

# The Papakura Sentinel



Number 55

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## Editorial

It’s hard not meeting as we go in and out of lockdown again, but the important thing is looking after each other, and we’re surviving Delta. Again staff have been working from home or rattling around in an empty Museum, we have exhibitions that no-one visits (Faka-Tokelau), while the Anne Frank exhibition will happen if we can get into Level 2 soon enough, although without the full impact we had hoped for. We’ve also had cancelled meetings, including the AGM, and some interesting talks, and cancelled trips. Hopefully members have enjoyed their walks.

Even so, we have some milestones to report!

First, it’s something we’ve talked about for some time, and some efforts have been made, but at last, through the efforts and tech-savvy of Rosie, our multi-talented Media-Receptionist, *Sentinel* can now be read on our website. Thanks, Rosie.

Second, we are grateful to two of our members who donated the new screen and its stand so that the Museum can show digital images. Thanks Wendy and Corallie.

Third, we now have a walking map for old Papakura with brochure (photos and information) to go with it. Again thanks to all those who have made it happen. To Kay for looking after the funding and business side, to Ione and Rosie for editing and arranging it, to the 9 people who joined the pioneer walk and shared their knowledge and memories of the places. It’s been a bit of a trek but it has been fun. The material is available for groups and for self-directed exploration. You can run, cycle, walk or drop in and out by car. It was going to be part of the doomed Auckland Heritage Festival, but we will conduct a walk when we can. It will be free.

There’s always a silver lining, and Delta has also helped delay the destruction of our built heritage by capital-injected wreckers. Speaking of which we have had some discussion by Zoom or email which might at least offer a

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way for us to identify and research places, trees and buildings of historical and social value to inspire action that will lead to the listing or protection of some of them. Sometimes it seems a little petty and privileged to bang on about protection for buildings when there are other issues like poverty, homelessness, increased inequality and social injustice, but all these issues are connected. One reason for helplessness and hopelessness is the loss of identity and the feeling that no-one notices or cares. Another is the unequal power that money confers.

Our delayed AGM will be by Zoom on 28 October at 1pm, and we hope a goodly number will be able to attend, or get in touch with me beforehand—see message going out with the Sentinel—with your ideas and suggestions and nominations. Our energetic President Margaret is stepping down, and will be missed. We would like to take this opportunity to thank her and also Peter Costar for their work on the Executive. Peter and the Costar family have contributed much to the Museum, and for Peter this has meant long travels from the Waikato.

And as if that's not enough change, we are wishing our able and amiable Curator Ione all the best, as she and Cameron are expecting a baby in early March, so she will be taking a year's leave of absence. Meanwhile Ione has been working on the archaeological material on Rings Redoubt during Lockdown and reports below on some of the interesting stories coming from the exploration of the site. The other two articles are connected. Edna Carson takes us out just beyond Ring's Redoubt to tell the story of the Travellers' Rest inn and the interesting lives of the early founder and licensees. And your editor reports on the transforming power of the discovery of gold on the settlers who started at Kirikiri. You might remember one of the Kirikiri settlers—brother of the gold-discoverer no less—getting a very sore head getting home from the Travellers' Rest in the last issue.

Read on, enjoy, and best wishes for the future.

*Ed.*

## **Kirikiri/Ring's Redoubt**

### **Ione Cussen**

Papakura Museum was recently the beneficiary of the archaeological dig at the Kirikiri or Ring's Redoubt. In 2017, archaeologists were contracted by Cabra Developments to assess and excavate Ring's Redoubt before a large housing development started in the area. The dig by Richard Shakles of Clough and Associates unearthed a plethora of militaria: buttons, bullets, and musket balls, and as well a variety of everyday objects: teacups, beer bottles, coins, clay pipes and cattle bones. Our thanks to the archaeologists for the donation of these artefacts.

The redoubt at Kirikiri came to be known as Ring's Redoubt after Captain Ring, who led the 200 men from the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Regiment who were placed there in 1863. The redoubt was a British military post located at the top of the Papakura-Clevedon (Wairoa) Road and was used during the Waikato Campaign of the New Zealand Wars to protect the settlers and military lines in the area and to patrol the Hunua forests, working with the Forest Rangers based at the Travellers' Rest (next article). The first Kirikiri settlers who arrived on the *Viola* in April 1865 also stayed in tents at the Redoubt while building their homes.

The finds from the redoubt dig tell stories of everyday life in the British Army during the nineteenth century, but also spark some interesting theories that we can speculate over.

During the Waikato Campaign, many colonial families in and around Papakura temporarily left their homes and moved out of the way of potential conflict. Their cottages and homesteads were vacant, but still full of belongings. Most Maori also left the area. Te Akitai were expelled and the local community arrested before their land was confiscated in 1864. Others moved south to the safety of the Waikato, while a small armed minority remained in the shelter of the Hunua Ranges to keep an eye on their lands and those who remained, and conducted some raids.

During this time, theft from settler homes was rampant. At the time, much of the blame was put on Maori, despite there being few tangata whenua left in the area. Finds from the Ring's Redoubt dig further question the assumption that Maori were to blame. A slither of a gold ring and a black garnet with marks that suggest that it was prised from a ring were found under floorboards at the redoubt. These, along with two smashed chest locks found in the dig, strongly suggest that it was the soldiers, not Maori, who were looting homesteads. The slither of gold ring, rather than a whole ring, also suggest that the loot was pieced out, or had been cut up to sell more easily or inconspicuously. Although it could be argued that the gold slither and garnet belonged to one of the men at the redoubt, the circumstances of the find



Above: scratched garnet and sliver of gold.



Left: two smashed locks.

From Ring's Redoubt archaeological dig.

Papakura Museum

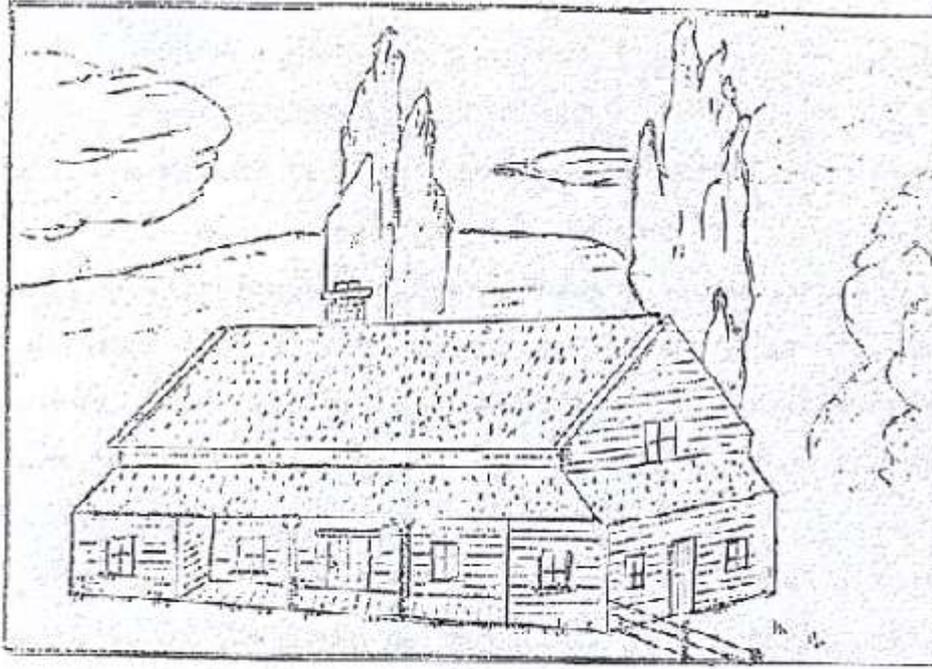
- being stashed under the floorboards - suggest otherwise. Contemporary newspapers also reveal that some British soldiers in the area were convicted of theft, and some were even sent to Australia on penal sentences. It's therefore only a small step to attribute these precious finds to British soldiers looting local homes.

An enormous number of bottles - beer, champagne, gin, oil, medicinal - were found during the Ring's Redoubt dig. This was to be expected, as the soldiers didn't take rubbish with them; rubbish pits were dug at best, or things were left to lie where they were discarded. Some of the champagne bottles had sliced necks, suggesting that an officer had opened the bottle with their sword blade in a dramatic swoop. Some of the beer bottles also had sliced necks. We think it is likely that soldiers may have mimicked their superiors (sarcastically? I hope so!) and used their bayonet to slash the tops off beer bottles. I entirely accept that it may be historical embellishment to imagine a group of foot soldiers having a laugh while mocking the grandiosity of their superiors. However, the concept provides an interesting lens to consider the soldiers through and brings some human elements to what is otherwise just another broken 160-year-old beer bottle.

The finds from archaeological digs are an interesting beast to work with. Most of the finds can only be contextualized through what we know of the redoubt, but like much of history, there are often more questions than answers. However, every piece of broken bottle or stashed gemstone brings us closer to understanding more about our past, or at least gives us more questions to ask.



carrying some of their possessions. It is believed that a large two-roomed raupo whare built by the local Maoris was their first home. Ben sold off 46 acres of this land to a Mr Webb soon afterwards to provide funds, while he and his sons started to fell some of the surrounding trees for timber and to clear land ready for planting crops and grazing cattle. It took them over three years to clear most of the land and to saw



enough timber to build a two-storey house to accommodate their large family, along with stables and other outbuildings. The house itself had a passageway in the centre with two rooms on both sides, further passageways with extra rooms along the side exterior walls and bedrooms in the upstairs loft. There were verandahs at the front and back, which were later boarded up for protection during the early days of the Waikato War.

The family settled into their farming life and the older boys explored the Hunua Ranges. This provided them with experience they put to good use later during the New Zealand Wars. More settlers moved into the district and the now widened track between Wairoa and Papakura saw an increasing number of travellers making their way between the two districts, all of whom were assured of a good welcome from Martha at the house which Ben had named the Travellers' Rest. It was not long before Ben realised that this would also be a good opportunity to get a steady income from their home. When the Licensing Act 1858 came into force, he applied for and was granted a 'bush license', as his house met the requirements of this Act which stated:

It must contain at least two moderate sized sitting rooms and two sleeping rooms ready and fit for public accommodation, independent of the apartments occupied by the family of the License Holder, and also be provided with a place of accommodation on or near the premises to prevent nuisances or offences against decency.

An advertisement appeared soon afterwards in the *New Zealander* of 1 February 1860:

B. Smith begs to inform the Public that he has completed the improvements at his Hotel, and is now ready to accommodate Private Parties, Families, and others with private sitting and bedrooms, and with every attention conducive to their comfort and convenience. Good stabling for horses, &c., &c.

Now that weary travellers were able to get a glass of ale or rum as well as a cup of tea, Ben and Martha continued to provide hospitality to all who visited, including members of the clergy. The Rev. Vicesimus Lush in his journal entry of 28 June 1860 gave a contemporary portrait of Ben:

I left their hospitable house (Wheelers) and rode four miles to an inn called The Travellers' Rest kept by a 'character' by name, Benjamin Smith, a short, stout, strong man with a great beard and bushy whiskers. He received me with great respect and soon placed before me a capital tea with a very tempting hot beefsteak. Shortly after tea, mine Host entered and entertained me for an hour and better, with some of his adventures in California among the gold diggers.

Rev. Thomas Norrie, the local Presbyterian minister, also gratefully testified to the welcome and hospitality he received at the Travellers' Rest on his journeys by horseback along the track to visit his outlying parishioners, while Bishop Selwyn also preached there to settlers from Hunua and Wairoa before churches were built. It was said on these occasions 'that Ben had attended to matters spirituous while the Bishop to

matters spiritual, both giving satisfaction in their respective dioceses’.

At the outbreak of the Waikato War in 1863, the inn again came into prominence, as it was at this time that relations between the Europeans and Maoris deteriorated over the question of land. When war became imminent, a number of redoubts were constructed between Papakura and Wairoa and the Travellers’ Rest was well fortified. Rev. Lush made mention of this in his journal:

When I reached Ben Smith’s – The Travellers Rest – I pulled up to have a chat: his house is fortified after the fashion of the kirk, the outside encased with 3 inch timber and where the windows are, loopholes left for firing through. This may give a feeling of security to the family but it makes the inside of the house monstrously dark and dismal.

Gustavus Ferdinand von Tempsky, at that time a war correspondent for the *Daily Southern Cross* before undertaking an important leadership role during the New Zealand Wars, had often met the proprietor of the Travellers’ Rest while he was a reporter. He also mentioned that on one of his visits there that ‘old Smith had strengthened and loop-holed his home’. This was to provide safety not only for the family but also for any of the local settlers and their children who wanted to find shelter within its walls rather than leave the district.

As fears of war progressed, one of the Smith daughters later remembered hearing a discussion between Sir George Grey, another frequent visitor to the inn, and William Jackson from the Papakura Valley (later Wairoa) Rifle Volunteers, recommending the formation of a troop of men who had sufficient experience in the bush to scout and track down Maori settlements in the Hunua Ranges. By early August 1863, a band of ‘active young men, having some experience of New Zealand forests’, known later as the Forest Rangers, had been formed under Jackson’s leadership. The Forest Rangers made their headquarters in one of the outbuildings at the Travellers’ Rest, which by this time included a store, bakehouse and stabling for up to 50 horses. The inn was an ideal place for the headquarters, as it was close to the Hunuas and provided extensive outhouse accommodation and space for the men’s camp across the Wairoa Road, as well as being close to a military post if help was needed. For Ben Smith there were the added benefits of having the protection of the soldiers and of gaining extra profit from accommodating them. The Smith family as a whole played an important role during this period, with two of the boys joining the Forest Rangers, while Martha and the girls attended to the daily food and beverage needs of the men stationed there and those from nearby redoubts patrolling the road. Although there were raids on many of the outlying settlers’ farms during this time and some settlers killed by a group of younger Maoris associated with the Pukekiwiriki Pa, from where they had been driven out earlier, the older Maoris had great regard for Ben Smith and dissuaded those responsible from also attacking the Travellers’ Rest by reputedly telling them that ‘Hemiti has been very good to us and we owe him for plenty of flour and sugar’.

After the cessation of the war, Ben’s health started to deteriorate because of the extra workload at the inn and on the farm that had been necessary during this period. He no longer had the help of two of his sons, who had married and left the district. In early 1865, he tried to let both the farm and the Travellers’ Rest inn. This was unsuccessful and he struggled on with the day-to day running of the property for two more years before he died on 27 September 1867, leaving Martha, his ‘cheerful wife’ to manage the inn with the other children still living at home. Folk in the district long afterwards remembered Ben as a kind-hearted man, who unlike some landlords in remote areas did indeed keep his place as a ‘travellers’ rest’.

In his will, Ben had left Martha the household furniture and contents and a life interest in all his real estate property. He appointed Samuel Jackson of Auckland and John McDonald of Wairoa South to be trustees. The oldest son, William Benjamin, carried on the farming operations for some years until these were later sold, while Martha managed the inn and had the publican’s license transferred into her name. She did this successfully for over 15 years and visitors who stayed there during this time often praised the high standards of service she provided. One of these visitors was Sir George Bowen who, with a party of friends, had stayed there for a few days’ pheasant shooting in the district. He reported afterwards that they had been very impressed with the abundance of the game, and especially with the accommodation, cleanliness and comfort of the Travellers’ Rest. This sentiment was echoed by other parties of sportsmen who were ‘rather surprised to see such good accommodation in a bush public-house – quite equal to a family hotel in town’.

Despite running a fairly prosperous business, Martha started to feel the effects of her advancing years and the remaining 57 acres which included the Travellers' Rest were put up for sale:

#### HOTEL FOR SALE

"The Travellers Rest", South Wairoa Road. The house contains 19 rooms, and has extensive out-buildings, about 57 acres of good land, divided into suitable paddocks, a fine orchard of about 2 acres, never-failing stream of water. Apply to J.M. & J. Mowbray, Land Agents, 42 Queen Street.

After the sale of the Travellers' Rest, Martha retired to Ponsonby where she died on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1891.

The next publican, Emma Hope, was an equally indomitable, hardworking and resourceful woman. She had been born in Shropshire about 1833, married one John Corbett, who had died soon afterwards, then married John Hope and had emigrated to Canterbury with him and three of their respective children as assisted passengers on the *Chariot of Fame* in 1863. On arrival, the family had lived briefly in Christchurch before moving to Timaru. Life had not been easy for Emma there and when she could no longer tolerate the abuse from her drunken layabout of a husband, which had meant being the main breadwinner for the by then family of eight children, she began planning ways to make a fresh start without him. While still in Timaru in 1880, she bought the lease of the Railway Hotel at Pleasant Point nearby but was unable to get the publican's license transferred to her because of opposition from the local police. This could possibly have been because her name (and that of her husband John Hope) often featured in civil proceedings in the Timaru District Court. Not deterred by this setback, she resold the lease, left her husband and moved to Auckland with most of her children. On finding out that the Travellers' Rest inn was for sale and had been managed previously by a woman, she bought the property for £625 with a large mortgage from Samuel Jackson on 12 March 1883. The next hurdle she had to overcome was that the Licensing Act 1881 had decreed that a married woman could not hold a publican's license in her own name. To bypass this regulation and because she was unknown in the district, she applied for the license as a widow using the name of her previous husband:

#### NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A PUBLICAN'S LICENSE

I, EMMA ELIZABETH CORBETT, of Ardmore, Wairoa South, do hereby give notice that I desire to obtain, and will, at the next Licensing Meeting, to be holden at the Public Hall, Wairoa, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of June 1883, apply for a certificate authorising the issue of a Publican's License for a house situate at Ardmore, and known as the Traveller's Rest, containing ten rooms, exclusive of those required for the use of the family.

Dated the 15th day of May, 1883.

EMMA ELIZABETH CORBETT

The Wairoa South Licensing Committee duly granted her the license and she had no problems renewing it for six years, as according to all the police reports, she had conducted the hotel 'in a most satisfactory manner'.

The Travellers' Rest continued to provide hospitality to all the settlers in the surrounding districts until 1889 when her husband tracked her down, arrived in the district and made it publicly known that she was his wife. This meant that Emma could have been prosecuted for illegally getting a publican's license. However, the licensing committee and the police were clearly sympathetic with her domestic situation and despite being urged by Sir William Fox, a well-known prohibitionist, to have her prosecuted, they continued to renew her license, though from then on it was under her married name, Emma Elizabeth Hope. Against all odds, she retained her license and continued working as a publican for several more years. Her time at the Travellers' Rest, however, came to an end when on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1894 the hotel burned down after a fire had started in the kitchen. She was given permission to carry on in a temporary building for six months by which time a new building would need to be erected. Evidently, as the cost of this would have been prohibitive and beyond her financial means, this meant the end of the Travellers' Rest as a licensed hotel.

Emma had two unsuccessful attempts to get the license transferred to other hotels. In 1895 she eventually managed to have the license of the Falls Hotel in Henderson transferred to her and she remained there until 1899. After visiting one of her daughters in Timaru, she moved to Parnell the following year to stay with Elizabeth, her eldest daughter. However, it seems that the connection with Ardmore still remained. When Elizabeth and her family moved to the property at Ardmore for Elizabeth to become postmistress in 1901, Emma went with them, possibly to help with the children as Elizabeth did not keep very good health. The Ardmore

(formerly Wairoa Road) Post Office had been established in 1885 in the old building used by the Forest Rangers, which had been shifted behind the farm house, and was closed in 1912. Following her daughter's return to Parnell and although now in her seventies, Emma took over the position of postmistress in January 1905 almost until her death on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1907. She died in her daughter's Parnell house but was buried in the cemetery at St James Church, Ardmore within sight of the former Travellers' Rest. The 57 acres of land on which the hotel had stood was sold to Frederick Mullins on 13 February 1908 after probate had been granted for her estate and it was said that the ruins of some of the outbuildings could still be seen many years later.

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Papakura Museum Archives

*Papers Past* articles about the Travellers' Rest

# KIRIKIRI

## 5. Staying, leaving, returning

**Rob Finlay**

The district constable at Papakura for almost two years had been Thomas Campbell, one of the *Viola* settlers. But he resigned from his post on the first day of April 1868, and Thomas McCaffrey was appointed as his replacement. Campbell and his family were off to Thames. They would not be the only ones.

The previous article in this series was about the struggling settlement at Kirikiri in those first hard years, 1865—1868. For the most part the mainly Scottish immigrants held together in expectation of the date when three years (1865-1868) occupation of their 10 acre grants would be up and they would be the owners of an asset which they could either farm or sell. For *Viola* settlers that date would be in April of 1868; *Resolute* settlers would have to wait till July. Certainly some were ready to make that break as soon as possible. Their impatience had been shown in the second protest meeting at Drury in early 1866 (previous article) where one demand had been the immediate issuing of the land titles so they could raise mortgages on them. (This solution had also occurred to the Colonial Secretary in London, but the Auckland Provincial Superintendent had stood his ground, partly because the surveys were not complete.)

But in 1868 they knew the time had come. Many nineteenth century immigrants from Scotland, especially those with a rural background, appear to have valued farming and land, but some had mining and industrial skills. A few, especially single men, or those whose trades allowed them to choose an alternative path in Auckland, had already left. But another prospect, which had previously led to some exploratory visits to Thames, opened out

for them in August 1867 when one of their number played a significant part in the Shotover gold strike at the Thames.

The *New Zealand Herald* reported on 27 February 1868:

As the time is almost up for the Kerikeri (sic) settlers receiving their Crown grants, a considerable number of allotments are changing hands at prices varying from £30 to £100, that is from £3 to £10 per acre. Mr. George Clarkson, the famed gold-digger, has purchased six allotments adjoining his own, at prices ranging from £50 to £100: his father-in-law Mr. Bull, bought one for £40, another allotment was also sold at the same price, and one at £35, the owner of which went to Auckland and paid half his passage money, £8, and got ten acres in the ranges at the back of the settlement. Good Is resulting from these changes, as Clarkson is giving the bush-felling of each allotment to its original owner at £2 per acre; he has twelve or fourteen men employed, and is thus circulating a considerable amount of money in the settlement, which in these dull times is very acceptable.'

I have previously written about the rags to riches story of George Clarkson, and the farm he developed and named Kuranui after the site of his good fortune, which later became Everslie (*Sentinel*, #42, Aug 2019 and #44, Dec 2019). But this series is about the Kirikiri community which benefitted from the Thames Gold Rush. Clearly movement didn't wait for the three years to be up: once money was available, people acted.

## THE CALL OF THAMES

**There had been talk of gold** at the Coromandel for some time, and several had gone to search. The Clarksons, all Lanarkshire coal miners, are said to have paid a brief visit to Thames in late 1866. The 'Hauraki Gold Field' was opened up to prospectors at the end of July 1867, and immediately drew a few hopeful men. At first they searched for alluvial gold in streams and on the beach. Back in Kirikiri, news of alluvial gold at the Thames excited interest. The Rev. Vicesimus Lush reported on a visit to Kirikiri on 5 August 1867: 'Found the people rather excited about the rumours now going about of a payable gold field having been found up the Thames', and two days later, 'found a strong "gold fever" seizing the people'.

**George Clarkson** was one of the prospectors. Widowed and without work, he had walked to Auckland and boarded the *Enterprise* for the 17 hour journey to Thames. He boarded at the *whare* of James Mackay, later Warden for the Hauraki Gold Field, while he searched unsuccessfully. Without adequate shelter or food, he was ready to leave for Auckland but was persuaded to join a party who were about to explore the Kuranui stream bordering Native Land. History was made on 10 August when he – or Hunt, who got the credit - struck the rich seam of quartz gold behind a waterfall. The '**Shotover**' strike launched a gold rush that, almost overnight, made Thames a town of 20,000 people, larger than Auckland, and brought wealth to George and his family. Clarkson became one of the owners of the Shotover Mining Co. Regd.

**I**N answer to the advertisement in the *Thames Times*, I, George Clarkson, beg to state that it was I who first struck gold in the Shotover Claim, on August 7th, 1867.

G. CLARKSON.

Advertisement placed by him in the *New Zealand Herald*, 23 and 24/3/1869

Hunt got the kudos, but others gave the credit to Clarkson. In fact he placed notices on consecutive days in the *New Zealand Herald*, to assert his claim to the first discovery. Despite these notices, most reports continued to credit Hunt. Incidentally, John Ebernezer White was the surviving son of one of the earliest Wesleyan missionaries, born in Hokianga in 1835.)

(The 'Shotover' is often spoken of as 'Hunt's claim' but accounts differ about who actually made the find. It was a party of 4— George Clarkson, William Hunt, John Ebernezer White, Henry



MR. G. CLARKSON.

George Clarkson, *NZ Graphic*, 21 July 1909, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, NZG-19090721-33-5

Clarkson was generous with his newfound wealth. He claimed he had spent £4000 providing employment for the diggers in Thames, and back in Papakura he spent thousands more buying land from some of his neighbours and employing them clearing trees, draining and fencing and building his house, which he called Kuranui. George's heart was still in Papakura. A fellow passenger on the *Resolute* had been the Yorkshireman Henry Bull, whose allotment was on the ridge where Opaheke and Boundary roads meet, and George married his daughter Lucy, Glasgow-born, Hull-raised, in December 1867.

He built two houses in Remuera, and indulged his interest in horses, importing five horses and three Shetland ponies on the *Hero*. Word was sent home and his widowed father David, oldest brother James with his family, and youngest brother David immigrated to share the fortune. All the Clarkson men were coal miners; their mother and sister had died. The *Ida Zeigler* sailed from London on 3 August 1868 and arrived in Auckland on 8 November; they probably shipped directly to Thames, in time to join George grieving over the death of his son William from bronchitis on the 9<sup>th</sup>. They may have come back to Papakura with George to bury William beside his mother.

In 1869 the Clarkson family established the Clarkson No 1 Gold Mine and Quartz Crushing Co. in Wiseman's Gully, Shellback Creek. The Shellback Creek was separated from the Kuranui Creek (and the Shotover Co) by the Kuranui Spur. The initial shareholders were James Clarkson with 10,000 shares, William and David (the father initially, but later the son) with 7500 each, George with 5000, all 'of Grahamstown'. John's name was missing, although he was in Thames. (John had registered a miner's right in October 1867, and his son James was born in Thames in March 1870.) The manager was George Ritchie and offices were at Wyndham Chambers, Wyndham St. Soon after, on 7 July, the Clarkson's No 2 Gold Mining Co. was formed with a lease of 12 acres of land adjoining. The Clarkson family historian Judith Moor comments that a total of £49,500 was paid up in forming both companies and asks where the money came from: 'Had their mines been profitable before the companies were formed, was it all borrowed money, or was it George who was their backer? Perhaps it was a combination of all three sources.' She also reports that by 1870 James appeared to be running the mine. He remained in the Thames area mining until 1880-81, though the others were living elsewhere by then.

## Kirikiri men flood to Thames

Others from Kirikiri were not far behind, and George encouraged them to join him. The McGregors had been ready to walk off the land when John, with Thomas Cornes, was invited to join the Clarksons at the Thames in early August 1867. McGregor was a neighbour of George Clarkson, and Cornes lived close to William Clarkson.

Before long there was a flood of Kirikiri men to Thames.

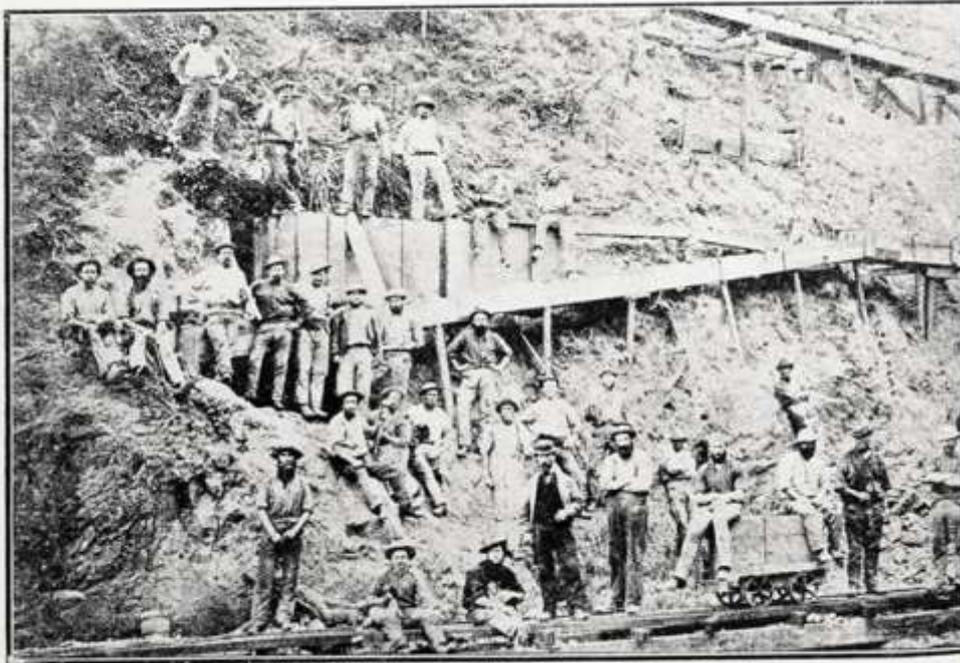
A Goldminers' Database (on the Thames Archive Treasury website) contains a record of miners across New Zealand between 1861 and 1872. A comparison of names on that database with the list of those allocated land in Kirikiri shows that only a few names do not appear on both. Almost every adult male— [Continued page 12]



**PHOTO ESSAY**

The first two photos were published long after they were actually taken, so date or circumstance are unknown. I have used descriptions provided by the relevant libraries.

**Top:** Men and women at the Shotover Mine, Kuranui, Thames. "The men photographed here probably include the discoverers of the claim - George Clarkson, W A Hunt, William Cobley and John Ebenezer White" information from Alexander Turnbull Library record, reference number: 1/1-003165-G There is no date for the photo, but it is possible that the women and children might include Lucy, Jane and William on a visit.



**Left:** The staff employed in the famous Shotover Claim. Published in the *Auckland Weekly News* 2 August 1917, but photographed probably in the late 60s . Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections AWNS-19170802-34-8.

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE THAMES GOLDFIELDS RECALLED: THE STAFF EMPLOYED IN THE FAMOUS SHOTOVER CLAIM, WHERE GOLD WAS FIRST DISCOVERED IN QUANTITY AFTER THE DISTRICT WAS OFFICIALLY PROCLAIMED A GOLDFIELD ON JULY 30, 1867.

How many of these men have come from Kirikiri, Wairoa or Maketu, ex *Viola* or *Resolute*?

**Right:** Looking north from below the Long Drive Claim, showing a miners camp at the mouth of the Kuranui Creek (centre), the path from Thames (Shortland) (left) along Kuranui Bay (left), the bluff leading up to Pukehinau Ridge (right), and Tararu Flat (left centre, distance). Hunt's claim is approximately 150 metres to the right of the camp; Photo R H Bartlett, August 1867. (So we know this photo was taken very soon after the discovery.)

Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 589-317



about 90 names - with some wives and teenage boys, took up miners' rights or lodged claims. A Miner's Right, costing £1, was for a year, had to be worked continuously, was not transferable, and you could only have one at a time, so the record indicates how long they were engaged, either independently or as part of a Party. For some there was a single entry, disclosing a passing engagement, but for others there were serial entries between 1867 and 1872. In addition the 1869 electoral roll for Franklin, which included Thames and the Coromandel, lists many who had land at Kirikiri but were leasing a house in Thames.

Several of the miners rights or claims were in the name of wives—Christina Lister (or McAlister) taking over from her deceased husband in 1870, and Margaret Clarkson. William Veitch's son Muir was 13 when he arrived on the *Viola* in 1865; he bought a Miner's Right in March 1869, when he was 17.

Sometimes the archive provides additional information. For instance the entry on David Murray, (V, blacksmith, Allot 104, Red Hill), notes 'born Scotland, died in Otago', revealing that he moved South from Thames. He was not the only one. The fact that a name is absent in the Goldminer's Database does not mean that they were not in Thames, because a building boom required builders and sawyers, and people had to eat and drink.

Most of the few Kirikiri or Maketu settlers who are not listed remained on their holdings in Papakura, developing, sometimes enlarging their farms: Robert Brydon, James Croskery (who never spoke of being in Thames), Alexander Lyon, John McLennan, David McClymont, the oldest immigrant who was approaching 60 (but his son Thomas took up a miner's right in February 1868), Robert McCrae (though a John 'McRae', who could have been his son, was in Thames), Archibald McDonald, Malcolm Millar, Andrew Pitt, Andrew Scotland, Clark Smith (his family record confirms this). With the possible exception of Andrew Pitt all appear to have been agricultural labourers in Scotland or Ireland, and their absence from Thames probably marked their true inclinations and skills. On the other hand, only two of the Kirikiri settlers recorded as miners on immigration lists would later return to live in Papakura—Francis Mulgrew and William Clarkson.

Others had already left Papakura for other destinations. I will tell the story of Nelson Ireland, Maketu, who was in Newton, Auckland by 1866, later in this article. Others, mainly single men, are harder to track down.

During these early years when the Thames gold rush was at its peak, many of our Kirikiri settlers, like the Clarksons, divided their lives between Papakura and Thames. For some Thames would become home, but for others it was an important interlude in their lives. Most Kirikiri families had two homes for some years, even after title was granted. Very often they were householders or leaseholders in Thames while their property (and until at least 1868) their families were in Kirikiri, apart from visits to be with their menfolk.

Births of Clarkson children tell us something of the comings and goings of wives between Kirikiri, Thames and Remuera in these years. William and Ellen had 7 children in all, 3 born in Scotland (one dying there and another on the *Viola*), and 4 born in New Zealand: the first of these was born in Thames in July 1868, two were born and baptised in Papakura in 1870 and 1873, and the last in Dunedin in 1875. John and Janet had two born in Scotland; one died on the *Viola*, two were born in Kirikiri in early 1866 and late 1867, the next in Thames in 1870 and the last in Papakura in 1871. Of the three of George's and Jane's children born in Scotland one, Jane Symington (named at her Papakura baptism after another *Resolute* immigrant) survived to come to New Zealand, and William was born in Kirikiri in 1866 but died in Thames in November 1868. None of Lucy's children were born in Thames. The families maintained two establishments (a third in Remuera for George and Lucy), with several births in Thames, but all treated Papakura as their base in these years. Once the land was theirs, wives and children could accompany their men to Thames.

It would be hard to overestimate George Clarkson's contribution to the Kirikiri community: his role in launching the gold rush, his investment in mining, in the community and in Kuranui/Everslie farm, his direct employment of others from the Settlement, his participation in the Papakura Association and other local activities. His contribution was psychological as well as financial: he provided an example that others could

emulate. His strong sense of community prompted him to generosity, particularly to the Kirikiri community. It was necessary that some should leave, given the inadequacies of the local economy and 10 acre blocks, and he showed them alternatives. Even as some merged into the wider Thames community strong bonds were kept. Whether they stayed there or returned to Kirikiri, many of them benefited from the profits of gold mining and were able to invest in land and improve their assets.

## The Thames connection—Kirikiri spreads its wings

**Although quite a few would later resume** their lives in Kirikiri, Maketu and Wairoa, others, even some who now held title in Kirikiri, made Thames their new home. Most went as miners, but not all remained mining. Some of their stories will be told in the next issue, but the accounts below relate to some of the people we have previously followed, from as early as August 1867 to the end of the gold rush around 1872.

Initially quite a few were employed by Clarkson. **John McGregor** was one of these neighbours who sold his 10-acre lot to Clarkson in October 1869. He and Thomas Cornes first worked as ‘tributers for Clarkson and then took up a miners right ‘between Waiotahi and Karaka Creeks’ in 1868 —apparently it was not very productive. When the families made the move, the McGregors built a large house in Shortland, Thames. With his background as an iron moulder John worked for a while at the Price Brothers foundry but ten years later took up a responsible position with the successful Moanataiari mine, working closely with Cornes. He and Janet were thinking of a return to farming near Te Aroha, but on election day in 1880, he fell to his death down a deep mine shaft at the Moanataiari mine. A McGregor relief fund, set up by Cornes, was widely subscribed to by friends including John Frater, George Symington, William Brown. In a little over 10 years in Thames he and Janet had raised a family of eight, one born in Kirikiri, and entered fully into community life — in the Fire Brigade, Presbyterian church, Miners’ Association, Thames Scottish Volunteers, the Sir Walter Scott Masonic lodge and local politics. Janet and family remained in Tararu, active in business and rugby, before moving to Auckland at the end of the century.

**Thomas Glen Cornes** bought 12 shares in the Grand Junction Gold Mining Co of Shortland, Thames. By late 1874 he was Senior Deacon of the Thames Walter Scott Lodge of Freemasons. Like many others he was drawn to the possibilities of mining in Australia, and by the end of the century he was in north Queensland at Mt Morgan where gold mining had begun in 1882. There is a record of his arriving from Sydney on the *Zealandia* in 1902. It was his last visit. In July 1903, he died - ‘at his residence, Mt Morgan, Queensland ..., beloved husband of Margaret A Cornes, late of Thames ..., aged 60 years’.

**Charles Davidson**, who had been an iron miner in West Lothian and was former Deputy Superintendent at Kirikiri, had bought a miner’s right as early as February 1868, but had other ambitions. He was one of several Kirikiri people who invested in hotels or became licencees. He bought the Grahamstown Temperance Hotel on Owen’s St in Tookey’s Flat. From October 1868 he advertised ‘alterations complete’ with ‘every comfort’ and with the ‘special aim... to keep such a table as to merit general approval, and at all hours’. He bought shares in mining companies – 200 shares in Clarkson’s No 2 Goldmining Co (Reg), one of the big investors after James Clarkson’s 800 shares; and 800 shares in Otunui Gold Mining Co (Reg). He was elected as one of the Directors for the Scotchman’s United Goldmining Company (Reg). He took up a lease of just over 10 acres at Karaka Creek in February 1870. He also threw himself into public affairs, as one of the foundation Trustees of the Waiotahi Highway Board in September 1868, and in 1869 he was nominated as a candidate to represent Thames in the Provincial Council. To an objection that he ‘was no digger’ he responded that he would represent the mining community; his ‘last sixpence was risked in the goldfield’. However he withdrew (although one vote was cast for him): but that ‘last sixpence’ was portentous. The next years were disastrous for the Davidsons. In May of 1870 he filed for bankruptcy in the Supreme Court at Auckland, with liabilities in his estate

of £1105 and nominal assets at £671 14s 6d, and the Grahamstown Hotel 'of which Mr Davidson has been so long the popular proprietor' was sold in December. The 10 acre lease was surrendered. A few months later, on 1 August, Christina died at Grahamstown: 'aged 40 years.— Home and Australian papers please copy.' Their link with Kirikiri was clear from the funeral planned for the Saturday following: 'from Messrs. Quick and Co's stables, Victoria-street, and from Papakura on the same day at 2 p.m.' Kirikiri, where they had lived for 3 years, was still their social centre. (The reference to Australian newspapers is interesting).

Davidsons were not the only ones to have a go as hotel licensees, and some clearly supported others into these roles. Thames historian Althea Barker records 102 hotel listings in the 1870 Thames Directory and 80 in the Street and Business Directory, but points out that many did not remain open for long. **George McDonald** was at the Kuranui Hotel and then at the London Hotel at Tararu in 1869. **J (John?) Cook** was publican at Crown Hotel, Grahamstown in 1873. **Charles Morrow**, son of Adam and Elizabeth, was publican at Kurunui and then at Prince Arthur Hotels in 1875, living at Sandes St., Shortland, and at Willoughby Hotel in 1877. **Samuel Young** was licensee at Court House Hotel on Queen Street, Grahamstown in 1876, then took up a license at Golden Age Hotel, Waiotahi Creek in 1877-78, before relinquishing it to **Charles Fugill** who held it briefly in 1878. (Hotels of Thames, Althea Barker, 2017). But the couple who made the biggest impact on the social life of Thames were **George and Jane Symondson**. (We'll come back to them next time.)

**Thomas Campbell**, moved to Thames by January 1868, where he was involved in mining in Karaka, Moana-taiari and Waiotahi, and **Anne** and the family joined him in due time. There is a record of Thomas Campbell and party of 4 requiring 'to be absent from the (Norwegian) claim' in June because 'no payable quartz (had been) found.' By the time his NZ-born daughter Catherine died in August 1874, aged 3, Thomas had become a teacher, and they were living in a three-roomed school house at Punga Flat. His oldest son, Alexander, registered miner's rights several times from December 1867 in South Tapu Creek, and registered a claim in June of 1868; in 1875 he was leasing a house in Murphy's Lane, Shortland. Although Thomas, Anne and younger children would leave Thames for periods, it remained their home until Anne died there in 1894.

**Richard Watson** of Otau, who had married Elizabeth **McDonald** at the home of her father John in Kirikiri in September 1870, found work at the Queen of Beauty Mining Co. in Thames. On 24 January 1874 Elizabeth and their two boys were on their way on the paddle steamer *Golden Crown*, probably with some 'home cooking and "extras" to cheer up his lot'. He was working at the Kuranui Battery at midnight as crushing supervisor tending the steam boiler for the stampers, when it exploded, mortally scalding him and killing two others. In hospital he reported that he had noticed that the pressure on the boiler was higher than usual as he lit his pipe: it was probably inexperience that killed him, as he had not been trained. He spoke of his wife. 'His body was accompanied back to Wairoa by the widow left with two young sons. (She joined her family, now in Hunua. Seven years later she remarried William Haresnape and bore another three children.)

A Government inquiry into the explosion and the state of boilers and machinery at Thames reported in July, recommending a system of inspectors, and prohibiting children of under 10 from working with machinery. By September of that year Parliament had passed the Inspection of Machinery Act, one of the first in a long process of making workplaces and mines safe for workers. A *Resolute* Kirikiri settler, James Coutts (next issue) would become Inspector of Mines for the Thames mining district 23 years later.

Not all who moved to Thames went as miners. Unlike Charles Davidson and Thomas Campbell who took up other roles after starting as miners, some found alternative and perhaps surer ways of making a living. John **Frater**, one of the 'other' Kirikiri settlers, another Scot and Presbyterian, maintained old Kirikiri friendships. He and his brother became influential business men, share agents of 'Scrip Corner', the 'brokers (who) would roam the cross-roads calling out company's names and prices' soliciting finance for the larger companies. He regularly reported to the *Thames Guardian and Mining Record* (1871-1872) on current prices. **William Bendle**, working as a carpenter in Shortland in October 1868, was 'walking in company with Mr McKenzie' near Mr 11

## Auckland, Australia, Scotland—and return to Kirikiri

Not all who moved to the Coromandel worked around Thames, and not all who left Kirikiri went to the Coromandel. In fact several had surrendered their grants even before the Gold Strike, and had moved to Auckland.

**Nelson and Helen Ireland** had come from Kirkcudbright in Scotland. Perhaps Nelson was doomed from the outset: his birth record, naming him Nelson 'Ireland or McGowan', suggests doubts about his parentage. A paternity suit was brought against him at the Bridge of Dee in 1857, the year before he married Helen (or Ellen) Marshall. By this time he was a stonemason. The couple arrived in New Zealand on the *Viola* with three children and had another three here. They left Kirikiri and Maketu within a year although they acquired two additional quarter acre sections in Papakura. As a mason and quarryman who could earn more than the average wage, it made sense to move to Auckland. In 1866 a daughter was born to 'the wife of Nelson Ireland' in Newton. He left a lasting monument in Auckland harbour by providing the masonry for Bean Rock, the lighthouse in the channel at the entrance to the harbour, the stones coming from his quarry in Drunken (now Islington) Bay, Rangitoto Island. The weather was inclement, but the masonry on the rock as the basis for the ironwork was deemed a good job. In an accident at Drunken Bay in December 1871, James McKenzie, another Kirikiri settler working for him, had a serious head injury resulting from a windlass swinging free. Newspapers recorded several tenders for jobs. As a quarryman he challenged Brogden and Sons over supply of rock for the Parnell Railway Tunnel in 1874. Although the 1500 cubic yards of stone supplied had been dressed and delivered according to the agreement, it had not been stacked as agreed, and he had to pay costs as well as losing his case for payment. A great gale in January 1875 sunk several yachts, but his ketch *Tiri Tiri* was the worst affected, breaking up against the breakwater. In 1872 he had rescued a man at Wynyard Pier who had attempted suicide. Sadly he was regularly charged for drunkenness (in 1869, 1870, 1873 when he forfeited his bail, 1876). In March 1875, described as a small contractor living with his family in New North Road, he was charged with attempting a rape upon his 9 year old daughter. He was also charged for assaulting his wife Ellen after 'attempting a rape' on their child in 1879. She 'was afraid to return home.' He was charged to keep the peace and he and two sureties had to pay a bond. He was also charged for failing to pay education rates or court costs, and appeared in court for failing to pay for the support of his children, in the custody of their mother, being £5 in arrears. When the amount increased to £11, a constable called to collect and was assaulted by him. Sadly a son, David, was among three young men who assaulted a young woman outside the Symonds St Cemetery in 1880. By 1884, Nelson and some of his family were in Sydney, and here, in Sussex, he was found dead in 1896: the police report commented that he had been drinking heavily for years.

The sad story of Nelson Ireland and his family was not typical for our settlers, though it illustrates one of the tensions in the community, which not only included some heavy drinkers, but quite a few stalwarts of the temperance movement. Another whose enjoyment of the pub, where he loved to sing, led to trouble was William Brown in Thames who returned one night thinking he had killed someone. His wife had suggested flight to Miranda, but that had not been necessary.

**One immigrant returned all the way to Scotland.** Readers will remember Jane Campbell, 18-year old relation of Thomas and Anne Campbell who had married Edward Rogerson, blacksmith, in 1865. They had three children. He was a good tradesman and hard worker. He had returned from Thames to a larger holding. But in June 1872 the family and John O'Hagan, a sawyer who had been a shipmate on the *Viola*, were staying at the Rangiriri hotel. They were perhaps investigating loggable timber on the other side of the Waikato, and had arranged to visit Churchill. In the evening the owner of the canoe, Loder, came to the hotel to tell them that he was in a hurry to get back. O'Hagan worried that the canoe was not fit to take five people but they were persuaded to cross. When it hit a 'nasty joggle' midstream, the canoe sank. Rogerson who was a strong swimmer struck out for shore, but never made it, and disappeared. The distraught young widow left with three children expressed a wish to return to Scotland, and locals, mar-

shalled by the publican Mr Shirley and the *Southern Cross* newspaper raised a subscription to send her back to Glasgow. A shipping notice in the *Herald* of 15/11/72 reported: "Mr. Rogerson, and two children (sic)" on the *Countess of Kintore* for London. Jane Rogerson and Elizabeth Watson, both *Viola* brides, had in short time become *Viola* widows.

Many of those who had been in Thames in the peak years of the Thames gold rush had never surrendered their land and returned to live in Papakura - Daniel Brisbane, John Carmichael, William Clarkson (although he maintained his mining interest and always called himself a miner), William Fulton, Archibald Livingstone, Thomas McClymont, Robert and John McCrae, Lee McKinstry, Gavin McMurray, both Alexander McNeils, father and son, Francis Mulgrew, Thomas and William Neillie, John Nicol, James Rhind, Robert and Thomas Stewart, Charles Williams. But interest in mining continued, if only through purchase of mining shares. These, and those named earlier (p 12) who had never left for Thames, were the core of the Kirikiri community in the remaining years of the nineteenth century.

Many returned with enough capital to supplement their ten acres, acquiring more viable farms, while they also found other supplementary employment, eg contracting. The Vogel years and railway building, Thames gold, the needs of a growing district and larger farms made for a more prosperous community than the raw settlement they had been cutting out of bush when they first arrived. While quite a few bought up the land of former neighbours and became established in Kirikiri, others bought land elsewhere in Franklin – Wairoa and Hunua, Papakura Valley (Ardmore), Pukekohe, Patumahoe. This happened progressively from the 1870s on. In some cases, they retained land in Kirikiri and bought elsewhere as well.

The Kirikiri community that came to settled maturity in the 1870s and 1880s will be the subject of a future article. But there are still many stories to be told of those who had left, particularly in Thames, Ohinemuri and the Coromandel, Northland and Auckland, who maintained contact with their former neighbours, and the next issue will deal more with this diaspora.

### Sources consulted:

In addition to newspapers, *New Zealand Herald*, *Daily Southern Cross*, *Thames Guardian and Mining Record (1871-2)* this article has made use of sources on the local area and Thames, on archival sources and on the contributions of several family researchers including:

Judith Moor, Clarkson Family Book, typed 1988

Leslie Wylie McGregor, *Seed of a country: a story of the life and times of John and Janet McGregor*, Self-published 1988

Nancy Hawks (Smith), Clark and Catherine Smith and their descendants: an early settler family from Papakura who arrived on the *Viola*, 2018

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Ann and Grahame Watson, McDonald/Wright ms, 1987

The article has also used the following sources on Thames and mining:

Althea Barker, *Hotels of Thames*, 2017

Althea Barker, 1869 Franklin Electoral Roll, [http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~althea/history/Electoral\\_Rolls.html](http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~althea/history/Electoral_Rolls.html)

Kae Goldminers' Database (on the Thames Archive Treasury website), [kaelewis.com](http://kaelewis.com)

Fred W Weston, *Thames Goldfields: Diamond jubilee 1867-1927*

Citations provided on request.

# NOTICES

**October Monthly Meeting**— will be our **AGM**. In view of the likely Covid level, we will hold it at 1pm on Thursday 28 October on Zoom. An email invitation will be sent out to those members who can receive it. We realise that many will not be able to attend, but it is a requirement that we hold this meeting. Please contact me (wearing my Secretary hat) —see covering letter or email below—for apologies, to register for Zoom invitation, or to make any nominations or proposals.

Further activities this year? Wait for messages, and hope that everybody gets their vaccinations.

When we know we'll send you the details by email.

## MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS:

**Faka-Tokelau in August.**

**Next (hopefully): Anne Frank: 'Let me be myself'**

**Meetings** are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Library Meeting Rooms opposite the Museum, starting with the talk at 1 pm, continuing with business and afternoon tea (for a **\$2 gold coin** minimum). All are welcome. Phil Sai-Louie arranges our interesting speakers.

**Events are advertised** here, on the screen in the Museum window and on our blog and Facebook pages. Please check for updates and Museum news.

**Trips** are usually held on the fourth Saturday of each month two days after the meetings. The bus leaves from East Street behind the Access Point building at 10 am, unless otherwise stated. Cost is \$5 more for non-members, but anyone is welcome on a first come first aboard basis. Please register early and advise if unable to attend as numbers are limited.

**To register for trips, please ring Dave at (09) 2984507**

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