

NEWSLETTER

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Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre
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School Visitors

The Centre regularly helps schools with field trips in the Pirongia district. They include visits to find out about Matakītiki Pa, the East and AC Redoubts, the Path of War from Te Rore to Orakau, and Tawhiao's declaration of peace in 1881.

It is particularly pleasing that Year 5 and 6 students from Pirongia School have also become annual visitors to the Centre, finding out about the history of the village. A few students follow up their group visits, bringing parents and friends to see the displays, asking some good questions for their school assignments.

We are always pleased to help.



Young researchers

A Shipping Building on Crozier Street

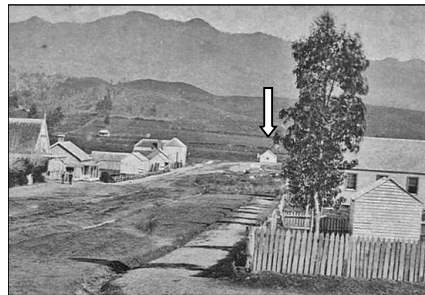
You have probably noticed in the Centre, an enlarged photo looking down Crozier Street in 1876. Standing in the centre of the roadline, beyond the Royal Exchange Hotel on the corner of Crozier and Parry Streets, is a distinctive building, similar in style to the Library building - now the honey shop. The location of the building on public land, immediately above the riverboat landing, suggests that it had something to do with the river trade. It can be seen in an earlier 1870s photo and was still there on another, dated 1923. Reg Bell said that it was used at one time by a gunsmith named Bendick.

A recently-discovered entry in the *Waipa Post* in March 1932 refers to the sale of what appears to have been this building for £7-10s (\$15) "at a recent stock sale".

The building, described as a "shipping shed", was said to have been built for the Waikato Shipping Company in the early years of settlement, but had stood deserted for some time, surrounded by gorse, on county land at the blind road-end. Because the shipping company was long defunct and those with any financial interest in the building had left the district, it was virtually ownerless until claimed by the Waipa County Council because it stood on county land. The sale was estimated to yield at least 600 feet of timber and the proceeds were remitted to the Cemetery Fund "through the good offices of Mr T Steel".

It is interesting to note that in June 1930, the obituary of Miss Emily Miller recorded that she had purchased "an old store built some years earlier for a shipping enterprise when steamers were still able to ply on the Waipa River with goods and produce". She made that building available to the Gymnasium and Athletic Club for use by the youth of the township and neighbourhood as training quarters. Might that have been the same building?

Although similar in appearance, it was definitely not, as some have suggested, the building that became the Library. That building was originally the Native Grain Store and was moved from somewhere near the riverboat landing in 1887. The shipping building was in its location long after that.



The arrow indicates the building in question.

AGM – Wednesday 27 June

The 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre will take place in the Centre at 7:30 pm on Wednesday 27 June. Papers will be forwarded to members two weeks beforehand. At its AGM, the Centre reviews its achievements during the last year, summarizes its financial position, elects new officers and offers opportunities to make recommendations to the incoming committee. It is anticipated that the meeting will take about 30 minutes.



Following the formal meeting, in an illustrated presentation, Nick van der Sande will tell the story of Pirongia Clydesdales from the early days of the DB Clydesdales at Paterangi. The work of Nick and Jill van der Sande at Pirongia Clydesdales is known nationally for their knowledge and skills associated with traditional horsemanship, shire horses and carriage driving. In England, Nick is also named in the Hall of Fame of the National Shirehorse Centre in Plymouth. Come along. Bring a friend. His story is an interesting one.

Thanks for Support

- **Karen Howard** who crafted and donated a wreath for the Centre to lay at the Pirongia Dawn Service on ANZAC Day.
- **Jack Yeates** who, with his grandmother Marilyn, laid the Heritage Centre wreath on ANZAC Day.
- **Ros Empson** who is doing much needed work to bring our computerised archives records up-to-date.
- **Joy McGregor** who often staffs the Centre when there is a last-minute change of plan.

Improved Visitor Statistics

Annual returns show that visitor numbers have increased almost every year since the Centre opened and the 2017-18 financial year is no exception. The annual total of 3339 represents an increase of 225 over the previous year. The numbers were boosted by returns of 407 in April 2017 and 410 in January 2018.

The April 2018 return of 475 – our highest monthly total ever – suggests that we could be on the way to an even better return in the new financial year.

Dancing with the King

Michael Belgrave's recent book, *Dancing with the King: The rise and fall of the King Country 1864-1885*, explores in detail the story of the Kingitanga during its years of isolation in Te Rohe Potae following the battle at Orakau, and in the aftermath of Tawhiao's declaration of peace at Alexandra in 1881. It spells out the difficulties faced by a pan-tribal organization attempting to balance the interests of different tribal groups whilst confined to Maniapoto territory, stoically challenging the government confiscation of its Waikato lands. The book is well-researched and is a useful complement to Vincent O'Malley's *The Great War for New Zealand*. However, because of the complexity of its subject-matter, it is a more demanding, but an equally rewarding read. Try a copy from the Te Awamutu Library.

For your diary

27 June Heritage & Information Centre AGM at 7:30 pm.

Speaker: Nick van der Sande

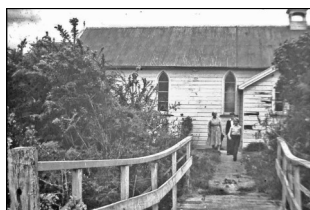
From the Committee

- Ros Empson, who is doing sorely-needed work to bring our computerized archives records up-to-date, argued the case for a second computer to be located in the archives room for this work. It was agreed that this will allow archiving to take place free of distractions at the inquiries desk. Steps are being taken to purchase and set up a suitable computer.
- Marilyn Yeates reported that photographs of Ginn's Sawmill that worked beyond the end of Mangati Road between 1947 and 1949 are now on display. The photos were obtained from the Ginn family by Joy McGregor.
- Arrangements are being made for a group visit to the Te Awamutu Space Centre at Kihikihi. Entry costs \$10 per adult. A date will be set when it is known who would like to join the group. If you are interested in coming, leave your name at the Centre or advise us by email and we will get back to you.

St Saviours at Waikeria

A recent visitor to the Heritage Centre was Warren Towns, the son of the late William Towns, the Corrections Department member responsible for the removal, in 1960, of the 2nd St Saviour's Church from the AC Redoubt site to the village outside Waikeria Borstal where it became an inter-denominational church.

In 2013, William Towns told us that the building on the redoubt site was in very poor condition, which is obvious in the accompanying photograph.



The building was in very poor condition, and surrounded by gorse on the embankments.

Mr Towns and four inmates dismantled

the structure in sections, numbering all the components for reconstruction after it was transported to Waikeria on Corrections Department trucks in a slow process which took weeks. It was fortunate that the weather remained perfect, with no rain.

The re-construction, re-cladding and re-lining of the building which transformed its appearance and condition, and the re-painting, was all undertaken by officers and inmates using Waikeria machinery, workshops and materials. In all, 22 inmates who worked on the building took part in the Waikeria Interdenominational Church's official opening on 25 February 1961 which was attended by Warren Towns who was then a schoolboy.



Warren Towns

The church served the Waikeria community for almost 30 years until alternative arrangements were made for the accommodation of staff and their housing was removed, leaving the church to be re-located to Pirongia in 2003, where the Heritage Centre became the beneficiary of the work completed by William

Towns, other corrections staff and inmates who gave new life to a heritage building.

Welcome new members

- Warrick & Suzie Denize

Charles Prince and the Salvation Army at Pirongia

Research for a response to a recent inquiry has revealed that there was an "outpost of the Salvation Army" in Alexandra/Pirongia between 1895 and at least 1901. It appears to have been largely the single-handed enterprise of one man, Charles Henry Prince, who was supported by officers of the Army from Hamilton and Cambridge.

Prince, who came to New Zealand in 1863 as a member of the Naval Brigade, took part in military offensives in the Waikato War, including the battle at Rangiriri, but little is known about him after he was discharged, until about 1870 when he was living in Northcote, working as a bootmaker, and married to Elizabeth Jamieson, with whom he had 6 children before she died in 1881. Soon afterwards, he married Mary Edwards, with whom he had another 6 children. Mary is buried with him in the Alexandra Cemetery in Pirongia.

The Prince family had moved from Northcote to Cambridge by April 1891 and it was probably in Cambridge where Charles, still working as a bootmaker, became a dedicated Salvationist. Prior to that, in Northcote he was served with a Prohibition Order as the result of family violence when he was drunk, and again in Cambridge in 1892 he was convicted of beating his wife, for which he was fined £5 and costs, although he appears to have served the alternative one month's imprisonment. Nevertheless, by 1895, under the influence of the Army, his life had been turned around because from the time of his arrival in Alexandra (soon to be renamed Pirongia) in May of that year he was hiring the Public Hall to run Salvation Army meetings every Sunday evening, at which he gave witness. Some of the meetings were said to have been "numerously attended".

By August 1895 Prince was reported to have bought a disused hotel building in which he established his boot and shoemaker's shop in the former bar and where, with little alteration, "the premises would make capital barracks" for the Salvation Army. In December, it was reported that the new Salvation Army Barracks were opened at a meeting run by Lieutenant Wells from Hamilton and Sergeant Prince. The meeting reportedly attracted an attendance of 80 people – "rather more than sufficient for the accommodation on so warm a night".

It is not clear which of the two disused hotels in Alexandra was occupied by Prince. The *Shamrock* was named in the first newspaper report and the *Royal Exchange* in the second when the barracks was opened. However, there is no supporting evidence that he ever purchased either of them. Both were mortgaged to the Auckland Permanent Cooperative Building and Investment Society by Mathias Asmuss when he opened the Shamrock in 1883. They became properties of the society when Asmuss was declared bankrupt in 1889. The society was voluntarily liquidated in 1893 and Matewai Wickham purchased the Shamrock building at an auction of the society's assets in 1898. It appears that the Exchange did not sell at that time. It was still leased by Edward Garmonsway, probably as a storage depot for his carrying business in 1899 and was still technically an asset of the by-then defunct building society when the building burned down in 1905. It is most likely that for a time, Prince leased, rather than purchased one of the hotels – probably the Shamrock.



The Shamrock Hotel, probably leased by Prince c. 1895-97

The only evidence of Salvation Army activity in Pirongia is in newspaper reports and these focus mainly on more-noteworthy events, including a Harvest Festival and a First Anniversary Celebration held in the barracks in 1896 and in December 1896 a community Christmas Tree celebration in the Public Hall. However, it is likely that weekly meetings, as the Army called its gatherings, which were never listed in the weekly newspaper "Church Services Tomorrow" advertisements, also continued, still led by Sergeant Prince as he was known.

After 1896, there was no mention of the barracks in newspaper reports and Salvation Army events, particularly annual Harvest Festivals, were held in the Public Hall, suggesting that Prince had probably relinquished his lease of the hotel building. On the 1899 Rating List he was renting Lot 127 in Hudson Street, owned by Mary Ann Harper, and had a lease on Reserve 521, the former "military paddock" incorporating today's Aubin Close and other land west of Franklin Street which he apparently farmed.

The last newspaper reports of Salvation Army activities in Pirongia were of a Harvest Festival in 1901, still organised single-handedly by Prince but supported on the Saturday of the festival, and at follow-up services on the Sunday and Monday by Captains Marshall and Martin from Hamilton and Cambridge. As in other years, proceeds from the sale of produce were donated to the Army funds.

It seems that the Salvation Army never established a significant following in Pirongia. People, including many local Maori, enjoyed the lively nature of the meetings, but there is no evidence of the establishment of a nucleus of dedicated Salvationists. Moreover, Prince was reported as supporting the initiatives of other denominations, being "ready to assist in any of our religious functions ... one of the most indefatigable at our church bees".

Charles Henry and Mary Prince lived the rest of their lives in Pirongia. Of their children, Mary Agnes married Joseph Papesch in 1908, Albert, who worked at Paterangi, served in the Boer War and two other sons, James and Ernest served during World War 1. Mary Prince died, aged 67, in 1920 and Charles Henry, aged 80 years in 1921.