

# NEWSLETTER

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

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## Looking back to Newsletter No.1

This newsletter marks 10 years of quarterly publications by the Pirongia Heritage and Information Centre, known originally as the 'Pirongia Historic Information Centre'. Looking back at Newsletter No.1, published in August 2006, shows that we have come a long way in 10 years, but that some things remain much the same.

The first Newsletter noted that until February 2005, the Centre had been regularly open to the public only on Sundays from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Extending the days open to Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays immediately increased visitor numbers. In the first year, over 700 people visited the centre. That was seen as significant progress. Since then, visitor numbers have grown to exceed 2500 annually.

Of course, some things do not change. Newsletter No.1 observed that "progress towards achieving the aims and objects of the Centre was made possible by the voluntary contributions of a hard-working nucleus of members and a widespread set of organizations and individuals who, as friends of the Centre, donated funding and material resources, historical archives and display materials, and made significant contributions of time and expertise". That continues to be the case, and it is worth noting that amongst the list of volunteers who regularly opened the Centre in 2006 there were six who were still acting as hosts during the 20014-15 financial year: Marilyn Yeates, Barbara Walter, Sabina Owen, Patricia Grierson, Paula McWha and Alan Hall.



Our first tour group in 2005 with Owen Wilkes at Matakaitiki Pa

Little was recorded about the development of displays in the Centre. But reference was made to the then-new rotary display stand designed by the late Murray Walter and built by Kevin Farrell of Pirongia Welding, still in use, that already held a number of displays on the RDX postal delivery, Alexandra Racing Club, Pirongia Domain Board, Annual Craft Day, hotels and river history. Some of these later became the subjects of more extended displays on other display boards and most of the others were upgraded.

Newsletter No.1 also recorded that our first historical tour took place in November 2005. It was led by DOC Archivist, Owen Wilkes, and became the fore-runner of the 7 different tours now available on demand.

## AGM – Tuesday 16 June

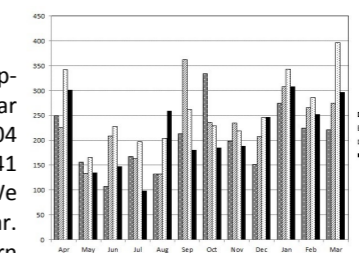
The Annual General Meeting of the Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre will take place in the Centre at 7:30 pm on Tuesday 16 June. It is anticipated that as in previous years the formalities will be completed in about half an hour. The committee will welcome some new members.

Under General Business, the Executive Committee will move *That Sabina Owen be awarded Life Membership in recognition of her leadership in the establishment and development of the Centre.*

Following the formal business, this year's speaker will be Kingsley Field, a columnist and author who grew up in the Waipa district and now lives in Pirongia. On the topic, ***The last of the practical generations***, Kingsley will explore the idea that we are in danger of losing both the attitude and skills that created a No.8 wire approach to solving practical everyday problems.

## Reduced Visitor Numbers

Visitor numbers for the 2014-15 Financial Year show a disappointing decline from the strong growth recorded until last year when over 3000 visitors were recorded. This year the total of 2604 represents a downturn of 518 compared with last year, and 141 when compared with 2013. The reason is hard to determine. We would have expected an increase in Pirongia's 150th Jubilee year. However, we are pleased to report an increasing number of return visitors and people doing family research.



Visitor Numbers by Month: 2014-15

## No shouting during World War 1

You may be surprised to learn that shouting was made a criminal offence in the 1916 War Regulations. But while the *Anti-Shouting Legislation*, as it became known, may sound like an attempt to make the country less noisy, its real intention was to curb the social practice of shouting or treating other people with alcohol.

At the outbreak of war in August 1914, when New Zealanders began enlisting for overseas service, the powerful temperance lobby, fronted by the New Zealand Alliance, campaigned against the sale of alcohol to troops and bombarded soldiers with leaflets and newspapers about the evils of liquor. It also argued to the Government that 'national efficiency' would be improved if liquor sales were banned for the duration of the war. While the government was unwilling to go that far, it used the 1916 War Regulations to make shouting illegal in public drinking establishments, apparently believing that the measure would reduce the consumption of alcohol. The legislation that came into effect in August made the publican, the 'shouter' and the 'shoutee' each legally culpable and liable to substantial fines.

The force of the new law was felt in Pirongia on 21 October when William Morton Chappell, saddler, was observed by a police constable from Hamilton who was dressed as a tramp, purchasing a drink for local farmer Arthur Horace Knight, from William McCarthy, the Alexandra Hotel licensee. Charges against all three men were laid in the Te Awamutu Court on 27 October. A spirited defence was argued and supported by Hales Boggis as a witness, but the *Waipa Post* account records that Mr E. Rawson, S.M. remained unconvinced by their case. Each was convicted and fined: McCarthy £10 and 7 shillings costs, Chappell and Knight each £5-1s and 7 shillings costs. The fines were not light at a time when few working men earned as much as £5 a week.

However, McCarthy, Chappell and Knight were not daunted. They appealed the judgement in the Supreme Court in Auckland where, in March 1917, the convictions were annulled in the light of other evidence called for by the presiding judge, His Honor, Mr Justice Cooper.

Nevertheless, newspapers of the time reported many successful prosecutions for shouting throughout the country, particularly in 1916 and 1917. The War Regulations ceased to apply after 1918. This made shouting again legal. However, six o'clock closing that was instituted as a further war measure in the 1917 War Regulations continued until 1967.

## A VC at Gallipoli

Did you know that a grandson of Captain William St Clair Tisdall, the Adjutant of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Waikato Militia at Alexandra between 1863 and late 1867, was awarded the Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery at Gallipoli? Two of his grandsons, raised in Persia where their father was Secretary to the Church of England Missionary Society, and educated in England, were decorated for bravery during World War 1.

Sub-Lt Arthur Tisdall was a volunteer in the British Naval Brigade at the Gallipoli Landing on 25 April 1915. Hearing wounded men on the beach calling for assistance, he jumped into the water while under fire, and pushing a boat in front of him, went to their rescue. He made a number of trips between ship and shore and was thus responsible for rescuing a number of wounded men regardless of the heavy fire. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery. The award of his VC was, however, posthumous. He was killed in action a week later.

Arthur Tisdall's brother, Lt Charles Tisdall of the Irish Guards was later awarded the Military Cross in France where he was also killed in action soon afterwards.

## The Waikato River Gunboats:

### New Zealand's First Navy

by Grant Middlemiss

In July 1863 General Cameron's forces invaded the Waikato by crossing the Mangatwhiri Stream, near Pokeno. Cameron saw the need to control the "main highway" into the Waikato – the mighty Waikato River. The purchase of the *Avon* was the first of eight armoured river boats that eventually comprised Cameron's river fleet, all manned by crew members of British naval ships moored in New Zealand. This book covers the events and battles that commenced at Koheroa and finished at Orakau, sufficiently to give an overview of what happened during the Waikato War. Of particular interest to the reader will be the attention paid to the activities of the eight gunboats which have not been detailed in past accounts. So, this book fills a gap in our historical knowledge.

The book's strengths include its many contemporary paintings and drawings, a number of useful new photographs and particularly the remarkably detailed drawings of the eight vessels by Harry Duncan. To finish the book, the author includes an epilogue detailing the fate of the gunboats and also the later lives of some leading figures in the conflict.

All in all, a book to grace the bookshelf of any historian, particularly one interested in the Waikato War, though it lacks an index which is a minor shortcoming.

Available from the author, Grant Middlemiss at [middlemissgrant@gmail.com](mailto:middlemissgrant@gmail.com) or [www.waikatorivergunboats.com](http://www.waikatorivergunboats.com). Price: \$35 plus p & p.

Reviewed by Robin Astridge

## From the Committee

- Andrea Thrower, has been appointed Administration Coordinator, working at the Centre on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings.
- Because of the closure of the Village Café for alterations by its new owners, the keys for volunteer hosts are now available from the Mountain View Bakery.
- As an interim measure until the AGM, Robert McWha and Robin Astridge are together taking care of the Treasurer's duties. However, a permanent replacement will be required for the next financial year.
- Many charitable funding agencies now require applications for grants to be lodged using online forms, with supporting documents attached as digital files. This required some rapid new learning by Barbara Walter when she recently submitted an Executive Committee grant application to COGS. Fortunately, Charlie Coles and Kevin Thrower were able to help her find the way through the electronic maze, and chart the process for next time.

## New and Improved

When you next visit the Centre, make sure that you look at the ANZAC display mounted recently by Marilyn Yeates and Barbara Walter to commemorate the beginning of World War 1. Central to the display is a framed photograph of George Lyford together with his war medals and a commemorative plaque that was presented to the next-of-kin of each serviceman who died as the result of war service.



The ANZAC Display

Also included in the display is the citation for the Military Medal awarded to George Lyford's brother, Leslie Lyford of the NZ Rifle Brigade. The Lyfords were from Otorohanga, but their father had become a resident of Pirongia by 1920.

## Subscriptions

Members are reminded that the subscription rates for the 2015-2016 Financial Year are:

Individual members	\$15
Families	\$25
Institutions	\$35

The new membership year commences on 1 July.

This means that current members are entitled to vote at the AGM on 16 June, but renewals will be necessary from 1 July.

**You may like to renew your subscription when you attend the AGM.**

## Thanks for Support

- **Charlie Coles** and **Kevin Thrower** who ably assisted **Barbara Walter** to negotiate the new online procedure for a COGS funding application.
- **Robert McWha**, who continues to quietly complete maintenance work around the Centre, whilst also filling in as interim-treasurer of the Executive Committee.
- **Jonathan Hurst** who helped Robert McWha and Robin Astridge interpret the Centre's accounts for preparation of the annual balance sheet.
- **Marilyn Yeates**, who, with the assistance of **Barbara Walter**, set up the current ANZAC display.
- **NZ Lottery Grants Board** for a grant of \$10,000 towards wages for our administrative assistant.
- **Mountain View Bakery Staff** who are currently holding the Centre keys to be signed out by volunteers.
- **Patricia Roberts**, author of *Not a Pioneer*, (reviewed in the last Newsletter) who donated a box of copies for sale by the Centre.

## New Faces

**Andrea Thrower** has joined the team at the Centre. She has been appointed *Administration Coordinator* to handle the office work. Andrea is employed for 5 hours a week divided between Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings.

When Andrea is on deck the Centre is open to visitors which means that we are now open at some time on six days a week.

**Ian Poole** has joined the team of volunteers. In previous life he was a bank manager and is using his experience to make a useful contribution to our financial planning.

**Tess McGruddy** has also begun to help host the Centre. She is interested in being involved in our research activities.

## For your diary

16 June AGM in the Centre at 7:30 pm, followed by a presentation by Kingsley Field.

## The Pirongia World War 1 Roll of Honour

Have you ever looked closely at the list of names on the World War 1 Roll of Honour on the Pirongia Memorial Hall? If so, you may have noticed that only parts of it are in alphabetical order, and in some cases, only a family name is listed. This suggests that the list of names was assembled piecemeal and without reference to any comprehensive military list. Indeed, in 1922, when the hall was opened and the tablets unveiled, it is unlikely that any comprehensive military list existed. And some of the families concerned were no longer in the district. So, like rolls of honour in other places, it was probably collated by word of mouth from local memory. As a result, inevitably there were errors and omissions.

A recent attempt to identify the men named on the comprehensive online listings now available, such as the Online Cenotaph ([www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph](http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph)), showed that there were also spelling errors and in some cases the name listed may have been that by which a man was known, when in fact his real name may have been different.

The exercise was complicated further by the *Waipa Post* intimating in 1922 that a further tablet was to be added with seven more names that had been left out. The paper listed those names, but the supplementary tablet did not eventuate.

Persistent research using individual military records now available at Archives New Zealand has allowed us to identify who we believe was each man on both the Roll of Honour and the list for the proposed supplementary tablet, what was his association with the district, where and when he died, and where he was buried.

The result will be an interpretive book about the Pirongia Roll of Honour being compiled by Alan Hall with assistance from Joy McGregor. It includes a summary of what was found out about each of 48 men from the district who fell in *The Great War*, as World War 1 was often called, in the service of their country. Individual photographs will be included wherever possible, and it is hoped that compiling the book may lead to others being made available. For this reason, the first draft will be in a loose-leaf form to allow the addition of photographs and the amendment of individual entries.

Visit the Centre to see the book. Tell us of details that you think should be added, or are incorrect, and in cases where we have no photograph, let us know if you or someone you know has an appropriate picture that we might scan for inclusion.



*Pirongia Memorial Hall in 2015 with the original Roll of Honour panels on either side of the entrance.*

## The opening of the Memorial Hall

Pirongia's memorial to those who died in their country's service during World War 1 is the Memorial Hall. It was opened on the afternoon of Wednesday 16 August 1922.

The building was erected on a section donated by Mrs M.J. Berry who the *Waipa Post*, in its report, described as "the Mother of Pirongia". It is a ferro-concrete construction designed by McInnes & Ross of Te Awamutu, built by Closey Bros. of Otorohanga and painted and decorated by Meiklejohn & Sons of Kihikihi.



*The Roll of Honour was unveiled at the opening of the Memorial Hall on 16 August 1922.*

*The bunting may be discerned above the spectators.*

## The bearers of bad news

When servicemen were killed or wounded during the war, advice was delivered by telegram to their designated next-of-kin who would then advise other family members. This meant that the unpleasant task of delivering the bad news became the lot of the Post Office. In Te Awamutu, the Postmaster, William Stewart, who himself had two sons serving overseas, assumed responsibility for always delivering those telegrams. After the war, he donated a memorial sundial to those who died and those who served. It is still in the grounds of Old St John's Church.

You can read the story of the sundial in *Footprints of History, No.1*, October 1988.

***Who were the servicemen listed on the Pirongia Roll of Honour who died during World War 1?  
What were their connections with the district?***



## What does the Roll of Honour tell us?

**The cost of the war, in terms of human life, was high.** This is reflected in the high number of deaths recorded from this district. Even more telling was the cost to families who lost more than one son and brother— two McKinnon families, the Goodwins, McConkeys, Langleys and Lintons. But what is not revealed in this list is the added anguish for those families and others who also had other sons wounded or stricken by disease. For example, in addition to losing two sons, the McConkey family had two other sons wounded, one so badly that although he returned home, he was never again a fit man.

**Although most of those listed were killed in action or died of wounds, some died of disease.** The conditions under which soldiers lived in trench warfare and their poor diet, made them vulnerable to disease. So it is hardly surprising that some were diagnosed and sent home to die from TB for example, and by 1918 the influenza pandemic also took toll. Some were exposed to gas which added to their vulnerability to lung disease.

**Many of those listed were born or brought up in the district, but their families had moved away.** Some, such as the Goodwins and the Goldsmiths had moved away before the war. Others like the Lintons moved later, but before the Roll of Honour list was compiled. These probably help account for some incomplete entries and mis-spellings of names.

**A few of those listed were related to local people who wished to see the sacrifice of their lives commemorated, regardless of the fact that they lived elsewhere.** Walter Ormsby is an example of a young man from the South Island and the Wellington West Coast with many local relatives. James McCarthy, from the West Coast of the South Island was the younger brother of the Alexandra Hotel licensee, William McCarthy.

## Others who might have been listed

The supplementary list of seven names printed in the *Waipa Post* when the plaques were unveiled contained five names that were clearly unfortunate omissions. However, the other two were problematic. The name of W.A. Macky (known as Allan) appears to have been a correction of the spelling of "A. Mackay" on the original list, and has been substituted for that name.

The other was P.P. Grace who returned to New Zealand from the war. He lived near Papakura until 24 February 1921 when he drove a truck over a 70 foot bank in the Hunua Hills and was killed. He was known to have been wounded three times whilst overseas and it is likely that an assumption was made at Pirongia that his death resulted from his war wounds, which was not the case.

The name of R.C. Linton has been added to this list. The reason is that only the name "Linton" appeared on the Roll of Honour, and the *Waipa Post* identified that man as A.W. Linton. However, his brother R.C. Linton was also killed in action and should have been listed. Listing him here is a convenient way to include him.

Beyond this list, it is now apparent that at least 11 other men from the wider district were as deserving of inclusion as those listed. They include L.G. Arthur, F. Clark, H. Clark, W. Haddock, D. Lane and F. Smith from the Te Pahu area, together with H.G. Garmonsway, R.H. Gordon, K.C. Johnston, R.N. Milne and F.L. Ryburn from Ngahinapouri, Te Rore and Mangapiko. All are also listed on other war memorials as are others on the Pirongia Roll of Honour.

It is proposed to also include brief biographies of these men in the interpretive book about the Pirongia Roll of Honour, bringing the total number of biographies to 59. Their sacrifices should not be forgotten.

## Original Roll of Honour Names

Pvt	William Roland AHIER	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Sgt	William Moon ALEXANDER	Otago Infantry Regt.
Pvt	William Stanley BAINBRIDGE	NZ Rifle Brigade
Pvt	Samuel BIRD	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Cpl	Hugh Thomas CORCORAN	NZ Training Unit
Trp	Henry Albert GODFREY	Auckland Mounted Rifles
Pvt	Reginald Charles GOODWIN	NZ Rifle Brigade
2nd Lt	Robert GOODWIN	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Sgt	Walter GOODWIN	NZ Field Artillery
Pvt	James HARMON	NZ Pioneer Battalion
Trp	Ernest Jonathan HARRIS	Auckland Mounted Rifles
Trp	Gilbert John JOHNSTON	Auckland Mounted Rifles
Pvt	Richard William JONES	Wellington Infantry Regt.
Pvt	Herbert Theodore LANGLEY	NZ Rifle Brigade
Gnr	Robert Frank LANGLEY	NZ Field Artillery
Trp	Percy David LEE	Auckland Mounted Rifles.
Sgt	Andrew William LINTON	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Trp	Johnny LINWOOD	Auckland Mounted Rifles.
Pvt	George Herbert LYFORD	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Pvt	William Allan MACKY	Otago Infantry Regt.
Pvt	James McCARTHY	Canterbury Infantry Regt.
Pvt	Arthur Edgar McCONKEY	NZ Machine Gun Corps
Pvt	Thomas Alfred McCONKEY	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Trp	John McKINNON	Auckland Mounted Rifles.
Pvt	Kenneth McKINNON	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Pvt	Malcolm McKINNON	Wellington Infantry Regt.
Gnr	Murdoch Alexander McKINNON	NZ Field Artillery
L/Cpl	Robert Roderick McKINNON	Canadian Infantry
Cpl	Roderick Angus McKINNON	Otago Infantry Regt.
Trp	Robert McNAUL	Auckland Mounted Rifles.
Pvt	Edwin Laurence MEADWAY	Auckland Infantry Regt.
2nd Lt	James Alexander MELVILLE	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Pvt	Albert Ernest MOGFORD	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Cpl	Norman Hector MUNRO	Auckland Infantry Regt.
L/Cpl	Walter George ORMSBY	NZ Rifle Brigade
Pte	Horima RANGI	NZ Pioneer Battalion
Pvt	Charles Harvey REYNOLDS	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Pvt	James Malcolm Fleming SHAW	NZ Rifle Brigade
Cpl	Peter Frederick James SHEFFIELD	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Trp	Archibald Cranley SIMPSON	Auckland Mounted Rifles.
Lt	James Albert TAYLOR DCM	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Pvt	Thomas YOUNIE	Auckland Infantry Regt.

## Supplementary List Names

Cptn	Alfred Charles BLUCK	Auckland Mounted Rifles.
Pvt	William James FROST	Canterbury Infantry Regt.
Pvt	John Richard GOLDSMITH	NZ Rifle Brigade
Trp	Frederick George MARSH	Auckland Mounted Rifles.
Pvt	Allan Roy SCOTT	Auckland Infantry Regt.
Pvt	Robert Charles LINTON	Auckland Infantry Regt.

