



NEWSLETTER

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Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre
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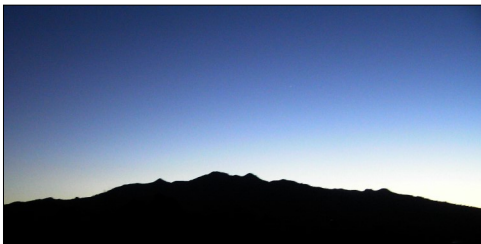
AGM Thursday 20 June at 7:30 pm

The 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre Inc. will be held in the Centre at 7:30 pm on Thursday, 20 June. As in previous years, it is anticipated that the formal business will be completed in about 30 minutes.

Following the formal business, at about 8:00 pm, the meeting will be addressed by Oliver McLeod, a volcanologist who will talk about:

A geological exploration of Mt Pirongia, the North Island's largest basaltic volcano.

Formed by a succession of eruptions beginning over 2.5 million years ago, Pirongia is a volcano with a complex history that is only just being discovered. In this presentation, Oliver will present the first geological map of Pirongia Volcano, and unravel details of its birth, growth and eventual collapse over its one-million-year active lifespan.



Oliver McLeod is an early career volcanologist with a deep interest in mapping ancient volcanic landscapes. He studied geology, geography and surveying at the University of Otago where he mapped the volcanic geology of the Karitane coastline. Following graduation, Oliver documented eruptions at Colima volcano in Mexico and mapped a large area of unstudied volcanic terrain in the eastern Mexican Volcanic Belt. Since 2016, at the University of Waikato, he has been engaged in a PhD study of the volcanology of the Alexandra Volcanic Group centred on the 2.5 million-year-old Mount Pirongia.

Record Visitor Numbers

A total of 3277 people visited the Centre during the 2018-19 financial year that ended in March. That is our highest annual total to date. It represents an increase of 103 over the previous year, continuing a trend of annual increases since the Centre opened. Analysis shows that Saturdays and Sundays tend to be the busiest days, and understandably, the warmer months between September and April, produce more visitors.

The Centre again opened on 6 days a week and on all public holidays, except Christmas Day, between 10:30 am and 3:30 pm. It is a triumph for our small number of volunteers who are to be congratulated on the success of their endeavours.

This flies in the face of the comment in a recent *Village Messenger* posting about *Things To Do in Pirongia* which implied that the Historic Centre, as the commentator called it, is often not open.



Visiting Groups

Recent visitors to the Centre included two groups finding out about different aspects of our local history. On 29 March, a bus-load of students from Melville High School visited Matakītiki Pa with Haupai Puke, spent time at the Centre with our staff and visited two redoubt sites with their teachers. They plan to repeat the day again next year.

On 2 April, a bus-load of members of the University of the Third Age in Hamilton visited Matakītiki Pa and the Centre and did a short walking tour of the Village before enjoying lunch and going on to Kihikihi.

Each group was appreciative of a talk at the Centre illustrated by a Powerpoint display.



An illustrated talk for U3A

Thanks for Support

- **NATIONAL SERVICES TE PAERANGI** provided a Helping Hands Grant of \$444-20 for conservation materials.
- **ROS EMPSON** continues to make progress on a backlog of accessioning and catalogue entries about our collection.
- **GARRY HOWARD** has begun making a computer record of materials in our Families Vertical File which will facilitate more efficient searches.
- **ROBERT MCWHA** whose repairs have breathed new life into map storage cabinets that show signs of their age.

From the Committee

- A recent decision by the Executive Committee makes it possible to include in our Newsletter contributions by non-members. The biography of Hōne Te One, contributed by Frank Kingi Thorne, a researcher for Ngāti Hikairo, on page 2, is the first such contribution. In accordance with the policy, it identifies him as its author.
- On ANZAC Day, at the Pirongia Dawn Parade, Marilyn Yeates and Ros Empson laid a wreath on behalf of the Centre.



For your diary

20 Jun at 7:30 pm. Heritage Centre AGM.

Speaker: Oliver McLeod on the geology of Mount Pirongia.

Bring a friend.

Condolences

Members were saddened to learn that fellow-member Norma Graham passed away on April 2nd. We will miss her and share the sorrow of her family.

Disclaimer:

Views expressed in items published in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Heritage Centre.

New & Improved

Events that Shaped our Landscape is a temporary display providing basic information about the formation of the Waipa Valley when the hills between the present valley and the coast were slowly lifted and tilted about 5 million years ago, while the valley floor may even have been depressed. The ancient Waipa River followed the fault along the line of hills to Taupiri where it flowed out to the coast. The display shows where the Alexandra Volcanic Group of eruptions (including Karioi, Pirongia, Puke Houa, Puketotara, Kakepuku, Te Kawa and Tokanui) overlaid some of the earlier landforms between 2.7 and 1.6 million years ago. It also shows where the Waikato river flowed into the Hamilton Basin some 20,000 years ago, carrying into it vast quantities of volcanic debris from earlier Taupo eruptions, to create extensive river flats and large areas of peat swamp such as the Moanatuatua and Rukuhia wetlands, around hills that existed before the Waikato flowed into the basin. In the process, the Waikato River joined the course of the Waipa.

The Laying Down of Arms

On 12 July 1881 King Tawhiao led some 600 warriors into Pirongia where, at his request, he met Major William Mair to declare an end to the military conflict between the Kingitanga and the New Zealand Government. That conflict dated back 18 years to the commencement of the military invasion of the Waikato region when General Cameron's army crossed the Mangatawhiri Stream near Pokeno on 12 July 1863 leading to the eventual confiscation of more than a million acres of Maori lands after the Battle of Orākau.

After the exchange of formal greetings, Tawhiao motioned Mair to stand back. He laid his gun on the ground, an example which was followed by seventy of his people. He then had seventy roasted pigeons and a fantail laid along-side the guns, after which the King told Mair, "This means peace." Picking up the fantail he handed it to Mair and said, "This bird belongs to this land. I have ritually endowed it with all the sacredness I possess. It shall be a talisman of peace for this land."

The symbolic action of laying down arms was interpreted by some at the time, and others since, as an action of submission to the government. However, as later events showed, the laying down of arms signalled an end to military conflict and a change of tactics by the Kingitanga which continued to protest against the confiscation of its Waikato lands via visits and petitions to parliament, and visits to England by deputations which unsuccessfully attempted to hold talks with Queen Victoria.

The important feature of events on July 1881, was Tawhiao's declaration of peace, represented symbolically by the laying down of arms. It was not an act of submission.

Recently, the Centre was given a set of scans of photographs of a Centennial Parade in 1981, commemorating the occasion.

The Allan family

Members of the Allan family who lived in the Alexandra from 1864 until the 1890s, are commemorated on headstones in the Alexandra Cemetery where John Allan, his wife Margaret, her mother, Grace Nicoll, and one of John and Margaret's sons lie and another is remembered. A headstone records that Margaret was the sister of Robert Nicoll, a Scottish poet in the tradition of Burns, who died before they left Scotland.

The family hailed from Tullybelton, Perthshire, Scotland. However, they moved from Scotland to Yorkshire, England where their youngest son Robert was born about 1860 before they migrated to New Zealand. John and Margaret arrived in Auckland, from London, on the ship *Annie Wilson*, on 21 September 1863 with 3 sons, 5 daughters, and Margaret's widowed mother, Grace Nicoll.

A few days later, their oldest son, John, aged 19 years, enlisted in Auckland as a military settler with the Waikato Militia, and served in the 2nd Regiment throughout the Waikato War. This made him eligible for a town acre and a farm lot in the vicinity of Alexandra. His family followed him into the area where his father, John Snr, and his brother James, also enlisted as substitutes in place of militiamen leaving the regiment, so that they too became eligible for land grants. As a result, by 1869, when their grants had become freehold, the family had acquired three separate 50 acre farm lots between Alexandra and Mangapiko and several town acres in the settlement. Their house on Farm Lot 297 on Pirongia Road is clearly marked on AC Sgt Edenborough's 1872 map. It was located near the present site of Reymer Agricultural Contracting. Edenborough would have known it well because in December 1867 he had married John & Margaret's daughter Grace Allan.

Only the youngest son, Robert, is likely to have attended the Alexandra School when it opened in 1872, although we cannot be certain of that because there are no surviving enrolment records before 1880.

Family members participated in the life of the community. In 1872, John Allan Snr was elected by the community to be one of its first cemetery trustees. As Presbyterians, his family were members of the local congregation, and in 1878, John Allan Snr was appointed by the Waipa West Presbyterian District to help canvas for subscriptions in the Pirongia area to build a Presbyterian manse in Te Awamutu. He was clearly respected by the community. His daughters regularly sang in concerts, and he, or one of his sons, was a member of the Pirongia Rifles Volunteers in 1872.

All five daughters married. Grace married AC Sgt Charles Edenborough in 1867, Christina became the second wife of Richard Seccombe in 1877, Mary married Francis Hicks in 1883, the same year that Kate, who was teaching in Auckland, married Henry Morpeth, soon to become the town clerk at Waihi, and in 1899, Robina, postmistress-in-charge of the Alexandra Post Office for nine years, between 1890 and 1899, became the second wife of George Ahier of Te Awamutu, whose first wife, Anna Maria, the sister of Richard Seccombe, had died in 1897.

John Allan Jnr worked in the district as a carpenter, but by 1893 he was working in Te Kuiti where, in October 1896, he drowned crossing the Mangaokewa Stream on the way to where he lived in the native settlement at Oparure, near Te Kumi. He was 51 years of age and lies in the Alexandra Cemetery alongside other members of his family.

James Allan lived with his family, listing his occupation as "labourer" in the 1881 Electoral Roll. However, he is not listed in the 1893 or 1896 Electoral Rolls. At some stage, he must have migrated to Australia where, in 1913, he was living at Cobar in western New South Wales, probably working in the copper mines because an electoral roll listed him as a "smelter".

Robert Allan would have been eligible to vote in 1881 but is not listed in the electoral roll. At some stage, he too migrated to Australia, first to Queensland and then to North-Western Australia, in search of gold. There were reported discoveries of gold in that part of Australia in 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892 and 1893. He was one of two gold prospectors killed in a confrontation with Australian Aborigines on the remote Richendra River in the King Leopold Ranges, north-west of Broome, in June 1892. He was 33 years old.

John Allan Snr lived at Alexandra until he died on 1 July 1896, aged 85. He lies in the Alexandra Cemetery, Pirongia, which changed its name from Alexandra to Pirongia in the same year.

Margaret Charlotte Allan was living with Mary and Francis Hicks at "Laherne", Pukekura, when she died 17 years later, on 17 December 1913, aged 92. She remained in good health until shortly before her death.



Margaret Allan in later life

In the Pipeline

- A new display about Redoubts is in the final stage of production led by Barbara Walter and Marilyn Yeates. It sets out to answer questions which are often asked by visitors.
- Progress is also being made by a working group led by Haupai Puke on a major update of the Maori display.

Welcome new members

- Tony Giles
- Shane Bailey

An important biography

Hōne Te One was an enigmatic figure in the history of Alexandra. His name appears as the owner of property in early government maps of Alexandra, including two sections, 10 acres at Mātakitaki, sections at Te Rore and more than 3000 acres across the river at Whatiwhatihoe. We know that he was a leader of Ngāti Hikairo, that he was expelled from Kāwhia by the Kīngitanga in 1867, but was present at an important meeting at Te Kuiti when Major Mair met with the Kīngitanga leaders in 1871 and later became a Kīngitanga supporter. Frank Kingi Thorne's biographical notes, below, written from a Ngāti Hikairo perspective, provide useful background information about him.

Hōne Te One

Hōne Te One (John Jones), given the birth name Te Waiwera, was born around 1810 at Mātakitaki, Pirongia. His parents were Te Makaho-o-te-rangi and Parehaere. His siblings were Wī Hikairo, Tamihana Te Makaho, Mereaina Koutu and Rakuraku. His subtribes were Ngāti Purapura, Te Whānau Pani, Ngā Uri o Te Makaho and Ngāti Horotakere. Due to his actions and foresight, in the future he would become a notable leader of his tribe, Ngāti Hikairo.

Raised in Pirongia, Mangauika, Ōpārau and Kāwhia, Hōne could read and write, later becoming a prolific writer from the 1850s to the 1890s. He owned and operated flour mills, and also owned, captained and operated trading ships. He was an entrepreneur, dedicated to maintaining beneficial relationships between Māori and the Government. A member of the tribal committee Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hikairo and a Native Magistrate, he was also a Native Assessor. In 1860 he fought at Māhoetahi in the Taranaki Wars. Throughout that decade he was heavily engaged with Māori Government leaders. Initially he opposed the Kīngitanga due to concerns regarding perceived threats that it posed to Māori, European and Government relations.

After the battle of Ōrākau in 1864, he played a vital role in negotiating to have Ngāti Hikairo surrender and lay down arms. He took a lead role from 1865-1866 in applications to the Compensation Court for Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hikairo lands at Whatiwhatihoe, Pirongia, and Te Rore to be returned to his tribe. At least 9 applications were made at which he and others of Ngāti Hikairo presented evidence. This resulted in 3500 acres in Pirongia Parish, over 1000 acres of Ngāroto Parish, 10 acres of Mangapiko Parish (Mātakitaki Pā), and several sections in Alexandra Township West & East being returned to Ngāti Hikairo. He was awarded the Crown Grants 329 and 330 of Pirongia Parish at Whatiwhatihoe and invited King Tāwhiao and the Kīngitanga to occupy the land as their headquarters and a neutral place to meet with the Government within the confiscation boundary.

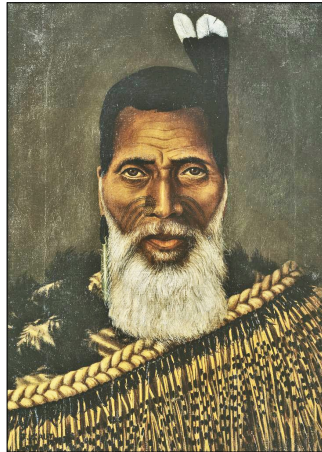
In 1866 however, due to his continued support for the Government, Hōne Te One and a large contingent of Ngāti Hikairo were expelled from Kāwhia by the Kīngitanga. They initially went to Whāingaroa (Raglan). But soon after, were invited by Aotea tribes to reside at Mōtakotako. While there, he committed to supporting the Kīngitanga and built the meeting house Te Tokanganui-a-Noho at Mōtakotako, gifting it to King Tāwhiao. He and his people stayed there until the mid 1870s when he returned to Kāwhia and Whatiwhatihoe.

Hōne Te One led the application to the Native Land Court for the Kāwhia Block on behalf of Ngāti Hikairo in November 1868. This block covered what is now the Kāwhia Block, Pirongia West Block, Waihōhonu, Pākarikari, Maketū, Motukōtuku and Mangaora Blocks comprising nearly 45,000 acres. The investigation and hearing was never followed up.

Hōne Te One led Ngāti Hikairo opposition to the June 1883 petition by only four tribes representing Te Rohe Pōtae interests, excluding Ngāti Hikairo. He applied to the Native Land Court to recognize Ngāti Hikairo's rohe within the King Country, and then led Ngāti Hikairo to join the petition as the fifth tribe in December. He welcomed Governor Jervis to Ōmiti, Kāwhia, on 14 March 1884, where Ngāti Hikairo discussed surveying, roading, the Kāwhia Township and the Armed Constabulary. He was a founding member of the Kāwhia Native Committee, Kāwhia Licensing Committee and Kāwhia Sports Committee and also an applicant for the 1886 Native Land Court Rohe Pōtae Investigation. He was a key witness in the Mangauika, Pukekura, and Puahue Investigations in 1868, Kōpua-Pirongia-Kāwhia in 1887, Waihōhonu and Manuitū in 1889.

Hōne Te One had at least two wives; his widow was Iwikau. He had no surviving children, although he was involved in raising several children of other family members including Hōne Kaora, and Matire Morgan. After a lifetime of campaigning for the independence of his tribe, he died in Kāwhia in 1892 aged 82.

Frank Kingi Thorne— Ngāti Hikairo Researcher



Hone Te One from an 1886 portrait by Joseph Gaut

Electricity came to Pirongia in 1921

The first hydro-electricity power station on the Waikato River was built at Horahora between 1911 and 1913 by the Waihi Gold Mining Company, to provide power for the Martha Mine and its stamping battery. When it opened in October 1913, it was New Zealand's largest hydro-electric generating plant and the 80 km transmission line to Waihi was the longest in the country.

The government bought the Horahora station in 1919 and used the surplus in its 6.3 megawatt capacity to supply electricity to Hamilton, Cambridge, Te Awamutu and their surrounding farming districts. As a result, electricity was first turned on in Pirongia on 30 December 1921.

The *Waipa Post* reported that "despite drizzly weather, there was a large and interested crowd at the Pirongia hotel to witness the ceremony of switching on the electric lights.

Mr F.C. Cuff, President of the Pirongia Chamber of Commerce, presided, and introduced the reason for the gathering. It had been intended to hold the ceremony elsewhere, but the weather made the hotel verandah the most suitable spot. Festoons of coloured lights had been artistically hung by the Power Board staff, and the result, as Mrs A.E. Aubin, the oldest resident, switched on the current for the first time, was most pleasing and gratifying, the town lights brightening up the familiar streets wonderfully.

The president thanked the Power Board for its efficient work and Mr J.T. Johnson, chairman of the Power Board, in a brief but interesting address, sketched the board's history, its financial difficulties, and ultimate progress, and enlarged upon the many uses to which electricity could be put in the home and on the farm. He thanked the engineer and the staff of the board for their loyal support and efficient work.

The meeting went across to the Pirongia Hall, where dancing to music by Mr George Hill was carried on till a late hour." (*Waipa Post*, 31 December 1921)

Who planted that tree?

Recently, the owners of a house in Belcher Street asked if the Centre had information about when a kauri tree on their property was planted. Although we had no information about it, Joy McGregor remembered working at Tokanui with Vic Wooton who lived there. She contacted him and learned that he purchased two adjacent sections on Belcher Street in 1976 and built a house on one of them in 1978. The other section was later sold to Derek Gane. In 1980, Vic Wooton was given a kauri seedling by a relative in Kaitiā which he planted in front of his house. At that time, it stood about 45 cm tall. Today it is an imposing 39 years old kauri tree.

Happy Birthday Ngaire

Congratulations and good wishes to member **Ngaire Phillips** who recently celebrated her 90th birthday and remains a most useful source of detailed information about the history of our district. Her contributions are greatly appreciated.



The Pirongia War Memorial Hall

A seismic assessment of the Pirongia War Memorial Hall, completed for its owner, the Waipa District Council in 2018, gave the building a Seismic Grade E because it met less than 20% of the current building standard. The report noted that otherwise, the building appears to be in good condition for its age, with no obvious cracking or settlement and has a regular shape. Nevertheless, until measures are undertaken to improve its seismic grade, it will remain unused.

Under the NZ Building Act 2004, the structure needs remedial action to reach the 34% of the building standard necessary for it to be used and 67% for it to be reclassified as of low risk. This will require at least adding structural steel members to the existing concrete structure and roof bracing, additional structural support of the concrete parapets at the front and rear of the building, and some additional sub-floor bracing.

A public consultation meeting about the future of the building will be convened by the Pirongia Community Association and the Waipa District Council in the Pirongia Community Centre in the near future. A notice about the meeting will be published in the Te Awamutu Courier and the Village Messenger.

The history of the building

The War Memorial Hall was built by the community in response to two demands. One was for a new public hall. A public meeting in 1911 agreed that the dilapidated state of the existing public hall in Crozier Street was a disgrace to the town and took steps to obtain a suitable site for a new building. By 1913 offers of two sites had been made by Mrs A.E. Aubin and Mrs M.J. Berry. However, any further activity was delayed by World War 1.

Following the Great War, there was a public desire in 1919 to erect a war memorial to men from the district whose lives had been sacrificed, and a further meeting agreed that the war memorial should take the form of a new public hall to be erected in ferro-concrete on the site donated by Mrs Berry, "the committee arranging to procure and place upon the ground, by voluntary labour, all the sand and stone required." Memorial tablets, suitably inscribed, were to be mounted on the front of the building.

The new hall was funded by donation and local money-raising, no government subsidy being available. When it was available for use, the old public hall was sold to the Methodist Church for £100 (\$200).



The hall, built by the community, was opened by Mr J.T. Johnson at a well-attended ceremony on Wednesday, 16 August 1922

The ferro-concrete structure, designed by McInnes & Ross of Te Awamutu, was built in 1920-21 by Closey Bros of Otorohanga with painting and decorating by Meiklejohn & Sons of Kihikihi.

Opened in August 1922

At the opening ceremony on 16 August 1922, the two war memorial plaques were dedicated and unveiled by Mrs Mary Berry, an early settler who had donated the site and Mrs Tema Jones, the mother of one of the fallen soldiers, before the building was officially opened by Mr J.T. Johnson. In his speech, Mr Johnson stressed that the War Memorial Hall was "not an obelisk of stone but a memorial of utility, where the people could gather socially and in meeting assemble", emphasizing that it was a memorial for use by the community.

The opening ceremony was followed by a concert and dance, the first of the many community functions for which it was regularly used. Besides concerts, dances, more formal balls, and other functions run by local organizations such as the school, sports clubs, the WDFP and the Women's Institute, kitchen evenings and wedding receptions took place there. It was the venue for public functions such as farewells to servicemen leaving to serve in World War 2, patriotic activities during the war, and welcome home functions for returning servicemen. Films were shown there regularly in the 1940s and it was later used by a badminton club. In more recent times it was used for displays on annual craft days and for monthly markets.

The War Memorial Hall was the property of the Domain Board which maintained it using local resources. In 1946, the hall was partly re-modelled and two more memorial plaques were added commemorating men from the district who had been killed in World War 2.

Thus, it became a memorial to local men whose lives were sacrificed in two world wars. Later upgrades were made to the toilets, ceiling and kitchen.



*The War Memorial Hall in 2019
Unused because of earthquake risk.*

In 1992, responsibility for all the Domain Board properties was taken over by the Waipa District Council which has continued to maintain the building which it lists as a Category C Heritage Item, of local community value. A 1997 Heritage Survey recorded "that it is associated with important aspects of the history of the country and district, that it is important to the community consciousness, that it is a physical landmark, has commemorative value, has educational, historical and social value for present and future generations, and has a good level of integrity."

Where Now?

When a decision is made about its future, it will be important to remember that the War Memorial Hall was built in response to public demands, that its construction and later improvements were funded by local people, that it commemorates local men who gave their lives in the service of their country and that it has served as an important venue for the community for almost 97 years. The War Memorial Hall is an iconic reminder of who we are.

Ros Empson & Alan Hall

A disputed architect's fee

The decision to build a public hall as "a memorial to our fallen soldiers", was made at a meeting in Pirongia on 27 May 1919, when a committee chaired by T.C. Grace was appointed to pursue the matter. Soon afterwards, the committee decided that the building should be of ferro-concrete, 80 x 30 feet (24.3 x 9.1 meters) in size. Mr Grace then approached architects for preliminary plans of what they might offer. One of those architects was John Blechynden of Warren & Blechynden in Hamilton who was told that the cost should not exceed £1,500. The architect said that the cost for what was wanted was more likely to be £1,800. Nevertheless, he was asked to submit a proposal with his ideas, which he did on 13 June. However, receipt of his plan was never acknowledged. On 18 September Blechynden submitted an account, charging £22-10s (\$45) for his work. This was also ignored by Mr Grace until it was followed up by two letters from Blechynden's solicitor. At that stage, Grace returned Blechynden's plan saying that it did not meet the committee's requirements and that there had been no agreement about a fee. However, Warren & Blechynden pursued the matter of payment in the Hamilton Magistrate's Court. The case was heard in November 1920, by which time construction of the hall by Closey Brothers, using plans by Tommy McInnes of Te Awamutu had already begun. Judgement was in favour of Warren & Blechynden. The case was appealed in the Supreme Court in August 1921 when the original judgement was upheld.