeting. They have a small staff room, so it was only suitable for a small gathering, but they were pleased to meet us and talk about their library.

## **GENERAL & COMMITTEE MEETING CHANGES**

At our last committee meeting it was decided to reduce the number of General Meetings which will now be on alternate months, and our committee will meet in the intervening months using the same room at the Greerton Library. We felt it was not easy for some people/members to travel every month to Greerton especially during the winter.

On June 25<sup>th</sup> we will hold our committee meeting in place of the General Meeting.

July 23<sup>rd</sup> – General meeting with Margaret Jenner on her book "Small Libraries of NZ".

August 27<sup>th</sup> – Committee meeting.

Sept 24<sup>th</sup> – AGM.

Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> – Committee meeting.

Nov 26<sup>th</sup> – Christmas morning tea.

Many thanks to Barbara for organising the new programme and the speakers.

## **HISTORY – OLDEST & NEWEST LIBRARIES**

The time has finally arrived for Tauranga to have a brand new, state of the art, City Library. The temporary location in Devonport Rd will close on Sunday 13 September and the new library is set to open Friday 16 October 2026! Check out our website for more details. We are also very fortunate to have the oldest free-standing library in New Zealand right here in Tauranga.

### **OLDEST FREE-STANDING LIBRARY - Mission Library, Tauranga**

It was established in 1839 and has an Historic Places Category 1 listing. There are 1,000 beautifully bound books, letters, pamphlets, family records, and personal papers inside. These include practical manuals on how to grow crops of various kinds, medical books, encyclopaedias and religious tracts, During the Musket Wars (1818-1842) threats were frequent so a trapdoor in the floor was dug, opening to an underground hiding space. The Brown family were still living in a raupō whare when Rev. Alfred Brown completed the library in 1839, now the oldest free-standing library in New Zealand and the first permanent structure on the site. In Brown's diary he records 'painting the library' on the 18th and 19th of November 1839. Worried about the damp affecting his books, Brown added a chimney in 1844.

Ref: footprintsontepapa

**VERY FIRST PUBLIC LIBRARY IN NEW ZEALAND** - was the Port Nicholson Exchange and Public Library in Wellington. Opening in 1841, it struggled financially and closed just one year later, later reforming into the Wellington Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute.

### **FIRST PUBLIC LIBRARY IN TAURANGA 120 YEARS AGO -**

A public library in Tauranga was first suggested in 1867 and four years later in 1871 a library of sorts was operated out of one room in a house on Cameron Rd until 1873. Then a building in Harrington St was completed but destroyed by fire in 1881. Although the books survived, it wasn't until 1906 that the BOP Times announced there would be a "Tauranga Public Library". [then there is a gap in the timeline]

A new library was erected on the west side of Willow St in 1930 with the Municipal offices on the ground floor and the library upstairs until 1959. During this time attempts were made to have a bigger library. In 1942 a librarian, Miss Pricilla Taylor said, "Let the people of Tauranga realise that a full Library is their right, let them demand that right, and let them get it."

In 1962 a mobile service was suggested for Greerton but then a shop was rented in Chadwick Rd which was a great success.

Mt Maunganui Library opened in 1963, and a new Municipal building opened.

Eleven years later the city library gained the use of all the Willow St building in 1972. In 1989 the old Council building was demolished, and a two-story building was erected on the site. There were public protests, both about the removal of the old much-loved building, and about the site not being returned to a local tribe. The new building was occupied by a small group, and books and paint were thrown down the stairs. The library initially only occupied the ground floor, but as the city grew, the upper floor was taken over, then later a third floor was added in place of the rooftop car park, (this also stopped the leaks in the building!) and moved into its final position in the Civic Complex and reopened in 1989.

It took another 100 years for the Papamoa Library & Community Centre to be built which opened in 2006. In 2016 a new library was built in Greerton to replace the old one, assisted by the Lotteries Commission. And now 120 years after the first city library was announced – a new one will be opened in Willow Street this year. Over the last 40 years FOL have campaigned relentlessly to achieve these new and revamped libraries and community spaces.

**OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY OPERATING PUBLIC LIBRARY IN NZ** – Nelson Public Library opened its first official reading room on Trafalgar Street in 1842 and has provided a continuous lending and reference service to the public ever since, (now primarily housed at the Elma Turner Library). It traces its unbroken roots back to 1841 via the Nelson Literary and Scientific Institute from books on board the New Zealand Company ship, *Whitby*.

**OLDEST OPERATIONAL LIBRARY IN THE WORLD** – St Catherines Monastery library located in Egypt at the foot of Mount Sinai (Jebel Musa). The library was established at the time of the construction of the monastery, between 527 and 565 CE, on the orders of Byzantine Emperor Justinian I. [ Still open Dec 2025]

**MOST IMPORTANT LIBRARY IN HISTORY** – Library of Alexandria in Egypt is widely considered the most important library in history. Established in the 3rd century BCE in Egypt, it was the first major attempt to collect and categorize all human knowledge in one place, laying the foundation for modern research and universal libraries. It includes studies by the likes of Hypatia, Euclid, Archimedes, Catherine of Alexandria, and more ancient thinkers and scientists still influential today. Sadly, destroyed during the Roman invasion.

## **NEWS FROM TCC WEBSITE**

### **Tauranga City Council Library – Greerton & Papamoa**

Update on opening hours and changes to library programmes.

In May 2026, Council confirmed a series of targeted changes to community services as part of the development of its 2026/27 Annual Plan, aimed at keeping rates increases as low as possible. As part of these changes, some library programmes and opening hours were impacted. At its meeting on 2 June, Council voted 7-3 to reverse a proposed change that would have closed the Greerton and Pāpāmoa Libraries on Sundays.

From 1 July 2026, adult library events and programmes will reduce.

Library opening hours stay the same. Greerton Library and Pāpāmoa Library will continue to be open on Sundays from 9:30am to 4:00pm

The following programmes will be discontinued from 1 July:

- Digital Drop-in sessions
- Digital Essentials classes
- Lunchtime art classes
- Monthly late night board games

The following will be reduced from 1 July:

- Library presentations to adults out in the community

We will continue to work with the community to celebrate significant events throughout the year. We know these programmes are an important part of our community, and we acknowledge this change may be disappointing for some.

## **AGM**

Our AGM will be held at 10.30am on 24<sup>th</sup> September at the Greerton Library.

## **CHRISTMAS**

We will again have a Christmas party at Greerton Library with delicious food and beverages at 10.30am on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November.

**HAPPY READING.**

**Bookline – June 2026**