

# NEWSLETTER

No. 30, November, 2012

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

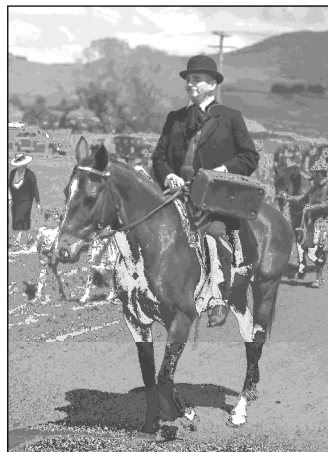
798 Franklin Street, Pirongia 3802

Phone: (07) 871 9018

Email: [pirongia.hvc@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pirongia.hvc@xtra.co.nz)



## Some old photographs



Who was he?  
Who did he represent?

The Centre is currently displaying a set of photographs taken in 1949 at the 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of Pirongia School. They were printed from a set of glass plate negatives gifted to the Te Awamutu Museum from the estate of F.J.Gilbert, a photographer in Te Awamutu between 1912 and 1930. However, they were not taken by Gilbert who was no longer in business in 1949. Trish Troup has a 1949 print from one of the plates which is stamped with the name of Nelson Irving who, according to Joy McGregor, had a studio at that time in Market Street, Te Awamutu.

We hope that older Pirongia locals may be able to identify some of the people depicted and also tell us what some of the individuals and groups, dressed up for the parade along Franklin Street represented. Like Trish Troup, they may even recognise pictures they remember from family collections.

If you, or anyone you know, can contribute information about any of these photos, please talk to the volunteer on the desk at the Heritage Centre who will record your contribution. Even the smallest details may be helpful.

## Thanks for Support

- **The Lion Foundation** for a grant of \$5000 to help fund the repainting of the Centre's building.
- **Waipa District Council** for an \$800 Pirongia Ward Discretionary Grant which will be used to establish a website for the Centre.
- **The Department of Conservation** for the latest enlarged display map of tracks on Mount Pirongia.
- **Paula McWha** who is managing bookings for our Summer Tours.

## For your diary

- 19 Jan: Pirongia walking tour No.1.** Sites in Central Pirongia. 1:00 pm at the Centre. \$5.
- 26 Jan: BBQ for Members.** Pirongia Clydesdales at 6:30 pm.
- 2 Feb: Pirongia walking tour No.2.** Matakītiki to the Cemetery. 1:00 pm at the Centre. \$5.
- 9 Feb: Southern Path of War Tour.** Te Rore to Orakau by minibus. 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Booking essential. \$30.
- 24 Feb: Pirongia Northern Tour.** Matakītiki Paterangi, Te Rore, flour mill sites & Homewood. 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Booking essential. \$30.
- 24 Mar: Hingakaka & Lake Ngaroto.** Sites of early Maori settlement around L. Ngaroto and the Battle of Hingakaka. 1:00 - 3:30 pm Shared cars.

## BBQ for members

Join us at the **Pirongia Clydesdales at 6:30 pm on 26 January** for a Heritage & Information Centre BBQ to get the New Year under way.

Bring meat to cook on the barbie, an accompanying dish to share, and your favourite tipple.

There will be no charge.

**Have you thought about volunteering to help staff the Centre ?**

**We need more volunteers.**

## Summer tours

This year, the Centre has set for itself an ambitious programme of six historic tours over the summer months.

The first of them took place on 17 November when, despite the weather, 10 intrepid participants accompanied driver Robert McWha and tour guide Alan Hall on a minibus trip to the south of Pirongia, visiting Mangatoatoa Pa, the Mangapouri Mission Site, Whatiwhatihoe, Te Aka Rau Ti Urua, the Wesleyan Mission Site on Cannon Road and Puketotara Pa on Candy Road.

We were particularly fortunate on this occasion to have Raymond and Kristine Ormsby in the tour group. Raymond is the trustee elect for Te Aka Rau Ti where many members of the Ormsby family are buried, and Kristine has been investigating the Ormsby family history. They brought with them a photocopy of a document identifying the boundaries of the urupa which it said is located within the site of the former Te Aka Rau Ti Pa. Hence its name. Kristine also explained the layout of the graves in family groups.



The South Tour participants. Damp but not downhearted.

Regardless of the wet conditions, many participants considered the tour a resounding success.

The Northern Path of War Tour – Tuakau to Ngaruawahia will take place on 1 December, after this Newsletter has been printed. Robin Astridge will be the driver and tour guide.

In the New Year, four further tours are planned. They include two walking tours which are scheduled for Pirongia Market Days. If they are successful, we may offer them regularly on market days.

Brief details of the forthcoming tours are provided elsewhere on this page. For further information and to book, inquire at the Centre or contact Paula McWha (Phone 07 871 9585. Email [mcwharjpk@callsouth.net.nz](mailto:mcwharjpk@callsouth.net.nz))

## From the Committee

- The committee still hopes to proceed with having the Centre building repainted during the summer. A grant of \$5000 by the Lion Foundation will help pay for the work.
- An \$800 Pirongia Ward Discretionary Grant, recently received from the Waipa District Council, is to be used to develop a web site for the Centre.
- Our visitor statistics show that we appear to be heading for our best annual total at the end of March. In late November, we are more than 120 visitors ahead of other years.
- Faith Haakma has been appointed to provide administrative support at the Centre for 5 hours on Tuesdays.
- Grace Abernethy is assisting with cleaning and filing on Saturday mornings.

## New & Improved

Have you seen the new banner displayed at the front of the building when the Centre is open? This was produced by Alexandra Images and has attracted favourable comments.

A beautifully presented, large new map of Mount Pirongia, with the latest track information, supplied by DoC, has been wall mounted in the Centre. It is proving useful for providing information to an increasing number of visitors seeking track information.

## A new book

The Centre now has in stock copies of Richard Stowers' latest publication, *Von Tempky and the Forest Rangers* which updates his earlier history of the Forest Rangers. This is a handsome paperback book with explanatory maps and photographs of

outstanding quality. Its attention to detail and careful footnoting will be welcomed by researchers, but Stowers' clear style and intelligent use of

photographs to support the text makes it equally appealing to those interested in simply reading about the military history of New Zealand. It contains useful material about the Forest Rangers settlement at Harapepe.

A great Christmas gift. Price \$40.

## Welcome new members

- Bruce and Jan Kilham
- Lyn Jackson who is also volunteering for desk duty at the Centre
- Jenny Gainsford
- Alan Papesch

**Don't forget the Barbecue on 26 January**

## The Murder of Surveyor Richard Todd

In late 1870, the peace of Alexandra was shattered by the news that the government surveyor, Richard Todd, had been murdered at his camp about two miles west of the settlement.

Todd was a well-known identity whose home was at Raglan. When plans were being made to establish garrison settlements to protect the confiscation line, he acted as an adviser to Colonel Haultain on the location of settlements at Cambridge and Maungatautari. He was an Ensign in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Waikato Militia and was listed as a Government Surveyor. It was in this capacity that he accompanied the Hon T. Russell, Minister for Colonial Defence, when he and General Galloway inspected the redoubts and settlement at Alexandra in July 1864.

Todd surveyed a road line from Alexandra to Raglan via Harapepe, the present day Lime-works Loop Road, Fillery Road and the Waitetuna valley. For the settlers of Alexandra and Harapepe this gave promise of direct access to the port of Raglan and less-expensive transport to and from Auckland. However, governments of the day were unwilling to support its development and continued to favour the more difficult Old Mountain Road route between Raglan and Hamilton where the Waikato Militia Headquarters was located.

In November 1864, when Todd was surveying the route from Harapepe, his survey party was threatened by Maori who fired a shot at his camp, but then "skedaddled" (as a newspaper put it) when a detachment of the 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment went to their aid. Precisely what triggered this incident is not clear, but as James Cowan later noted, there were two sets of men who were hated most by the Maori residents of the Rohe Potae: surveyors who were frequently the prelude to land alienation, and gold prospectors who had begun to take an interest in the land beyond the confiscation boundary. Not only was Todd a surveyor, but during the road survey he was reported to have found rocks bearing traces of gold.

Todd's murder occurred on 28 November 1870 when he, and his surveying partner Edward Frissell were contracted to survey and cut boundary lines around 350 acres awarded to Hone Te One and Ngati Hikairo by the Native Land Court, within the confiscated territory, but adjacent to the boundary. According to other members of his survey party, Todd was warned to discontinue the survey but laughed off the threat by Kingites, saying that it was all nonsense. It was later suggested that the Kingitanga objection to the survey stemmed from the fact that the land was to be given to Hone Te One who had been ejected by the Kingitanga from the Aotea area of the King Country in 1867. Another contemporary explanation was that whilst surveying, Todd had crossed the Aukati into Kingite territory.

Nevertheless, as Todd and his workers were having breakfast on the fateful morning, three armed Maori appeared from the bush and several shots were fired. The first shot killed Todd, and a half-cast chainman named Nopera (Noble) was seriously wounded in an arm and thigh. The other members of the survey party scattered, but were not pursued. Only Todd's theodolite and a small leather bag, containing his papers were taken. Frissell's survey party, four miles away, remained unharmed. The event had all the characteristics of a ritual killing, although at Alexandra, and elsewhere in the district, it was initially feared that it might signal an uprising by the Kingites, all of whom were regarded at that time as 'Hauhaus'.

Todd's body was recovered and brought to Alexandra where Dr Waddington, as Coroner, conducted an inquest where the jury returned a verdict of 'Wilful murder against [by] a native or natives unknown'. The injured Nopera who, with assistance, had walked out, eventually recovered at Alexandra hospital, despite initial fears for his life.

Many years later, James Cowan, who had interviewed people living in the Kawhia region of the Rohe Potae at the time of the incident, named Nukuwhenua as Todd's murderer and said that the shooting party withdrew to the safe retreat of the densely-forested Hauturu Range south of Kawhia where, protected by the refusal of the Kingitanga to cooperate with the Government until their confiscated lands were returned, he went free for all his days.

## Rival Christmas Sports in 1866

On Boxing Day 1866, there were two hotels in Alexandra East. Thomas Finch had established the first *Alexandra Hotel* on his town acre near the corner of Parry and Bellot Streets in July 1865 and endeared himself to the settlers by sponsoring a public Christmas Dinner followed by the first Christmas Sports on Boxing Day of that year. However, by May 1866, William Appleyard had opened a second hotel, the *Dorchester Arms* on the corner of present day Franklin and Crozier Streets, where the Alexandra now stands.

In December 1866, Finch and Appleyard each sponsored a Christmas Sports meeting for the community, both run at the same time, and only a few hundred yards from one another. Finch's sports at the *Alexandra* consisted of 10 athletic contests plus Catching the Pig with a Greasy Tail and Climbing a Greasy Pole. The *Dorchester Arms* sports consisted of four athletic contests, Catching the Pig with a Greasy Tail, and four horse races for hacks and ponies. The fact that the verandah of the *Dorchester Arms* served as a grandstand suggests that the course for the horse races probably incorporated at least a part of present-day Franklin Street. It is interesting to note that two enterprising members of the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment in Te Awamutu won prizes for the same athletic events at both sports meetings.