

NEWSLETTER

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A Full House

When Oliver McLeod talked about his geological survey of Mount Pirongia at our AGM in 2019, he told us that when his map and an accompanying interpretive book were published, he would like to come back to the Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre for the book launch. As a result, on 18 November, the Waikato Branch of the Geoscience Society of New Zealand held its launch of *Geology of the Pirongia Volcano, Waikato* to a packed attendance. We had anticipated an attendance of perhaps 40 people, but somehow we managed to pack more than twice that number into the building for the occasion. The meeting was chaired by Dr Adrian Pittari, president of the branch, but the highlight of the evening was Oliver McLeod's talk about the research which culminated in the publication. A lively discussion was followed by brisk sales of the map and book.



A part of the record crowd listening to Oliver McLeod

The book launch was followed by further presentations at Kawhia, Te Awamutu, Raglan and Hamilton, by the end of which the publication stock was exhausted and a re-print is under way. It is pleasing to note that Dr Oliver McLeod, as he became in December, has since raised Kickstarter funding to undertake a follow-up investigation of the geology of Mount Karioi.

Personnel Changes

Late in October, members of the Executive Committee and a few volunteers who regularly open the Centre, gathered for a pizza luncheon to honour the volunteer service of **June Bright** who stepped down from opening the centre, a duty which she has undertaken monthly since about 2005. June has a long history of voluntary community involvement in the Waipa, as recorded in the 1993 publication *Women of Waipa*. Her association with Pirongia is associated with the fact that she owns land on Sainsbury Road and has always been interested in the history of the area. President Marilyn Yeates spoke warmly of June's engagement in Centre activities.



Andrea was also presented with flowers

The same occasion was also used to farewell **Andrea Thrower** who, as the Centre's Administration Coordinator, has been employed on administrative duties on the front desk for half-days on Tuesdays and Thursdays since 2015. Her service to the Centre was acknowledged by Marilyn who wished her well for her family's move to Te Kauwhata.

Andrea's replacement as Administration Coordinator is **Jenny Mortland** who is currently being familiarised with her duties. Like Andrea, she is employed for 5 hours a week, split into half days on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



June was presented with flowers by Marilyn



Jenny being briefed by Ros Empson

Thanks for Support

- **ROS EMPSON** who acted as Administration Coordinator until the recent appointment of a replacement.
- **BRENT MEALING & ROBERT MCWHA** who, with **CHARLIE COLES**, prepared the site for the new storage shed and arranged its construction.
- **PAULA MCWHA** who manages our Facebook page which continues to attract large numbers of likes.

BBQ for Members

Join us at the War Memorial Hall from 6:00pm on Wednesday 24 February for what has become the annual Heritage & Information Centre BBQ to get the New Year under way.

Bring meat to cook on the barbie, an accompanying dish to share, and your favourite tippie.

There will be no charge.

Improving Visitor Numbers

The Covid 19 epidemic lockdowns had a disastrous effect on our visitor statistics. They took effect just before the end of the 2019-20 financial year. The Centre was then closed for the first three months of the present financial year and we continue to be affected by the absence of overseas visitors. Nevertheless, since July, our numbers have been surprisingly good. In fact, the July total exceeded the totals for July in the previous two years, and against all expectations, the October total of 456 was one of our best months ever. So, although 2020-21 appears to be running about 1000 visitors behind last year's total, we seem to be doing pretty well, considering our circumstances.

For your diary

Wednesday, 24 Feb: PHIC Annual BBQ at the War Memorial Hall. Drinks and nibbles from 6:00 pm.

From the Committee

After interviews with a number of applicants, Jenny Mortland has been appointed to be our new Administration Coordinator.

The Centre has a new and more dependable power switchboard that was installed last year by Trustpower.

A new postcard on sale at Centre for \$2 features an up-to-date photo of the Centre, including the wagon-shelter.

Check that your membership is up-to-date. There are a few memberships still in arrears.

A Storage Shed

During December, a small kitset building was erected next to the Centre's Archive Room. It will be used to store items such as chairs, spare fittings and other equipment which currently clutter the archive room workspace. It is planned to line the building, insulate it and fit it out for secure storage.



The new storage shed.

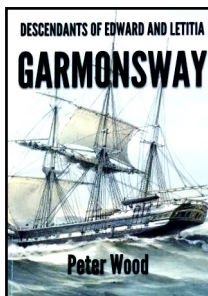
The project is in the capable hands of Brent Mealing and Robert McWha.

Two Native Eels

For some time, DoC has been lending the centre display cases containing stuffed native birds which are regularly changed. They are particularly popular with children. The most recent change has seen the birds replaced by two preserved native freshwater eels: a longfin and a shortfin eel. The longfin which is well over a metre long is estimated to have been 60 years old when collected and the shortfin was about 25 years old. The longfin variety grows characteristically to twice the size of its shortfin counterpart. The display eels are accompanied by interesting information pamphlets.

About the Garmonsways

Recently, author Peter Wood presented the Centre with a copy of his book *Descendants of Letitia and Edward Garmonsway*, published in 2019. It is a detailed and well organised publication which, as its name implies, tells the story of this family who were settlers at Alexandra from the time of its establishment in 1864. The book is especially well-indexed, meaning that it will be easy to locate information in it about particular descendants. Ask for it at the desk.



Dr Edward Waddington - Part 2

As recorded in *Newsletter 60*, Dr Edward Waddington was an important member of the Alexandra community between 1865 and the late 1870s. Not only was he important as a medical practitioner, he was also a significant land owner and farmer who acted as a livestock judge at agricultural shows in the wider Waikato, whilst also fulfilling important roles in the local community. Although he and his sons were living on the corner of Kane Street in the 1870s, he was employed to provide medical services to the Armed Constabulary, which involved him in frequent visits to Hamilton and Cambridge. In 1877, when his medical services to the AC ended, he had a dwelling erected in Hamilton which probably also incorporated medical consulting rooms. However, at that time, he continued to still own his house in Alexandra as well as his 400 acre farm at the junction of the Puniu and Waipā Rivers and had become a member of the Cambridge Farmers Club.

By 1879, Dr Waddington had moved from Hamilton to Cambridge where, in addition to his medical practice, he was a judge at race meetings in Cambridge and Hamilton, the president of the Cambridge cricket club, a judge at agricultural shows, a member of the NZ Agricultural Society, and in 1881 attended the banquet for King Tawhiao who toured the Waikato following his declaration of peace. In other words, Waddington had become a significant member of society in Cambridge and the wider Waikato.

In the circumstances of the growing economic depression in 1880, however, Dr Waddington was forced to issue a petition of bankruptcy. Like many early investors in land, he had mortgaged his properties in order to pay for development and the erection of buildings. It seems that the falling value of land during the 1880s depression meant that his debts exceeded the value of his properties and he was technically in a state of bankruptcy from which he was not eventually discharged until 1892. Nevertheless, the loss of his properties appears not to have affected his social standing. Nor did it appear to interfere with his medical activities which continued to be keenly sought in both Cambridge and Hamilton to where, from 1884, he travelled on one day a week. He also travelled widely over ill-formed roads on errands of mercy to treat the injured and the ill on farms in the wider district. He was an unsuccessful applicant to become the first surgeon at the new Hamilton Hospital in 1887.

Between 1889 and 1891, Dr Waddington moved to Te Aroha where he established a practice associated with the health-giving potential of the hot springs. However, he became seriously ill in September 1891 and spent time under medical treatment in Auckland before returning to recuperate at Cambridge.

He later moved to Morrinsville where, at age 76 he practised from 1895 until the early 1900s, also fulfilling duties as a coroner and, on occasion, assisted the superintendent, Dr Kenny, as chloroformist at the Hamilton Hospital.

In failing health, Dr Waddington, aged 84, left Morrinsville in 1903 to live briefly with the family of his son, Edward Horatio, at Masterton, where he died a month later.



Dr Waddington at Cambridge on his buggy drawn by 'Nellie'. Also pictured are his groom, leaning against the wheel, and Miss Ellen Willson who was his housekeeper for many years at Alexandra and Cambridge.