

NEWSLETTER

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Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre
Te Whare Taonga o Ngaa Rohe o Arekahanara

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Another successful AGM

At the 2014 AGM of the Heritage & Information Centre, held in the Centre on Tuesday 17 June, President Robin Astridge reported on another successful year. He highlighted a continuing increase in visitor numbers that exceeded 3000 over the financial year, the highly successful Pukehoua Bridge Centennial in February, a successful Re-union Day in March, and the Founders Day Luncheon and Commemoration at Queen's Birthday weekend, each of which involved substantial input from the Heritage Centre. Robin noted the important contributions of members Joy McGregor, Marilyn Yeates and Gloria King whose displays of historic photographs and memorabilia on several occasions attracted such positive comments, particularly from former residents who returned for the 150th year commemorative events.

The officers and committee members elected for the 2014-15 financial year are: President: Robin Astridge; Vice-President: Marilyn Yeates; Secretary: Sabina Owen; Treasurer: Faith Haakma; Committee members: Basil Coles, Patricia Grierson, Garry Howard, Gloria King, Nick van der Sande, Barbara Walter and Robert McWha.

Following the AGM, Haupai Puke, who grew up in Pirongia and plays key roles in the affairs of Purekireki Marae, gave an illustrated presentation entitled *Iwi Landscapes*, in which she showed how our everyday world is seen through the lens of Maori culture. This includes particularly the physical and natural landscape with which Maori people have a special affinity that is expressed in mythology and tribal stories and gives them a clear sense of identity. Haupai used traditional concepts to explain who she is, making specific references to features of the local landscape. Her presentation attracted a number of questions and discussion continued over supper.

This was a thought-provoking presentation which would be worth following up with an interpretative visit by our members to Purekireki Marae.



Haupai Puke talking about *Iwi Landscapes*

Commemorating the Founders of Alexandra

Heritage Centre stalwarts organised two functions held on 31 May to honour those who established Alexandra in June 1864 and developed the settlement into what we have today.



Dressed up for the occasion.
L-R: Joy McGregor, Marilyn Yeates,
Barbara Walter, Wendy Bain,
Gloria King & Jane Finch

A catered Founders Luncheon gathering was held in the School Hall between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. This was attended by 70 people, many of them descended from founding families. Most of those attending grew up in the settlement, so the displays of photographs and memorabilia and other decorations organised by Marilyn Yeates, Joy McGregor and Gloria King triggered the sharing of reminiscences amongst many who had not talked together for a long time. Discussion continued over lunch, and Roz Empson stimulated further recollection in a presentation about the roles of women who frequently receive scant attention in published histories.

At 2:00 pm, others joined the gathering for a public function where children from Pirongia School told the story of Alexandra

in a tableau and Alan Hall and Alan Livingston talked about the significance of contributions by those who founded and developed the settlement.

Many others contributed to the success of the day. Barbara Walter managed the luncheon arrangements, Robin Astridge acted as MC, a team of ladies from St Saviours's Church staffed the kitchen, and we are deeply indebted to Jan Cullen and staff members at Pirongia School who not only organised the lively presentation by pupils at a difficult time in the school year, but also made the hall available free of charge.

An inter-denominational church service of thanksgiving was held in the School Hall on the Sunday afternoon. This was attended by some 30 people and we are grateful to the Ministers' Fraternal from Te Awamutu for the participation by representatives of several denominations, including the Reverends Tim Lloyd and Murray Olson who arranged the service, to Tom Roa who spoke about the coming of peace in 1881, and to Nik Empson who made the other arrangements.

Thanks for Support

- **MATT ALLEN** of **RepairIT Computers** who sorted out a problem with our new modem, free of charge.
- **THE WAIPA DISTRICT COUNCIL 150TH YEAR COMMEMORATIONS FUND** for a grant of \$5,000 which will be used for a pictorial timeline to be located on the fence between the Centre and the Fire Force site.
- **WAIPA DISTRICT COUNCIL** whose annual grant to the Centre has been increased by \$600 to \$8,000. The increase is to cover the costs associated with the regulatory requirement to have the Centre's financial records professionally reviewed each year.

New and Improved

Our new website

If you are a computer user, don't forget to have a look at the Centre's new website. The internet address is:

www.PirongiaHeritage.org.nz

If you have ideas about how it might be used, pass your ideas on to a committee member or to Faith Haakma.

The 1865 Petition to Parliament

The Centre now has a transcribed copy of a petition to parliament that was signed by 304 men, women and children living in and around Alexandra and Kihikihi in June 1865. It is interesting because it expresses the fears of those living near the confiscation line when the British Regiments were withdrawn from Te Awamutu, but also because the signatures tell us the names of women and children living here at that time. The signatures included a two-year-old member of the Tisdall family who, like a few adults, signed with a cross!



Pirongia school children enact a scene from the early history of Alexandra.

From the Committee

- Subs for the year 1st July 2014 to 30th June 2015 are now overdue. Please get them in ASAP.
- As always, additional volunteers are needed to help staff the Centre. Talk with us, at the Centre, about how you might help, or with Sabina Owen.
- We have a raft of new local businesses displaying their brochures and business cards at the Centre. Thank you to those businesses for their support. Members may wish to take the time to check who they are and reciprocate by promoting them wherever possible.
- Our website is now up and running. Access it at www.PirongiaHeritage.org.nz. Newsletters will now be available on the website. Those preferring an emailed link to the Newsletter rather than having a copy posted can select this option on their membership renewal form or email us at: Pirongia.HVC@xtra.co.nz
- If you are a computer user, and wish to receive emails from the Centre, check that the Centre is on your "Safe Senders" list so that our messages are not being automatically consigned to "Trash" or "Junk".

Garage Photos Wanted

Some time ago, the Heritage Centre collated information from Denis Rasmussen about the development of garage services in the village, beginning with Eric Papesch in 1948. About 1950 a second garage was established in Franklin Street by Rob Signal. It was operated by a succession of owners who included Jim Hardy, Roy Cobbald, Andy Hoefhamer, Neville Taylor, Harry Holmes, Tom Dennis and Steven Gane, before it was taken over by Grant Hodgson.

It would help the Heritage Centre if some photographs could be collected of that garage in its heyday (1950 - 1974).

If you have a photo showing the garage, the Heritage Centre would be pleased either to be given it or it can arrange for the picture to be scanned before returning the original to the owner. Contact the Heritage and Information Centre Phone 871 9018 or call in and see us: 10:30 - 3:30 on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and most public holidays.

Don't forget our library

The Centre continues to add to its library of books considered to be of local relevance. The books are available for borrowing by members.

In order to encourage borrowing, committee member Barbara Walter plans to review a book in each edition of the *Newsletter*. Read her first review of *Out of the Scrub* in this edition and if tempted, come in and borrow the library copy. Simply ask for it at the desk.

Welcome new members

- Katherine Parsons
- Clare St Pierre
- Alan & Sue Walter
- Helen Fromm
- Irene Pearse

A report on the Alexandra District in 1872

Recently, an 1872 report by Armed Constabulary Sergeant C.A. Edenborough about the district within 5 miles of Alexandra, was located at the National Archives in Wellington. It includes detailed information about the topography of the district, rivers and streams, roads and tracks, settlements, numbers of settlers and an assessment of the resources available in the event of a military emergency. The locations of the farms of 56 settler families are also marked and named. When received at AC Headquarters, the report and its accompanying sketch map were praised by Colonel Moule, the National Commander as "a most full and excellent report, and a very clear and useful sketch map".

The population of Alexandra was reported as 111 (46 men, 21 women, 25 boys under 18 and 19 girls. The total population of the district (without counting members of the AC) was 258. The 22 page hand-written report has been transcribed, lightly edited and footnoted to make it easy to read, and plans are under way to obtain an enlargement of the map for display in the Centre. As soon as permission is granted, it will be on display.

Charles Allen Edenborough

C.A. Edenborough is remembered as the 2nd Waikato Regt militiaman who became the owner of John Vittoria Cowell's house at the junction of Grey, Rosborough and Hodgson Roads, after the land confiscation by the New Zealand Government in 1864. The house, known as "Homewood", is the heritage building now owned by member Heather Garrett.

Charles Edenborough was an Australian, a former merchant seaman, who enlisted in the 1st Waikato Regiment in September 1863, in Melbourne, and during the Waikato War served in the Commissariat Transport Corps where he became a sergeant. Units of the 1st Waikato Regt were deployed in the local district in early 1865 to garrison the Harapepe Redoubt while many Forest Rangers, who had been granted land in that vicinity, served on the East Coast until mid-1866. It is likely that Edenborough's company was at Harapepe, or at least in that part of the district because on 1 March 1866, when it was known that the 1st Waikato militiamen were to be moved to take up their land grants at Tauranga, he transferred to the 2nd Waikato Regiment as a Quartermaster Sergeant. Whether the main attraction was the land in the locality or Grace Allen of Alexandra who he later married, is not clear, but the Land Grants Index indicates that as a 2nd Waikato militiaman, he was granted Town Lot 8 in Alexandra (at the junction of Franklin and Beechey Streets) and Pirongia Farm Lots 80, 82, 82a, 83 and 86. These 122 acres must have included some land that he purchased because a sergeant was entitled to only 80 acres. Afterwards, as others left the district, he also acquired other nearby farm lots until his total holding amounted to 474 acres of prime farmland. His town acre appears to have been sold in 1866, soon after it became freehold.

In 1867, Edenborough married Grace Allan, the daughter of Scottish settlers John and Margaret Allan who had moved to New Zealand from Western Australia in 1863 and farmed between the Pirongia Road and the Mangapiko Stream. The Edenboroughs had three children while living at Harapepe.

After the 2nd Waikato Regiment was disbanded in late 1867, Charles enlisted in the Armed Constabulary where he was a sergeant in No.4 Division. It was in this capacity that he wrote the report about the district referred to in the article above.

The Edenboroughs sold Homewood to Isaac Hodgson early in March 1875 and left the district to travel overseas, spending time living in Brazil and Mexico, before moving on to England, from where they returned to New Zealand in mid-1878.

By 1879, Charles was located in Auckland, working in partnership with A.B. Donald as Donald & Edenborough whose schooners, and later a steam vessel, traded between Auckland and Pacific Island ports in the Society (Cook) Islands, Tonga, Samoa and Tahiti, regularly bringing return cargoes of tropical fruits to Auckland. During the 1880s, Charles and Grace lived much of the time in the Pacific until failing health caused Charles to retire to Auckland in the mid-1890s. He died there in 1898 at the relatively early age of 56. Grace lived until 1924.

Out Of The Scrub By Daylight - by Arthur Ings.

This collection of stories and poems is drawn from the author's many experiences; more perhaps from his youth rather than later life. The poems are interspersed throughout the book and if you like rhyme and rhythm when reading poetry then you are going to enjoy these.

This little book will bring back many nostalgic memories to those of the land. However, there is a range of reading which will appeal to many. The story of "Audrey" is very topical in many ways. One just begins to like her and then....

This book of 212 pages would be a good read on a wet day.

Some of the language is a little raw so it may not be the best book for Grandma although Grandma will approve of her granddaughter who said on graduating from university that she was 'going to help clean up the world'. Her mother suggested that by way of practice she might like to start on her bedroom.

With Christmas coming, this book will not go amiss in a Christmas stocking – but give grandma a miss.

[Reviewed by Barbara Walter]