

# NEWSLETTER

No. 53 & 54, November, 2018

Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre

Te Whare Taonga o Ngaa Rohe o Arekahanara

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## A Successful AGM

A well-attended AGM was held in the Centre on 27 June. Before the business was transacted, tributes to the late Gloria Ormsby, Basil Coles and Mervyn Owen, each of whom had been of service to the Centre, were read and received by the meeting. President Barbara Walter reviewed the year's activities and remarked on the many achievements although the limited number of volunteers available to open the Centre on six days a week sometimes makes this difficult to achieve. Charlie Coles presented the Annual Financial

Report which appeared very healthy, although much of the accumulated finance is committed to various projects.

A full set of office holders, listed separately, was elected, and it was noted that Haupai Puke and Sally Uerata were again nominated by Te Kauhanganui and Purekireki Marae respectively.

The meeting, was followed by an interesting illustrated talk about the history of Pirongia Clydesdales and Fresians by Nick van der Sande.



Some of those at the AGM.  
Nick van der Sande centre front



Charlie Coles presents the financial report

## Thanks for Support

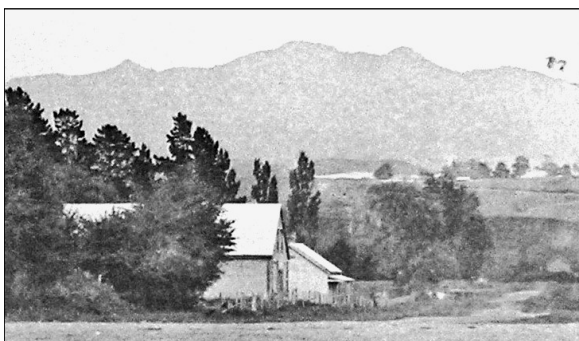
- **ROSS & SHIRLEY SCOWN** who donated \$1000 to help buy a new computer.
- **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION GRANTS SCHEME (COGS)** for a grant of \$5060.
- **TRACEY HERBERT AT FINNZ** (Te Awamutu) who reviewed the Centre's annual accounts.
- **BRENT MEALING** who designed and constructed a metal framed, glass display unit to support the de Thierry waka.
- **ROBERT MCWHA** who designed and constructed a storage unit for display panels.
- **TESS MCGRUDDY** whose typing skills have created many display captions.
- **ROS EMPSON** who continues to steadily update the Centre's *Past Perfect* catalogue.
- **CHARLIE COLES** who sprayed the buildings to remove algal growth.

## The Fate of J.D. Hill's Store Building 1866-1931

We have known for a long time that J.D. Hill ran a store in a distinctive building on Crozier Street, across the street from the Public Hall. It was built in 1866 for Scherff and Co who had been trading in the township from at least 1865. Hill was Franz Scherff's brother-in law who worked in partnership with him, managing the business and acting as an auctioneer until their partnership was amicably dissolved in 1871. Hill then took over the store and ran it under his own name. Apart from a period between 1877 and 1880 when the building was leased to Roberts & Lacon, while Hill and his brother, Kennedy, ran another business near the railway in Frankton, Hill traded in Crozier Street until late 1890. He then sold the building to Ahier & Gifford and left the settlement to set up a new business at Mercer.

From that time, the ownership of the building becomes less clear. By 1891, Ann Aubin, had apparently purchased the remainder stock from Ahier & Gifford, and was selling it at bargain prices. However, after that, we do not know who owned or used the old store. Nevertheless, the apparently derelict building, without its verandah, was still standing in Crozier Street in 1923.

The recent discovery of a report in the *Waipa Post*, dated 28 March 1931, finally tells that the building was demolished in that year. Under the heading *Removal of Old Landmark*, the writer noted that



Hill's store still stood in Crozier Street in 1923, without its verandah. The cottage next door which was the BNZ in 1875-77 is now the only surviving building from that era.

the dismantling of the "Old Store" would remove one of Pirongia's oldest and best-known landmarks. Although the structure was more than 60 years old, the huge kauri beams used throughout appeared to be "as sound as a bell" suggesting, as wryly noted, that "judging by this example jerry building must be a latter day art in New Zealand"

The report said that Mr A.C. Blackmore, living in Hamilton in 1931, was the last person to run a business in the old store. School enrolment records show that Blackmore lived in Pirongia between 1903 and 1905 although we know nothing about what use he and his family might have made of the building.

## Office-Holders 2018-2019

President:	Barbara Walter
Vice-President:	Marilyn Yeates
Secretary:	Paula McWha
Treasurer:	Charlie Coles
Committee Members:	Ros Empson Patricia Grierson Garry Howard Robert McWha Joy McGregor Brent Mealing Keith Ormsby Nick van der Sande Haupai Puke Sally Uerata

## To Our Volunteers

*Thank you for your contributions to the continuing development and operation of the Centre throughout this year. Without you, the Centre would not exist.*

## For your diary

**17 February 2019.** Meet at the Centre at 2:00 pm for a visit to the location of a swamp pa site at Lake Mangakaware.

## Samuel and Matire Morgan

Samuel Morgan was the nephew of John Morgan, the CMS (Church Missionary Society) missionary at Ōtāwhao from 1841. Samuel came from Wavertree, Liverpool, to assist at the mission but was never mentioned in John Morgan's diaries or his reports to the CMS, suggesting that his nephew's presence was not particularly valued. In October 1855 Samuel married Matire Te Rarangi (Matilda Juliet) Moncur in a ceremony conducted by his uncle at the Ōtāwhao Mission Station. Matire, who was by then a teaching assistant at the school, was the daughter of a tribal marriage between Rewa, a woman of rank in Ngati Hikairo and Captain James Moncur when he traded between Sydney and Kawhia in the 1830s. On their return from Sydney in the year following the death of their father in 1845, Matire and her sister Sophia became pupils at the Ōtāwhao mission school for half-caste children, where, following the instructions in her father's will, both were placed under the guardianship of John Morgan.

Ngati Hikairo gave land for Matire and Samuel to farm to the west of the Waipa River, close to the Turner land and extending downstream as far as what, in the 1880s, was to become the settlement of Whatiwhatiho. An 1864 military sketch map locates their dwelling opposite where the Puniu River enters the Waipa, immediately within the confiscation line imposed after the battle at Orakau. As with other Pakeha-Maori families, it was assumed that any descendants would remain members of the tribe so that it remained tribal land. In this case, that assumption was to be tested in 1877 when an attempt was made to sell some of the land to clear a debt and Tawhiao's secretary warned surveyors not to survey the land for sale by Mrs Morgan to a South Island buyer.

The couple lived on the property where they raised nine children born between 1856 and 1870, but they also maintained strong links with Matire's extended family at Kawhia. Where they lived during the Waikato War is not clear, although they appear to have been living at their house immediately after the military engagement at Rangiriri, late in 1863 because in 1867 Morgan claimed £22 for pigs stolen when they were living there, and slaughtered by Maori returning from Rangariri to Kawhia.

In the early 1870s, Morgan was auditor to the Alexandra Township Board for a short time and in 1874 and 1875 he regularly placed public notices in the *Waikato Times*, advertising his services as a "land, commission and native agent". However, his ventures appear not to have prospered. By 1876, when the unsuccessful attempt was made to sell land to clear a debt, Matire and he were estranged, and Samuel became a vagrant in the Rohe Potae from where he was ejected in February 1877 only to be arrested at Alexandra and jailed for vagrancy, the term to be served at the Ngaruawahia Gaol. On 20 February 1877 while he was in gaol he was murdered by Te Pati, a fellow-prisoner, who he appears to have provoked. Local historian J.B.W. Robertson referred to Samuel as "something of a scapegrace".



Matire Morgan

Matire Morgan continued to live at Kaiphi from where, with Harry Turner, who married her sister Sophia, she played helpful roles in easing the tension between the Kingitanga and the settlers at Alexandra. For example, in October and November 1873, she and Maihi Ngakuku accompanied King Tawhiao, who was visiting Kaiphi, when he first crossed the confiscation line to visit Alexandra. A month later, she and Harry Turner accompanied Tawhiao's son, Tu Tawhiao, when he too visited Alexandra from Kaiphi to breakfast with Captain Tregear and meet with Government Agent McKay. These visits were significant events in the gradual progression towards appeasement sought by Donald McLean as Native Minister. Her early life in Sydney and mission education at Ōtāwhao meant that like the Turner offspring, Matire interacted comfortably in both Pakeha and Maori contexts. It is therefore, not surprising that in the 1880s she acted as an interpreter in the Land Court when she was living at Kawhia. She died at Kawhia, aged 63 years on 26 April 1895.

## Before One-day Cricket

An early newspaper account reveals that when Alexandra was established as a garrison town, probably the first sporting event held by settlers was an unseasonable cricket match played on Saturday, 19 July, 1864, at Te Rore, between teams from the Imperial 12th Regiment and the 2nd Waikato Militia. The match was drawn with the "Waikatos" trailing at the end of play by 24 runs, but with 5 wickets in hand. They were said to be the moral victors. It is interesting to note that of the two most effective bowlers for the "Waikatos", Simpson bowled "round-hand" and Savage "under-hand" – perhaps influenced by the presence of so many Australian recruits in the Waikato Militia. A feature of the day was the playing of the band of the 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Other matches followed against regimental teams from Te Awamutu and Kihikihi. An Alexandra Cricket Club was formed in 1870.

## An upgraded display

A major re-arrangement of some of the Centre's displays has begun and will be completed in a few weeks. The change will facilitate an upgrading of the whole Maori history section by a team led by Haupai Puke. The coal-mining display stand will be moved to a new location to provide more space to incorporate a diorama being funded by Purekireki Marae.

A new metal-framed glass cabinet designed and built by Brent Mealing will be used to locate the model canoe in a more prominent position where it may be viewed from both sides, uncluttered by displays above it.



Brent Mealing's glass cabinet upon which the model canoe will be displayed..

Other display material is being revised to present a more informative, coherent and attractive display area.

It is inevitable that while these changes are being made, some sections will be less orderly, but that is a small price to pay for the anticipated outcome.

## New Display Panel Storage

From time to time it is necessary to take down useful display panels to make way for others and we have been looking for a way in which we might store them so that they may be quickly located and made available to help answer questions by visitors.

Robert McWha has solved the problem with his invention of a storage rack that will hold cardboard panels of different sizes, whilst also making it easy to sort through them to find a particular panel. It is currently on display in the Centre.



The new storage rack for display panels. An ingenious invention.

## Interpreting the Centre's Carved Sign

A recent inquiry about the meaning of the word *Arekahanara* on the carved sign in front of the Centre suggested that it might be a good idea to reprint this interpretive information for all our members.

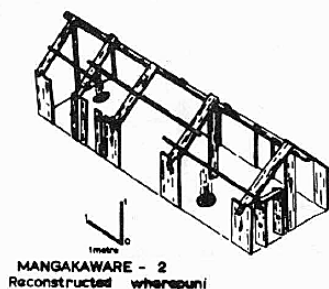


- The top of the sign depicts the silhouette of Pirongia Mountain which dominates the area and was of great significance to the original Māori inhabitants as both a source of spiritual inspiration and a rich resource for timber, birds, berries and other plant products.
- Originally, when it was established in 1864, the village was a government military settlement named Alexandra which is commemorated by the transliteration *Arekahanara* in the Māori name for the Centre. The name was eventually changed in 1896, with the agreement of the residents, because of postal confusion with Alexandra in Central Otago.
- *Te Whare Taonga O Ngā Rohe O Arekahanara* translates as The House of Treasures of the Districts of Alexandra.
- The word *Pirongia* in the English name for the Historic Visitor Centre acknowledges the subsequent adoption of the Māori name for the mountain as the name of the village and the district, by which both are now known.
- On the sides of the base are depicted two figures. One represents Rōtū, who originally named the mountain Pae-whenua. The other represents Hia-roa. They were family members of Raka-taura, the *Tohunga Iho* (High Priest) of the Tainui Canoe, and were members of the first party of Tangata Whenua who discovered and climbed the mountain to set up altars and perform sacred rites to preserve the *mauri-ora* (life principle) of *Nga manu o te wao nui a Tane-Mahuta* (the birds of the great forest of Tane-Mahuta – God of the forests).
- The sign was carved by the late Mac Bell of Purekireki Marae, a master carver whose family includes both local iwi and families of the military settlement in 1864. He considered it significant that the sign stands outside the former Anglican Church which both his grandfather and his great-grandfather helped build and which is intimately linked with the lives of many other members of the local community, both Māori and Pākehā. In it they worshipped, were baptised, married, and farewelled while it stood on the site of the Armed Constabulary Redoubt.



Mac Bell (right) and his mother, Mrs Jean Bell who unveiled the carved sign in a ceremony held on Sunday 15 May 2005.

An archaeologist's impression of what a sleeping house at Lake Mangakaware would have looked like, based upon findings from the investigation of the site and incorporating artefacts recovered.



## Pirongia War Memorial Hall

Members are probably aware that the Memorial Hall is not being used at present because a seismic assessment of the building judged it to be an unacceptable earthquake risk.

The structural report recommends:

- Adding structural steel members to the existing concrete structure and additional steel roof bracing.
- Additional structural support of the concrete parapets at the front and rear of the building.
- Additional sub-floor bracing in some areas.
- Age-deteriorated members in the timber roof framing would also need to be carried out during any major construction work.

The Centre has an interpretation of implications of the seismic report by committee-member Ros Empson who is a heritage architect. In it she suggests that when structural work is planned, consideration should be given to also upgrading the toilet facilities and the kitchen area, possibly as a longer-term project.

The building is listed as a Heritage Item on the Waipa District Plan with a C classification, indicating that it has local community historic value.

The Memorial Hall was erected in 1921 on land donated by Mrs Mary Jane Berry and funded by donations and local, district-wide money-raising. It is now the property of the Waipa District Council which will need to determine if and when it will be brought up to a low-risk standard in keeping with its historic significance and use as a public place.

Ask at the desk to read Ros Empson's report.

## Lake Mangakaware Access

Lake Mangakaware is a swamp lake, a part of which may be seen from Anderson Road. It is the site of two swamp pas that were investigated by archaeologists from the University of Auckland between 1968 and 1970.

Until recently, access to the lake was difficult, but Waipa District Council has now constructed an access way from Anderson Road via a gate opposite the end of Oakshott Road. It is now possible to drive down to a parking area beside the lake.

From the parking area, it is possible to walk to one of the pa sites which was a subject of a dig by archaeologists, although there is little evidence of that today. From there you can see the site of the other pa site investigated on the other side of the lake.

The older swamp pa on this lake existed in the late 1500s but archaeologists have concluded that both pas were vanquished by tribal enemies in pre-European times, probably in the 1700s.

If you would like to visit the site, Alan Hall will lead a group there on 17 February, 2019. If you are interested in coming, please advise the Centre. We will meet at the Centre at 2:00 pm and share transport. We should be back at the Centre by 4:00 pm.

If you are coming, note that the water table around the lake is near the surface, especially after rain raises the lake level, so bring waterproof footwear.

## From the Committee

- Re-arrangement of furniture and other contents has made the Archive Store, in the converted garage behind the Centre, more functional. It is used regularly for the development of display layouts and for work on the *Past Perfect* catalogue of our archives.
- A Newsletter Policy, recently approved by the Exec Committee, formally clarifies the *ad hoc* arrangements under which the past 52 editions were published. Alan Hall is now formally the Editor and committee members Ros Empson and Paula McWha will provide him with consultative backup. The policy makes it clear that contributions from non-members may be included, although the editor will exercise judgment about what will be included. The new policy will be reviewed in a year's time.
- A working group led by Garry Howard is developing a proposal to purchase some additional computer equipment. The Centre needs a second computer dedicated to management of our archives, which means that it should be located in the Archive Store, allowing archiving to proceed without interruption from the normal functions in the main building. It will be proposed that the new computer should replace the machine at the main desk and that the present machine should be relocated to the Archives store. Consideration is also being given to providing a printer and a dedicated scanner in the archive store to make high-quality scans of photographs in our collection.

## Outstanding Subscriptions

Andrea Thrower reports that a number of member subscriptions are yet to be paid for the 2018-19 year. They are \$20 for an individual, \$25 for a family and \$35 for a business, group or organization.

A membership renewal form has been included with this newsletter for those recorded as currently outstanding.

Please contact Andrea by telephone or email if you think that an error has been made.

Andrea is on duty on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings if you wish to call 07 871 9018.

## Pirongia Forest Park Lodge 30th Anniversary

The Forest Park Lodge celebrated its 30th birthday on Sunday 21 October. It was a great occasion which was very well organized on a beautiful day. It featured music, some excellent speeches, opportunities to visit all the Lodge's facilities and an afternoon tea with a birthday cake.

Helen Clark, who is the Patron of the Lodge Trust was there with members of her family.

Barbara Walter, Marilyn Yeates, Joy McGregor and Alan Hall attended, representing the Heritage Centre.

## Welcome new members

- Lyn Jackson
- Don Thomas

## What was a redoubt?

When the military settlement of Alexandra was first settled in June 1864, two redoubts were "thrown up", one on each side of the river near the landing place for steamers. Later, between 1868 and 1872, the Armed Constabulary developed a third redoubt on the site of the first St Saviour's Church. The term *redoubt* is no longer in common use, so it is hardly surprising that new members and visitors to the Centre often ask, "What was a redoubt?"

The word *redoubt* is a military term adopted from the French word *redout*, used in England from at least 1608 to denote a place of refuge or retreat, established to be defended against an enemy. Redoubts took the form of enclosed defensive emplacements, usually surrounded by earthworks and defensive ditches. The earthworks were created by digging deep ditches around the redoubt and piling the spoil beside the ditch to create walls to provide defensive cover. Hence the use of the expression "throwing up" a redoubt.



Warren Gumbley (Left) and John Fulford (Waipa DC), in an excavation pit on the East Redoubt site. On the right hand side is the profile of the defensive ditch around the fortification.

as at Orakau, that were made less vulnerable to Armstrong gun fire by incorporating fern in the earth walls to make them more elastic.

Some of the confusion about what was a redoubt appears to stem from the silent "b" in its spelling. At some stage it appears to have been added in the English spelling of the French word *redout* – probably because the English word *doubt* is spelled with a "b", despite the fact that it has no associated meaning. The word *redoubtable*, meaning "formidable", is derived from the word *redoubt*.

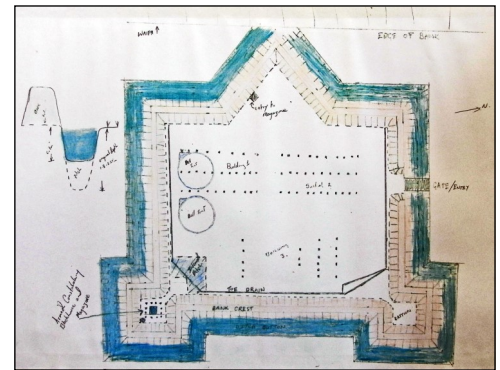
For more about redoubts, see W. Gumbley, *History and Archaeology of Alexandra East Redoubt*, *Footprints of History* 21, pp 3-5.

Usually redoubts were rectangular in shape with projections known as bastions on at least two diagonal corners to allow *flanking* or *enfilading* fire along the ditches outside the earth walls. Sometimes broken glass was scattered in the ditches to make crossing them more dangerous for bare-footed attackers.

Redoubts varied considerably in size, depending upon the number of people they were expected to accommodate. The Alexandra East redoubt, was built to accommodate 100 men. Initially they lived in bell tents that were later replaced by two barracks buildings.

Redoubts were used extensively in New Zealand by British regiments during the New Zealand Wars. In the Waikato alone, there are known to have been about 40 redoubts. Some were built to guard supply lines during the military advance. Others were constructed to guard camps, settlements and act as places of refuge for settlers. After 1867, the Armed Constabulary constructed a few at key points for surveillance and defence of the confiscation line.

Maori were quick to adopt redoubt technology. The so-called gunfighter pas constructed for defence against firearms incorporated bastions as well as defensive ditches, earthworks, internal trenches and underground, shellproof shelters. They also constructed earthworks,



Archaeologist Warren Gumbley's sketch of the East Redoubt layout based on information from his analysis of the site.

## A Reticulated Water Supply

Until 1921, there was no reticulated water supply in Pirongia. However, a newspaper report in the *Waipa Post*, dated 12 April 1921, records that Pirongia had accepted the terms for a water supply from the Te Awamutu Borough Council's water main from Mount Pirongia. Mr A.E. Fear, writing on behalf of a local committee – possibly the Pirongia Chamber of Commerce of which Mr Fear was the president – had accepted with thanks the Council's offer of 2s-6d (25 cents) per 1000 gallons delivered to the township, and asked the Council to arrange for a one-inch connection and a meter, stating that a contract had been let to lay the main. He added that Mr Bell (presumably Walter Bell) would be responsible for collecting the rates.

A one inch main may appear inadequate, but at the time there were few potential users.

**Disclaimer:** Views expressed in items published in this issue do not necessarily represent the views of the Heritage and Information Centre.