

# Farewell to Rowan Hall

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By **DAVID BRUCE**

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NOSTALGIA reigned in Stratford at a function to mark the demise of the Rowan Hall.

More than 60 residents and past members of the tiny community near Kaponga gathered on Sunday night to reminisce about their recently demolished hall that, in 1892, started life as a school.

Two of those past residents had attended the school before it closed in 1938. Most remembered it as the venue for community gatherings over the last 55 years.

One former resident, compiling a genealogy of families who lived in the district, travelled from Auckland for the occasion.

Rowan School ex-pupil Dex

Dunlop, now retired to New Plymouth, recalled how the school came to be the hall.

"The original Rowan Hall was across the road, but five days after I had my 21st birthday there (in 1948) it burnt down. We used the school after that."

Long-term Rowan resident Ila Kelly remembered lovely times at the hall that she wouldn't change for anything, especially the decision of the Country Women's Institute to hold its meetings in the evening without children underfoot.

"We all cheered like anything at that," she said.

Rowan Hall and Domain Committee chairman Vic Morgan said his committee would be putting up a small memorial to mark the site of the hall later in the year.