



# NEWSLETTER

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Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre  
Te Whare Taonga o Ngaa Rohe o Arekahanara

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## Bravo Neu Zeeland: Two Māori in Vienna 1859-1860

In 1859, two Māori men from the Waipā, Hemara Te Rerehau and his older kinsman Wiremu Toetoe, both of Ngati Apakura, joined the crew of the Austrian vessel, Novara, on its circumnavigation of the earth with natural scientists (1857-1859) when it returned to Trieste in August. The scientist, Hochstetter, who stayed on in New Zealand for a further nine months, was instrumental in their joining the crew with the intention that they should visit Austria. He was to catch up with them again when he returned to Vienna in 1860.

Te Rerehau wrote, in Māori, a diary of his experiences, mainly in Austria, providing the basis of a fascinating account and a well-researched interpretation by Helen Hogan which is now available in our library.

Hogan introduces the diary with references to other Māori who had travelled overseas, together with information about the Novara expedition and von Hochstetter. The diary itself is printed in Māori and English on facing pages. It is then interpreted in context, including information about Austria as the men saw it and how they reacted, together with how they were perceived and treated.

Under the oversight of Scherzer, an anthropologist on the Novara, they were based at the Imperial Printery in Vienna where they were introduced to printing, lithography and copperplate engraving, as well as the German language, under the supervision of a young Austrian man who, surprisingly, was studying the Māori language. Once settled in, they attended the official reception for the men from the Novara, and other public events which culminated in being presented to the Emperor Franz Joseph. Later, after Hochstetter's return, they toured Bavaria and Württemberg with him, before travelling to England where they were presented to Queen Victoria. In October 1860, sponsored by the government of Austria, they returned to New Zealand as steerage passengers on the Caduceus which arrived at Auckland on 11 October 1860.

Following the departure of the Māori rangatira, a gift was made to them from the Imperial Printery of a printing press to be used **Two Māori in Vienna 1859-1860 (continued)**

in New Zealand. It was shipped from Trieste and taken to Ngāruawāhia where it was in use late in 1861 for the publication of Te Hokioi e Rere Atu Na, although neither Te Rerehau nor Toetoe appears to have been involved in its printing. The remains of the press are now in the Te Awamutu Museum.

Hogan describes New Zealand as depicted by Hochstetter before outlining significant changes in its national circumstances including the emergence of the Kingitanga and events leading to the Waikato War in 1863.

The book concludes with an account of a later Austrian connection with New Zealand involving Andreas Reischek who betrayed the trust of Māori families, including the family of Te Rerehau. This is an insightful and well-written publication which is rewarding to read.

It is worth noting that Dr Tom Roa and Robbie Neha are descendants of Hemara Te Rerehau.

## Waipa Heritage Forum

Our Centre meets with representatives of Te Awamutu Museum, Cambridge Museum and Kihikihi Police House & Temple Cottage Society several times each year to discuss common issues. Recently we co-ordinated to produce two pamphlets, one on Heritage Experiences in the Waipa Region, and another one on Volunteering. These Pamphlets are available for any of the Forum organizations to print their own copies. They will be available at the Centre.

## New volunteers Rachel Duncan and Richard Jones.



On Craft Market day, Rachel set up her elderly sewing machine, dressed up in period costume and sewed in between talking to visitors. She has also been doing regular duty sessions, which we are very grateful for.

Richard, having a lot more understanding of the internet than many of us, has done excellent work in developing more information on our website, as well as regular duty sessions at the Centre.

**Web:** <https://pirongiaheritage.org.nz/>

We also appreciate work by Margaret McQuillan and others to get more onto our Facebook page.

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pirongiaheritage>

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## Visitor Numbers

These remain steady, with noticeable days when it is a holiday, or the sun is shining, or a tour group visits! We keep statistics on our visitor numbers, which enables us to spot trends. With the Pub closed and the Café opposite us no longer in existence, we noticed a definite drop in our number of visitors. This month, even the Hot Bread shop is closed for a few weeks.

This last month of October, we had 167 visitors, and the year from January to October we had 1340 visitors through the doors. Saturday remains our busiest day, with Friday our quietest day. Our lack of volunteers to man the Centre has meant we have had more days closed than we would like. We are continuing to look for more volunteers, (especially for Wednesdays).

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## News from our website

The committee has decided that the current Newsletter will not appear on the website until the next one is published so that paid up members get it first.

Meanwhile we have expanded our publications page with two summaries of Oliver McLeod's geological studies of Pirongia and Karioi written by Alan Hall.

During October we had 126 new users on the website, up from 94 in September.

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## Glenda Mary Bell

Glenda, a valued volunteer at our Centre, passed away in October 2024. She was someone with a long association with our area, many family connections and lots of knowledge about local families and places. Her brother Mac carved the sign-board on our front lawn. Glenda will be sadly missed, and we acknowledge her help and shared wisdom at Te Whare Taonga o Ngaa Rohe o Areka-hanara.



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

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## Barbara Walters



A morning tea was held in July to acknowledge and celebrate the work of Barbara Walters, after her retirement from our committee at the last AGM. Attended by current members, volunteers and family members, this gave an opportunity for us to thank Barbara for all she has done for the Pirongia Heritage & Information Centre.

Barbara has been involved since the early days of the Centre, starting with being a "behind the scenes" worker during the re-siting and construction stage of our Centre building. She became the one who fed the Waikeria workers morning tea and lunch, showing our gratitude for the time they spent bringing our building back into a state we could use and appreciate. During this time her husband Murry was involved with projects such as installing the toilet and building the entry deck, with Keith Ormsby and others.

Barbara was on the committee for many years, including some years as President. She assisted in the production of many of our display panels, proof read the newsletters and looked after our library of books, both the Mary Scott books and the general history library. Her effort and contributions are gratefully remembered!

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## Painting the Centre



With the funds from Waipa District Council Heritage Grant, we have been able to employ JL Connolly Ltd, painters, to repaint the most vulnerable areas of our building. Unfortunately we could not stretch to painting the whole structure, but with these high level areas attended to, and some other high need timbers repainted, we are looking neat and tidy.

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## Maps for sale

The AA used to supply us with free tourist maps of New Zealand, which were greatly appreciated by our visitors. AA decided to stop printing these, and we were continuing to have a demand for a printed map of the country.

We are now stocking maps of New Zealand, printed by Minimaps, which we charge \$5 a map, to cover our costs. These are continuing to sell, as many people appreciate seeing a large-scale map as well as the maps on their mobile phones!

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## From the Archives

One of our members, Don Thomas, gave us lots of information about the Sifleet family, which we will add to our archives. We have a file of 222 Family names, and this is steadily growing, and we regularly get requests for information about early district families. These requests sometimes also mean we get more information or images to add to our growing files.

One name which is in our list is Fleur Adcock. She is a well-known poet, whose grandparents lived at Te Rauamo. She never lived in our area herself, but wrote a book of poems called *The Land Ballot*, published by Victoria University Press in 2014 about her family memories. Fleur visited the Centre and gave us a copy of her book which we have in our library. She married twice in NZ to well known people (Alister Campbell and Barry Crump) but spent most of her working life in England, receiving many awards including the Queens Gold Medal for Poetry. Her sister is also a well known writer, Marilyn Duckworth. Sadly, Fleur Adcock has just passed away in October 2024.