



NEWSLETTER

No. 6: November, 2006

Pirongia Historic Visitor Centre
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Craft Day

The Pirongia Craft Day on 23 September was an outstanding success for the Historic Visitor Centre which welcomed a record 222 visitors during the day. One obvious reason was that this year, as the result of a request by the Executive Committee, the Craft Day organisers left some stall sites in front of the Centre vacant so that visitors could find their way in. The outside demonstration by three apprentice blacksmiths (Ben van der Sande, Cameron McKenzie and Rory McDonald) drew attention to the place, and inside, Garry Grace's demonstration of traditional Maori flax cloak weaving was also a draw-card. We are grateful to these people for their support, to our members who supplied food, and of course to the volunteers who staffed the Centre on the day.



Cameron McKenzie at the anvil, outside the Historic Visitor Centre on Craft Day.

Archaeological Tour

On November 11, the Centre held the first of what, we hope, will become regular Archaeological tours of historical sites around Pirongia. The 20 participants visited Matakaitaki, Paterangi and Waiari Pa sites, the site of a water-powered flour mill in Grey Road, the location of General Cameron's headquarters at Te Rore, the East and Armed Constabulary Redoubts in Pirongia, the site of the Whatiwhatihoe settlement. Along the way, a number of other sites of interest were observed from the bus.



The tour group at the East Redoubt.

Members assisted Nick and Ros Empson who catered for lunch at historic Auburn, Paula McWha handled the bookings and Alan Hall acted as tour guide.

Because there was a waiting list of 10 people who were unable to take part, a repeat will be held in February, and those who missed out will be given priority.

Coming Events

Archaeological Tour: A repeat of the November tour will be held on Saturday, 17 February, 2007. Participation will again be limited to 20 people.

The Path of War: On Sunday, 25 February, next year (2007) the Executive Committee is planning a trip for members, following the 1863-64 Path of War, commencing at the Queen's Redoubt, Pokeno. We plan to travel in cars, visiting as many sites as can be comfortably fitted in, including sites at Meremere, Rangariri, Te Rore and possibly Rangiaowhia and Hairini. We will enjoy a picnic lunch along the way.

If you are interested in taking part, please leave a message on the Centre answerphone and further details will be provided closer to the event.

Thanks for recent support to ...

Boy and Sharon de Theiry who loaned a picture of Mihi Reynolds for display on Craft Day.

Garry Grace who again demonstrated traditional flax cloak weaving on Craft day.

Ben van der Sande, Cameron McKenzie and Rory McDonald who demonstrated the crafts of a blacksmith outside the Visitor Centre on Craft Day.

Dave Bowler for the opportunity to scan photographs of the old fire station located in Franklin Street, opposite the Visitor Centre as well as the fire-fighting trailer which was stored there prior to the establishment of the Pirongia Fire Force.

Waipa District Council for a Community Grant to purchase and install a telephone.

Olwyn Verhoef for a copy of the Te Rore School Centennial Booklet.

Maureen McMonagle who made available copies of some other publications about the Te Rore school and district for the Centre to photocopy.

Paula McWha who handled the bookings for the Archaeological Tour.

Nick and Ros Empson for arranging a delicious lunch for the Archaeological Tour.

Margaret Holroyd for a 1957 photograph of the old gaol.

The New Zealand Community Trust for a grant which will allow the Centre to purchase a vacuum cleaner.

Welcome to new members

Ngaire and Ron Phillips
Basil and Rosemary Coles.
Angela Ormsby.
Robin Astridge
Margaret Holroyd

**To all our volunteers:
Thank you for your stalwart
services during 2006.**

Since August

12 September: Honorary Life Membership presented to Mary Hurst, followed by a talk about W.G.Mair.

23 September: Craft Day with record visitor numbers.

28 October: Marilyn and Les Yeates, Patricia Grierson and Alan and Glenyss Hall represented the Centre at the re-opening of the refurbished and extended museum facilities at Kawhia. The Auckland Museum Society returned the big snapper caught at Kawhia many years ago which has been languishing in storage at the Auckland War Memorial Museum for some years. It has been splendidly restored.

8 November: Centre visited by a bus-load of Kings Empire Veterans members and supporters involved in a bowls tournament in Te Awamutu.

11 November: Archaeological Tour.

22 November: Centre visit by 13 members of Te Pahu Rural Women.



Olwyn Verhoef presents Sabina Owen with a copy of the *Te Rore School and District Centennial* booklet.

Vacuum Cleaner

Thanks to a grant from the New Zealand Community Trust, we are now able to purchase a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter. This should help keep dust to a minimum, which is important for the preservation of museum collections.

We're on the Phone!

Did you notice the telephone number and email address in the Newsletter header?

Thanks to a Waipa District Council Community Grant, the Centre now has a telephone, with an answer-phone to record after hours messages. At the same time, broadband internet access was also installed.

The Centre can now be contacted by telephone at (07) 871 9018 or by email at pirongia.hvc@xtra.co.nz

Footprints of History

Members may have noticed that no new edition of *Footprints of History* has been published since No.28, in June, 2004. From the time of the first edition in 1989, this journal provided a developing resource of information about the history of the Waipa District and King Country. It was a collaborative enterprise supported by the Te Awamutu, Otorohanga, and Te Kuiti Historical Societies, together with the Waitomo Caves Museum Society. However, the driving force was a small group of members of the Te Awamutu Historical Society, led by the late Jim Mandeno and the late Ted Hunwick. Following their deaths, issues continued to be published, but the ranks of the Te Awamutu Society are now thinned to the point where that society is in recess.

It has been decided that a new publication will be established, based on the Te Kuiti Historical Society. However, its form will be different, just as *Footprints of History* was different from the *Te Awamutu Historical Society Journal* when it ceased publication in 1975.

We look forward to the new publication, and Mary Hurst gives a heart-felt sigh of relief, because she was the secretary-treasurer of *Footprints* for many years and is pleased to have its future finally determined.

An Index for Footprints of History

When the Pirongia Historic Visitor Centre was being established in 2003, Dave Tuson created an alphabetic index to the editions of *Footprints* published at that time. More recently, Alan Hall and Len Styles reformatted that index on a spreadsheet and added other data, including all the editions to No.28 and keywords for each entry.

Putting it into a spreadsheet allows the list to be sorted by edition and page, or by author, and the addition of keywords allows the spreadsheet's *search and find* utility to locate entries which include a particular word in the title of an article, or in the keywords indicating what the article is about.

Other museums have shown interest in obtaining copies.

Recently Acquired

Recently, the Historic Visitor Centre purchased a complete set of editions of the *Te Awamutu Historical Society Journal* printed in cyclostyled format from March, 1966 to December, 1975. Like *Footprints of History*, this journal is a valuable repository of information about the history of the district. For example, in six issues between September, 1967 and December, 1969 the transcribed diaries of Constable Neil McLeod of the Armed Constabulary were printed in serial form. Because McLeod was based in Alexandra, they contain many cryptic pieces of information about the settlement in the 1870s. The *Journal* also includes a number of well-researched articles about the Maori history of the area by the late Dr J.W.B. Robertson.

The next step will be to create an index similar to that developed for *Footprints of History* to facilitate the location of articles on particular subjects.

Anniversary Publications

The Visitor Centre is accumulating a useful collection of anniversary publications from the district and school jubilees of centres around Pirongia. They frequently include useful accounts of historical events and other local information. We are very pleased to have them.

The latest was a centennial booklet from Te Rore School and District which was presented to President Sabina Owen by Olwyn Verhoef when a group of the Te Pahu Rural Women visited the Centre recently. Coincidentally, Maureen McMonagle also recently loaned us other jubilee publications from Te Rore for copying.

Whilst it is particularly good to have original copies, the opportunity to photo-copy such documents is also valued.

In the Pipeline

Alan Hall has been working with Mary Hurst on a revision of our booklet about historic walks in Pirongia Village. A number of members of the Executive Committee have also contributed ideas and the text is nearing completion. The inclusion of additional photographs is currently being negotiated with the Te Awamutu Museum and it is hoped that the new booklet will be printed before Christmas.

On the Internet

If you have access to the Internet you may be interested in this website about New Zealand history.

www.matapihi.org.nz gives you access to an extensive range of historical pictures and maps from places like the Alexander Turnbull Library.

Try keywords like *Alexandra*, *Pirongia*, *Te Rore*, *Paterangi* or *Waiari*.