



PROSPECT

*The Journal of the
Epsom & Eden District Historical Society Inc.*

Volume 24, 2025

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Henry Charles William Wrigg, 1842–1924

by Val Sherwood



This gravestone is in the cemetery attached to St Andrew's Church in Epsom. Who was he?

In 1856, at the age of fourteen, Henry/Harry was articled to a civil engineer in the north of England, and as a draughtsman became involved in the construction of railways and waterworks. By 1859 he had joined the Royal Dragoon Guards, but in 1863 he sailed for New Zealand with the family and worked for a time with his father, who was engaged in fixing the permanent levels for streets in Auckland.

Henry Charles William Wrigg, known as 'Harry', was a draughtsman and holder of the rare New Zealand Cross. He was born in Carcur [sic] House, Wexford, Ireland, on 5 January 1842. His father Henry Wrigg (1812–79) was a civil engineer. He married Mary Anne Weekes (1815–61), and they had four daughters and three sons. In the 1861 census the family was living at 95 Fishergate Hill, Preston, Lancashire, with three servants.



Henry Wrigg as a young man

As his father was also Henry Wrigg, it is not always immediately clear which engineer is referred to in various contemporary papers, but I suspect it was Henry snr who produced the convincing arguments for building the first dam in the Waitakeres to supply Auckland with water.

On 3 December 1867 Henry jnr (on the marriage record as 'Harry') married Margaurite [sic] Cameron (1846–1933) at St John's Church, Invercargill, but they had no family. In the late 1860s they lived in Pollen Street, Shortland, Thames, before he became chief draughtsman with the Public Works Dept, Wellington, in 1871 and was Quartermaster Sergeant, Wellington Guards, in 1881. While there they lived in Woolcombe Street and College Street.



*Henry Wrigg in the
Royal Dragoon Guards*



Henry Wrigg in later years

Harry was licensed to carry out surveys under the Native Lands Act 1865, and under the Land Transfer Act, and was appointed a Foldfields surveyor and mining surveyor, *Auckland Provincial Gazette*, 1868. He served in the General Government Survey Department, 1868–1870, and with the Southland Provincial Council survey staff, 1870–1871. As mentioned above, in 1871 he was appointed chief draughtsman with the Public Works Department, stationed in Wellington, and subsequently at Auckland. He was

appointed draughtsman to the Duke of Edinburgh by special warrant when the latter visited NZ in 1868. Added to his skills as a draughtsman was a very real artistic talent. He achieved success as an artist and received numerous awards: eg silver medals at the exhibitions of Sydney (1879), Melbourne (1880) and the New Zealand Exhibition in 1897. Paintings by Henry Wrigg are held at the Auckland Public Library.

In 1898, "Cornet Harry Charles William Wrigg, Bay of Plenty Cavalry Volunteers, Opotiki," became one of only 23 people ever awarded the New



Zealand Cross. The first six had been published in the *New Zealand Gazette* in 1869, and there was one award gazetted in 1870. The remaining 16 awards were gazetted between 1875 and 1910, from six to 44 years after the actions commended.

The actual wording of his award says:

... it was in consideration of his having, on the twenty-ninth day of June, 1867, voluntarily carried despatches from Lieutenant-Colonel John H. St John, then at Opotiki, to Lieutenant-Colonel Phillip Harrington at Tauranga, through country infested by the Native Tribes then at war with the British.

The New Zealand Cross

The rare New Zealand Cross

Only 23 men have been awarded the New Zealand Cross, all members of volunteer forces not eligible for The Victoria Cross.

This one was awarded to Cornet Harry Wrigg of the Bay of Plenty Cavalry Volunteers for ‘... having on 29 June 1867 voluntarily carried despatches from ... Opotiki to Tauranga, through country infested by the Native tribes then at war with the British’.

THE WRIGG SCANDAL.

CORNET WRIGG ARRESTED ON A CHARGE OF LUNACY.

(Per Press Association.)

AUCKLAND, August 10.

Harry Charles William Wrigg was arrested to-night on a charge of being a lunatic wandering at large. He had fourteen ounces of chlorodyne on him, and was endeavouring to procure more at a chemist's. When arrested he threatened to commit suicide.

WRIGG DISCHARGED

Harry Charles William Wrigg, on a charge of lury, y was discharged. The medical men could not agree.

However, this 1898 award of the New Zealand Cross to Harry was controversial—largely because of his own involvement in the application process. Correspondence both for and against his application for the NZC was presented to the House of Representatives in July/August 1898 and published in a variety of local newspapers. Awarding Harry the NZC was a far from popular decision. Attempts were even made to get all surviving NZC holders

to object. Letters were published both denying and supporting his actions, and the controversy did not stop then. For instance, in 1914 Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Morrow wrote a detailed letter in support of his eligibility. In 1986 W.T. Parkham wrote an article in the *Historical Review: Bay of Plenty Journal of History*, May 1986; v.34 n.1: pp.42–44; titled 'A disputed New Zealand Cross' in which he discussed the controversy surrounding this awarding of the gallantry medal to Henry Wrigg 70 years earlier. Later still, an item in the *Auckland-Waikato Historical Journal*, Sept 1992 n.61: pp.8–12, examined this controversy and details why the award was not merited, the methods Wrigg used to obtain it, and the assistance given to him by Captain M.W. Bower.



An aged Henry Wrigg

However, quite apart from this, in 1900 Harry became a foundation member of the King's Empire Veterans Association. Retired members of the Imperial and Colonial Forces formed the New Zealand Empire Veterans Association under the patronage of Lord Ranfurly. Members were issued with a bronze medal in the form of a Maltese Cross surrounded by a wreath of laurel leaves, with NZEVA engraved in the centre. The medal was suspended by means of a red, white and blue ribbon, and was worn on the right side of the uniform. In 1910, the name of the association was changed to the King's Empire Veterans Association, and the letters in the centre of the cross were changed to KEV. When Harry died on 30 June 1924, he had been vice-president of that body for five years, and a memorial plaque in his honour was placed by the association in the vestibule of the Auckland Town Hall.

In 1907 Harry joined the Auckland City Council staff, resigned briefly from this position in 1917 but returned in 1918, and continued in their employment until shortly before his death in 1924, aged 72. The electoral rolls show that Harry and Margaret lived in various places in Auckland—1890 in Grafton Road, 1911 in Alten Road, 1914 at 44 Wynyard Street, 1919 at 29 Symonds Street. He died in Auckland on 30 June 1924, and was buried at St Andrew's, Epsom. Margaret survived him by almost ten years, and when she died on 12 November 1933 she was buried there with him.

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DAD'S WAR

Eric Reay Innes Clarke (1902–1980)

by Jeanette Grant

When World War II started in 1939, my father Reay Clarke was already 37 years old so he joined the Home Guard and spent several years going on exercises with them, digging “tank traps” near beaches on the Manukau Harbour and socialising with men of his own age.

Then on 27 January 1943, at the age of 40 and with a wife and child, he was ‘called up’. I was three years old when I had my first train ride to go and visit him in camp at Papakura. I also remember being told that he was



Papakura Army Camp, 1943

required to have all his teeth pulled so that he would not have any toothache problems to complicate army life. As his father was a dentist and his teeth were in excellent shape, this was a most peculiar requirement.

When they had their final medical inspections before being sent overseas, the doctor said that he had incipient rheumatism in his hands which would have flared up in a damp tropical climate, so he was tagged ‘home duties’ and became a gunner with the 9th Heavy Artillery. As a photographer, his hands would have spent a lot of time in the cold water

end of 1941, and followed this by the rapid taking of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin, there suddenly seemed to be an imminent threat of invasion or at least air raids. The Education Board issued orders that all school committees were to organise the immediate construction of air raid shelters for use in case of the feared Japanese attack. Trenches were duly dug; children were issued with name badges, cotton wool to put in their ears (to protect their hearing) and a cork to bite on (to prevent inadvertent tongue-biting). Mum was by then teaching at Owairaka School which was within walking distance of our home in Jerram Street. Their first air raid drill was a little less than a success. The trenches were there all right, but they had forgotten to dig any deep enough to hold the staff.

We had a little trellis-sided summer house in the back garden so Dad dug our air raid trench inside that so there was a roof over it to keep it from filling up with rainwater. It had clay banks as seats along the side and these were “upholstered” with old sacks. I dread to think what damage we might have suffered from flying splinters and fire if it had ever been put to the test.



*Dad's air raid shelter was at the built in the
back yard of our home*

On one occasion he was off-duty when a night shoot was planned, so he took me and my mother down to the waterfront to watch. In those days there was a gun on the point by the Tamaki Yacht Club as well as on North Head and we were able to see the orange flashes of light when they fired. We saw the searchlights all along Tamaki Drive in action and afterwards we went up the flight of steps on the cliff face near Mission Bay and actually inside the cliff to the generator room making the power for the searchlights.

I can still remember the curved silver shapes which were taller than I was. I had never seen anything actually bolted into a concrete floor before.

His comment to Mum the next day was that “the boat towing the target was in more danger than the target”.

In 1943 my mother fell pregnant again, and in January 1944 Dad was granted compassionate leave to be home for the baby’s birth. She was late, but it meant he was available to help with our move to a larger house in Mt Eden, and the baby was born the day before he had to report back so he did actually see her. From then on, when he had leave, much of his time at home was spent under the house digging out enough headroom to be able to install a ¾ size billiard table.

When the decision was made to cut back the defences of Auckland as told in J. A. Speer’s story (see *Prospect* 13, 2014, p. 52), he was one of the older men initially sent on leave without pay and then demobilised on 31 October 1944, and was soon back in the photographic business.

EMS/BAC		NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES		WAR. [Form N.Z.-684. (in pads of 150.)]	
Posting Order by Area Commander (Area No. 1.....)					
Item Number :	Date : 10/10/44	Camp, Unit, &c.	9th Heavy Regt.		
No. 480311	Gnr. CLARKE, Eric Reay,	41	Photographer,		
(Rank.)	(Name.)	(Age.)	(Occupation.)		
Married : 2	Children. Single.	Home Address 662A Mt. Eden Rd., Mt. EDEN.			
AUCKLAND.					
Boarded Auckland 6/10/44. Grade 3. Not fit to live in camp. Army pay including 7 days part annual and 14 days retiring leave ceases 31/10/44, then placed in Area 1 Pool on ILWOP. MANPOWER RELEASE. File to Area 1/Pensions.					
SOLDIER		[Signature]		Captain,	
5,000 pads, 7/44-48761		for		Area Commander.	

Dad’s influence had some odd effects on me. The first songs I knew that were not nursery rhymes were army songs:

‘Bless ’em all, Bless ’em all, The long and the short and the tall’; ‘Mademoiselle from Armentieres’, etc. For many years afterwards, I made a point of listening to ‘The Diggers Request Session’ at 8.45 on Sunday mornings as they asked for all those old favourites.

Even in those days before TV, children still heard more about the war than their parents realised. I was less than five years old but I can clearly

remember thinking “When I grow up, I will be a sniper”. Fortunately this never became necessary but I remained keen on learning to shoot—something encouraged by the fact that Dad was an excellent shot and we used to go out to my aunt’s farm in the Waitakeres regularly. He gave me an air rifle for my 14th birthday and we all practised shooting at home—in the backyard or under the house. Well, I wore it out. It was probably 1959 or 1960. I was at

university and used to get a ride into town with Dad in the morning. He had a reserved parking spot up by St Patrick’s Cathedral as his firm, Walter J. Thompson Advertising Studios, was on the corner of Wyndham and Albert streets. I used to walk down to Queen Street and up to Princes Street through Albert Park.

One day I strolled down Wyndham Street and along Queen Street to Tisdalls—with the air rifle under my arm. Nobody turned a hair. Today, the Armed Offenders Squad would probably have intercepted me before I reached the shop.

PS I still have his paybook and the booklets he was given on Morse Code, Small Arms Training, Section Leading in Attack & Defence, Infantry Section Leading, The Bren Gun, Arms Drill, Guerrilla Warfare, etc.

Form N.Z.—822c.]

 N^o 62148

CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE

Army No. 480311 Rank on discharge: Gunner

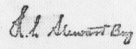
Full name: Eric Rees CLARKE

is discharged from the New Zealand Military Forces on termination of engagement.

ARMY SERVICE

In New Zealand:	Beyond New Zealand:
<u>1</u> yrs. <u>279</u> days.	<u> </u> yrs. <u> </u> days.
Total: <u>1</u> yrs. <u>279</u> days.	

WELLINGTON,
NEW ZEALAND,

31st October, 1944. 

*Adjutant-General,
New Zealand Military Forces.*

SPECIAL ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE NOTES ON REVERSE.

Quality control in the 1970s

by John Grant

In 1972 my bad leg began to play up, and I was forced to sell my mower repair business. In 1973 I went to work at the Dominion Motors assembly plant in Mortimer Pass, Broadway. At that stage they were the agents assembling Morris and Austin 1100s/1300s. (Triumphs were assembled in Nelson.) Three or four weeks after I started as a mechanic, I was asked to go to the assembly plant while the tester was on holiday. It had been decided to bring in an outsider, as he was the only qualified mechanic on the staff. (His own attitude was that he was indispensable and the whole plant should close while he was away!) This temporary posting turned out to be the start of a whole new career in quality control.



Aerial photo of Dominion Motors Ltd, Mortimer Pass, Newmarket, 1958

Whites Aviation WA-46928-G

Basically the job involved taking every car from the end of the assembly line, checking that it had oil and water, putting in petrol, starting it up and tuning it. The headlights had to be adjusted and the brakes etc checked in order to issue a Warrant of Fitness. I gave every car a road test of approximately one and a half to two miles along Mortimer Pass and Gillies Avenue before returning it to the Rectification Department with a list of faults to fix.

Well, that was the way it worked in theory. In practice they were usually so far behind that I delivered the car to a carpark under the viaduct where it could sit for a day or a week. This proved to be a blessing in disguise for me, as the regular walk round the block back to the plant was just what my bad leg needed and over the years it improved in strength and freedom of movement.

One night some person or persons broke through the wire fence and stole half a dozen cars by driving them straight through the wire fence. They didn't go very far as they only had one gallon of petrol in them but they were all in sad need of rectification when they were retrieved.

When I first started there, the plant was building 32 cars a day. They had a staff of around 300, many of whom had been there for over 30 years. Then there was a change of management. It had originally been the Dominion Motors Assembly Plant under contract to the British Motor Corp. This was



*The first (and second) New Zealand-assembled Morris 1100s,
photographed at the Newmarket plant on 1 February 1963*

a time of change. It was hard to know who owned what for very long. It all ended up as British Leyland assembling the full range, including Austins. Brand loyalty became irrelevant. The cars in the 1100 and 1300 range were identical. It was just a matter of allocating chassis numbers to each brand

and putting the correct badge on them as they came down the line. We even made a few Wolseleys. They had the radiator grille, bonnet and dashboard changed as well as the badges, and were given a little more trim.

Anyway, the Motor Corp took over the plant and put in their own new general manager over the top of the old management structure. He was an accountant, and changed everything around. For instance, Les R- had originally been in full charge of purchasing, both local and overseas. He was also responsible for ensuring that all the parts were in the right place on the assembly line at the right time. Well, his job was split. He remained in charge of local supply only, and someone else was promoted and put in charge of overseas supply. In other words, there were now two managers where previously one had coped well. From that day on there were always shortages, and production never flowed smoothly.

Quality Control used to have a paint line inspector, a hoist inspector, an end of line inspector (me) and a quality control manager over us all. At first, if I found repetitious faults, I would go straight to the foreman of the relevant line (chassis line, body line, paint shop, trim line) and speak to him directly. Then the powers-that-be decided that that was inefficient. All I had to do was fill in a form and the Rectification Department would fix it. They put an extra inspector on the trim line to try and catch more of these faults, but as far as he was concerned it was a nice easy job—a big perk—and the faults increased in number. Where once we had 2-3 faults per car, now I was reporting 2-3 pages of faults per car. Many were little faults but they could have been totally prevented with a quiet word in the early stages. What is the sense of making 50 cars with the same fault when it was spotted on the very first example?

The numbers we made began dropping off through sheer inefficiency. After the stores were re-organised, we never seemed to build a complete car. There was always something missing. For two years, Morris Marina vans were sold with no number plate lights. They were eventually fitted individually at servicing, or when they failed a WOF.

Not all the faults lay at our end. One batch of CKDs (Completely Knocked Down kits) came in with all left hand front suspension and no right hand. Another time a whole batch of engines for Morris 1100s were all second-hand and had been painted up to look like new. Over the years

we probably averaged one engine a week deliberately sabotaged in England by having a nut put on top of a piston during assembly.

In another batch, someone had been stealing engine bearings. We assumed that there was an English assembly worker rebuilding his own engine by taking one of each bearing he needed out of each engine he handled.

Then there was the noisy diff syndrome; crown wheels and pinions so poorly machined that we had to have them re-lapped out here at a cost of \$120 per axle. They sent inspectors out from England to see why this massive charge was necessary as the total cost in England was £12 per axle complete with brakes and everything else. The noise level from the shoddy diffs was acceptable there, but New Zealanders were getting more critical.

Paint cannot protect a car if it is not applied to the whole body. The tank in which our cars' framework was submerged was not deep enough to cover them above window level. Problems with rust made it obvious this was unsatisfactory but just deepening the tank did not solve the problem as simply as we had expected. There was a bubble in the roof which obstinately stayed dry. Eventually, one of the plant engineers and I thought of a cure. The remedy was to put a bump in the floor so as the car moved through the tank, it tilted first up and then down so the paint ran over this 'blind spot'.

It is no wonder there are few Morris Marinas left on the road today. English attitudes to fit and finish were a generation behind the times. They didn't realise that English cars no longer monopolised the New Zealand market and that NZers were coming to expect more reliability and cheapness. Perhaps the worst example of their arrogant attitude came over the question of water leaks. Despite our best efforts we could not make the Marinas watertight. Now, windscreens always need a drain in the bottom corners. The Marina's outlet faced forward in the gap between the mudguard and the plenum chamber in front of the windscreen. When on the move, air pressure pushed water straight up these tubes and sprayed it inside the car. An English inspector's comment was that "it was well named as marinas were normally full of water". No effort was made to correct the design fault.

The Morris Marinas had another major design fault in the pedal box.



Morris Marina 1970s

Photo: Shutterstock royalty-free image

The stop light switch would always hold the brake pedal down. It was just a little pressure but it was enough to prevent the fluid returning to the master cylinder reservoir. When the brakes got hot they would not release.

We showed the plant engineer the problem and his reaction was to tell the assembly line to leave a little air in the brakes! This gave the feeling that the pedal was fixed but it wasn't. The car would go out to the dealer who naturally bled the brakes in the course of the pre-delivery inspection. As a result, the brakes began binding on. Then there was merry heck to pay. Why hadn't we found the problem?

We ended up cutting 1/8th of an inch off the stop light switch button, and this gave enough clearance: a problem which could and should have been avoided by a bit of decent engineering at the English end.

Production eventually dropped down to about ten cars a day, and sales dropped even further as they were not complete cars. At the worst stage we had about 1,000 cars stored in the Epsom Showground buildings and another paddock full out at Panmure. Some had no glass so plastic bags were used to keep the worst of the weather out. Others had no gearboxes. I heard of one car which had to have a tree with a four-inch diameter trunk cut out of it. It had grown up through the hole in the transmission tunnel and throve in its own little glasshouse. Some of these cars were three years old before they actually reached the dealers in complete form to be sold as 'new'.

One day when cars were being picked up from the yard at Panmure, they found about 50 cars sagging sideways, as they had each had one wheel and tyre stolen. The silly thing was that each car had a spare wheel and tyre in the boot and none of the boots were locked. We didn't have enough locks! Locks were a problem of their own. Imagine sorting out the right keys for over a thousand stored cars. They had just been tossed in a box, and while there were only 40 or 50 different shapes, it still wasted a lot of time.

However, it was not impossible to get a good car. One year my father-in-law's brother from Whangarei decided to buy a new Allegro. I carefully chose for him a car which had been on display at the Easter Show and had been assembled with extra care and given more sound deadening than usual. At the last minute when they were fitting the number plates, the drill slipped and scratched the paint which then had to be touched up. (The NZ number plate holes don't fit the holes supplied on any car.) This car subsequently gave good service for about 15 years before being sold after his death.

It is a wonder I did not have lots of accidents. I certainly faced many crises as I test drove these supposedly finished cars. Imagine driving through traffic and having the entire steering column come off in your hands. The lazy sods on the assembly line were not removing the nut and bolt at the bottom of the steering column when they fitted it onto the spline. Instead of engaging fully onto the spline and then being anchored by the bolt fitting through both a hole in the column and a flat spot on the spline, the column was only going partly onto the spline because the bolt prevented it engaging all the way. This was not visible once the carpet was fitted. Typically it would stay in position while the car was being manoeuvred in the factory itself and driven about a hundred yards. In other words, it would get me nicely out into the traffic of Mortimer Pass or Gillies Ave and then come loose in my hands. By this time I always carried a spanner with me and easing the column back onto the spline and tightening it up was usually enough to get me back to the factory.

One day it happened when I had a passenger—the production manager himself. He was very upset about the number of faults I found it necessary to write up, so I took him for a ride to see what difference they made. I didn't expect this car to be one of the loose wheel varieties. We had both inspected it in the factory and to all outward appearances it was okay. His

reaction was all I could have hoped for. Back at the factory, he had all the foremen on the carpet and things improved—for a few days.

Many of our staff were old-timers who had spent all their working lives in that plant. Others were straight off the boat from the Pacific Islands, and had never owned or even driven a car before. This meant they had no understanding of the reasons why they were told to do things on the assembly line a certain way. To make it worse, some foremen never gave their new staff any real instruction. There was no organised on the job training at all. The results were often annoying, sometimes expensive to fix, but occasionally funny. Of course they could be all that at once.

The chassis line starts by assembling the subframe with the engine. Eventually the body is dropped onto the running gear and lastly at the tyre bay, the wheels are put into place. Until then the growing car is carried on a trolley running on rails. When it has wheels the car is slid forward so that the wheels engage in tracks raised a few inches above the floor, and the car then moves on a predetermined course while everything is tightened into place.

One day there was a resounding crash. Everybody's head turned, and there was a car half off its trolley but jammed instead of moving down these rails. The most cursory look showed the cause. The wheels had missed the rails and wedged themselves down the outsides of the tracks.

And what was the reason? Well this was a day when a new guy just in from the Islands had started work in the tyre bay at 8am. The foreman had given him instructions, "Put on four wheels and put one spare in the boot."

That was the total of his training. Fifteen minutes later when his first car reached the end of the trolley run came the horrible graunching noise of disaster. The car was a Morris 1100, and their wheels had a big offset one way. He had had to guess which way they went and he guessed wrongly. The wheeltrack was now too wide for the waiting tracks.

It was a major job to get the car unstuck and back upright onto its trolley as they had been designed with a steep ramp to allow the car to come off it. Nobody had ever envisaged trying to get one back up it. They had to get a big trolley jack to lift the car and put strong baulks of timber underneath it while we changed all the wheels around. Meanwhile the whole assembly line was stopped dead. Management then made sure that the shocked worker knew how to fit the wheels properly next time.

Another fault with the English-designed Morris Marinas occurred when the car was turned onto full lock. The steering arms would go over centre and jam with the car on full lock!. Fortunately this was not likely to occur at full speed but would be very embarrassing if you were trying to make a U turn. They did however accept that this was dangerous, and a modification was made installing stops on the steering swivels.

The same model had a habit of breaking off the heads of the rear shock absorbers. The angle they were fitted at was too great for the brackets and they tended to bottom out. The production manager used to drive a new car home every night under the guise of extended testing. Unfortunately, he lived in the Waitakeres, and one particular corner which had a bump in the middle and a reverse camber caught him out every night one week. England was not interested, but he insisted that we modify them. All that was necessary was to grind one side of the mounting bracket to allow it to move a little further without bottoming. This was a most annoying fault as we could not duplicate it on a jig in the workshop and it was only the production manager's personal experience which ensured it was fixed.

It was an unusual place to work. At one time we had a new shop steward. He was not long out from England and came equipped with all the typical English attitudes of 'them' and 'us'. Where the normal situation here had been for the staff to work in with management and try to settle any problems without major disruption, he complained because we did not go out on strike. He tried to get up petitions for higher pay. He wanted to stir up the Māori and Pacific Islanders against the company. He thought they would be easy to talk around but they weren't.

One day I was talking to the manager on a Friday, and he said that we wouldn't be having any more problems with the shop steward. When I went in on Monday, I found that the shop steward had been promoted. They created a new post for him—Time and Motion Study. From then on, he was against the workers and spent all his time going around with a stopwatch timing them. An elegantly simple solution which showed great understanding of the man's psychology; a creative solution which short-cut what could have become a real problem.

To me it was no wonder that sales were dropping off. Both the quality and quantity produced at the Newmarket plant seemed to steadily

decrease every year. Even the sales staff seemed uninterested. They had been spoiled by the years of car shortages when every new car of any description was virtually presold, and British cars almost monopolised the market. I vividly remember one incident. The Welsh millionaire Albert Gubay had just reached New Zealand and was in the process of setting up his bargain-priced supermarket we were to know as Three Guys. He was in the market for a delivery fleet of large trucks. I happened to be in the showroom in Broadway, Newmarket, when he came in to look first at the British Leyland products, as he was used to running them in his English enterprises. (Out here, they arrived in the country as a rolling chassis and the cab and trailers were then built to the customers' specifications out at Domtrac in Panmure.)

He came into the showroom dressed casually in shorts and T shirt and introduced himself to a salesman and asked to see the sales manager. His name was not recognised and his appearance did not look like a potential big buyer. The sales manager was having a cup of tea and didn't seem interested. He asked if he could come back a bit later. Gubay didn't wait around. He went straight to Cable Price in Mt Wellington, where they were delighted to sell him a fleet of Mercedes trucks.

Nobody was really surprised when the decision was made to close down the Newmarket assembly plant and concentrate all assembly out at Panmure. Even this was not done in a straightforward manner. Redundancy pay had to be paid, and there was a hard core of nearly 50 workers who had been in that plant virtually all their working lives. This did not make it cheap for the owners, and they tried to cut corners in mean little ways. For instance, the stores manager was due to retire in less than two years; rather than pay him the large amount of redundancy pay he would have been entitled to, he was transferred to the Panmure plant where he was given make-work until he reached retirement age!

I received a useful sum as all my seven years' superannuation contributions were refunded, although I got no redundancy pay. However, there were a few uncertain days as I wondered what my job prospects would be, but I spent a few years back where I began, working on heavy machinery before starting my own automotive repair business.

The teller of tales

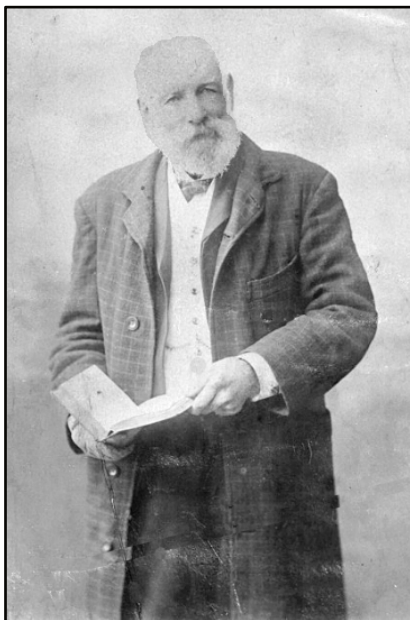
being, more or less, the life story of

Captain William Jackson Barry

by Val Sherwood

The enigmatic Jack Barry, born in 1819, was known by several names in his lifetime. Likewise, he was apparently born in two different places. In this way he managed to blur his real origins, and also to so muddle the waters that historians have found great difficulty in revealing an accurate record of his life. By reading between the lines of newspaper and other reports, as well as material in his own books, then assessing all the facts produced, various authors have managed to come to a consensus on what is as close to a clear picture of his life as possible. Barry was not alone in fudging his origins. For many men who arrived in Australia in the earliest days of settlement, having a carefully concocted personal history to present was a way of gaining acceptability in the community.

The cover story presented by Barry told of his birth at Melbourn, Cambridgeshire, son of a respected veterinary surgeon. Placed by his father in the service of an acquaintance, Sir John Alcock, the two sailed from London in 1828 on the *Red Rover* bound for Sydney on a drama-filled voyage. When Sir John did not like what he saw of Sydney life he booked to sail on to Buenos Aires. Determined not to leave Sydney, the lad ran away on embarkation day, hiding himself until the ship had sailed. He related that he was lucky enough to 'come across' a man named Smith, an



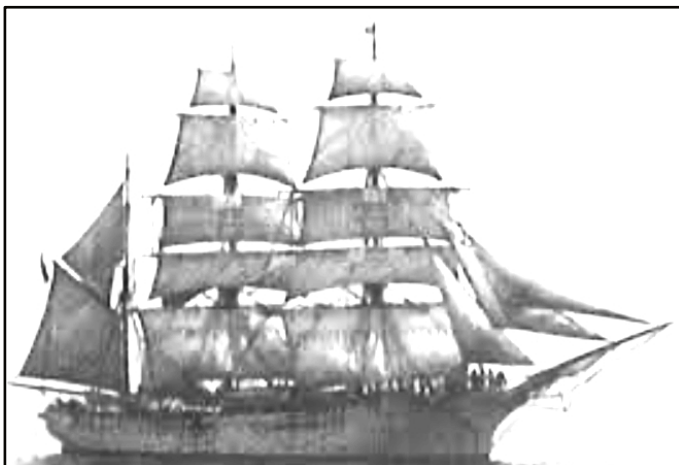
Captain William Jackson Barry
Unknown photographer, 1870s

old friend of his father, who ran a very successful butchery business. This man took him in, sending him to a Dame's school until 1831, though Barry confessed he had not appreciated the need for education and was not a good pupil. His critics, though, believe that he may have originated in Ireland and, while agreeing that he travelled to Australia on the *Red Rover*, it was in fact, as one of a group of juvenile convicts transported from England. This version has him assigned to a butcher named Smith. In his youth he was known about town as 'Sydney Nobby'.

Having left the tutelage of Mr Smith (strangely, we are not told this man's full name), he was faced with trying to secure a position at a time when both employment and accommodation were in short supply. One of his favourite stories told of being captured in the outback by bushrangers, one named Donoghue and the other the infamous 'Jacky Jacky' who was the perpetrator of a safe robbery at the Bank of New South Wales. Cynics suggested, however, that it was more likely that Jack had himself taken part in the nefarious activities of the bushranger gang.

Familiar with horses, as a young man he moved about Australia employed variously in droving, coach driving and butchering, taking work wherever he found it. He sailed on whaling ships and traders around Australia and New Zealand, then north to Indochina. In Calcutta in 1840 he signed up with the navy to serve on gunboats, cruising and trading in Burma, Malaya and China; hurricane and a shipwreck were part of the trials he survived over this period. Glad to be back in Australia, he decided to put down roots, marrying the vivacious Hannah French, daughter of an old whaling shipmate who had settled into the farming life in Western Australia. Unfortunately, when his father-in-law died, it was found that the property was heavily in debt, and the couple were forced off the farm. Ill fortune followed them. Hannah did not survive the birth of their first child, a daughter. Barry had no option but to leave the infant with a carefully selected foster mother.

In 1849 Jack Barry sailed from Sydney on the *Eleanor Lancaster*, headed for the Californian goldfields where his endeavours were well rewarded. In Shasta, California, in 1852 he married Adelia Buckley, a well-known business woman. His comment that she was behind the bar of the Eagle Hotel when they met suggests that she owned the public house he



The Eleanor Lancaster

Australian Postal History & Social Philately

frequented. Despite her desire to avoid 'fuss' he insisted on a stylish wedding, entertaining about 300 guests at a cost of £500. When the Adams Bank failed, through fraud, the Barrys' personal loss was purported to be a sum of £12,500. Rallying after this calamity the couple realized on their remaining assets and sailed for Sydney.

On 'home ground' again he invested in a quartz mining venture and in horse dealing, but lost money at both activities. The purchase and fitting out of a whaling vessel was designed to restore his financial status, but the venture culminated in the wreck of his ship along with its valuable cargo of whale oil. Following this run of bad luck, New Zealand, with the opportunities surrounding the discovery of gold in Gabriel's Gully in 1862, beckoned as a country which might offer a more successful life. Taking a major gamble Jackson Barry chartered two vessels and, with his wife and children, sailed across the Tasman with precious cargo purchased with the last remnants of their capital. This included horses and carts, harnesses and the other necessary equine trappings, which he planned to sell to raise money.

Having landed at Port Chalmers, the family stayed locally at Galbraith's Hotel until he had satisfactorily disposed of his horses, making a good

profit. To support the family he chose to involve himself in the supply of necessities to miners, believing that more profit would be made in this area than in actual gold mining. He supplied fish, hawked clothing and doubtful medicines, and was a butcher and fellmonger (a dealer in hides or skins, particularly sheepskins). Given the up to two-week journey, with transportation costs via bullock train to the gold fields at £80 per ton, prices were exorbitant. In the freezing Central Otago winter Barry found that his 'Perfect Chillblain Cure', the main ingredients of which were bran and lard from his own fellmongery, sold for 10/- per bottle. As word of each new gold discovery was spread and the gold seekers rushed to the next promising site, Barry went along with them. Turning his youthful training in butchery to good purpose enabled him to earn a good income.

The swift flowing Clutha river posed a geographical difficulty for the early inhabitants. The earliest bridge over the treacherous river, near the settlement known as "The Junction" (later named Cromwell) had been swept away by a flood which had claimed over 100 lives in the diggings, camps and shanties. Faced with the perplexity of having business on the wrong side of the river, Jack Barry dealt with the problem by stripping off and, with his clothes on his head, allowed the current to carry him down to where he found a foothold on the other side. Having a horse on the return



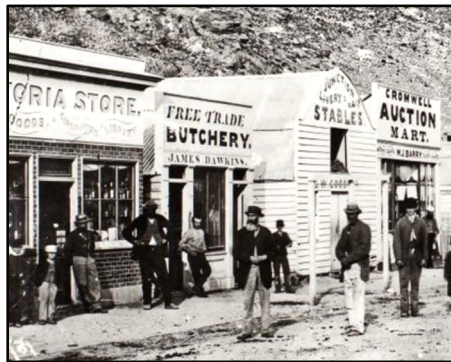
The wooden "lattice" bridge built in 1866 by the government

Online screen shot

crossing, he sent the animal into the water, held firmly onto its tail, and in this way achieved the second crossing. Thus he claimed to be the first person to have swum over this river, the third fastest-flowing in the world.

Barry's earliest meat sales to impoverished gold miners had consisted of tripe, cow heels, trotters and offal, which had been purchased from other butchers. In February 1863, with partner H. Murray, a more orthodox enterprise, which they called 'The Victoria and Sydney Butchery', was established in Cromwell, allowing him to settle his wife and family in a 'comfortable' house. An 'old enemy' George Harrison, who with a partner was operating an existing butchery, had set his prices at an exorbitant level. When Jackson Barry offered his goods at a lower price, a price war commenced. Both partnerships were losing money fast. Barry, realizing that two butcheries could not survive, devised a cunning strategy. He closed his business, allowing his competitors to believe they were the victors. Gaining confidence, Harrison & Co, filled their premises with increasing quantities of meat which they proceeded to offer at the same extortionate price, as earlier, at 1s 4d a pound. Barry bided his time, then later when his competitors had butchered many beasts and their premises were filled with meat, reopened his own shop. Announcing his slogan, 'Free trade and no monopoly', he proceeded to sell his meat at a loss, at 6d per pound.

Harrison and Co were caught when the disgruntled citizens of the town turned their backs on them and their excessive prices, leaving them with vast quantities of meat on their hands, rotting in the heat of a Central Otago summer, to be finally disposed of in the Clutha river. Although Barry had won the customers over and his competitors left town, he had lost a considerable amount of money, but survived. In doing so he achieved great popularity among the townspeople, who presented him with a gold watch. He had, in fact, become the town hero.



Captain Barry's "Free Trade" butchery

Online Facebook post

When celebrations took place for the official opening of the newly built replacement bridge at Cromwell, Barry's contribution to the historic occasion was to roast an entire bullock and dispense the meat to the revelling citizens. Champagne and other wines flowed freely. Barry claimed the provision of the bullock had 'extended his connection' i.e., he now found himself 'almost famous'.

Access to the settlement was aided considerably by the new single truss bridge at the confluence of the Kawarau and Clutha rivers. With the population swelling towards 5000, it was recognised that the setting up of local government was an urgent necessity. William Jackson Barry, enjoying the swell of popularity, was a certainty to win the August 1865 election to the office of mayor; there was a landslide of votes in his favour. The jubilant supporters cheerfully conveyed their first mayor shoulder high to Kidd's Hotel.

Whatever the citizens expected from their first mayor, it could not have been expected that dignity and regularity of conduct would be a strong feature of the nascent council under the leadership of Jackson Barry, but despite the general disorder that prevailed at council meetings, the popularity of the mayor flourished, and at a second election he was returned to office. Not all his council appreciated their mayor, nor forgave his shortcomings. Barry's authority was challenged when he neglected to ensure that he took the oath of office within the required time, but with jovial eloquence he persuaded his council to limit the imposed fine to a token one shilling. In 1867, while Barry was absent from Cromwell visiting Dunedin on private business, the council passed a vote of censure against the mayor. He was charged with suppressing a letter he had received from the Superintendent of the Province, one which he believed was entirely private. On learning of this censure he hastened to return to the town. Calling a meeting of his council he excluded members of the public and locked the door, putting the key in his pocket. There are varying reports of what followed. Jackson Barry's version of the ruction was that the council had divided into two wrangling groups. When the councillor who had proposed the vote of censure took to fighting with another, the mayor 'stepped up and knocked him down'. He claimed that two other councillors leaped through a window. When order was restored the clerk was ordered to erase the minute, for the original vote of censure had not been seconded.

Barry relates that next day he appeared before Mr Stratford, the magistrate, and was fined; though he still believed he had taken the appropriate action to quell the misconduct of the unruly council.

Sir George Grey, the Pro-consul, who, in 1867, made a long awaited visit to the South Island, had expressly desired to visit Central Otago. Thousands of people rallied to welcome the governor in whose honour triumphal arches and colourful decorations were set up about the province. The mayor of Cromwell, on whose shoulders fell the honour of conducting Sir George about the local district, fretted that the ermine trimmed robes, which a local wit had advised him would be suitable to wear for the occasion, were impossible to obtain.

On the scheduled day Governor Grey was duly welcomed to the township of Cromwell by the mayor, William Jackson Barry, the mayoress and the council. Jack Barry proudly rose to the occasion, leading the governor and Vice Regal party around his domain, excluding nothing which he considered to be of interest. Along with a general commentary, Barry, in his own irrepressible style, related stories of the district and from his own life experiences, tall and otherwise. As the tour was coming to an end, Barry, keen to extend his time with the eminent personage, suddenly exclaimed, "I forgot, Sir George, to show you my bloomin' pigs"; whereupon he called on the party to admire his treasured porkers. Ignoring the governor's wrinkled nose, he exclaimed proudly, "Them's prime pigs", and to the lady mayoress he directed, "Stir up the sow, Maria." Then, "She's a beauty, now, hain't she, Sir George?" That august gentleman was later quoted, when asked by a journalist, as saying that he had never been entertained by anyone as the mayor of Cromwell had entertained him.

To this point Jack Barry's life had been full of adventure and unusual, even unique experiences, but despite striving to win a steady income to provide stability for his family of six children, his life had continued to be a series of ups and downs. Although he enjoyed the status of his position as mayor, he found that the local body duties had become onerous, leading to the neglect of his farm and other responsibilities. Barry was devastated when one of his four sons was seriously injured in a horse racing accident which damaged his spine and left the lad deformed for life. When he returned home from a visit to Dunedin where his son was undergoing

treatment, it was to find that his farm had been badly affected by a serious storm resulting in the heavy loss of fences, topsoil, five acres of potatoes and drowned livestock. Barry was no agriculturalist. Heartily sick of struggling with farm management of which he had no real understanding, he sold out to a man who did. When council elections had come around again he was reluctant to sign the nomination form but was persuaded against his better judgement to do so, though he did not take an interest in the electioneering. Away from Cromwell on election day, he returned to find that once again he had been returned as mayor by a large majority and was, in his own words, like Dick Whittington, who was thrice Lord Mayor of London.

Though the hard times were dejecting, his irrepressible outlook on life led him to achieve many heights undreamed of for a man of his background. Always on the lookout for new and novel ideas to make a fortune, he began tinkering with the idea of profiting from his own life experiences. As a man who loved to tell a tale, he was aware that he could hold the interest of a wide range of listeners, for had not his stories held the attention, even, of Sir George Grey? He began jotting down notes of his adventures, which was no mean effort. Though fluent in speech and with a vivid imagination he could hardly be described as erudite.

Seeking a new profit-making venture Barry turned to auctioneering, setting up premises in Cromwell, Queenstown and Arrowtown, but found economic survival difficult. It had long been on his mind that miners fossicking for gold in the Pipeclay Terraces of the Carrick Range had found a number of quartz-bearing reefs but had abandoned them for easier pickings. In 1867, Barry investigated the area and rediscovered a number of dormant quartz-bearing reefs, most of which were broken with faults. He searched about in the crevices of the abandoned workings, then had a few samples assayed, whereupon his proposal that this area be reworked was pronounced viable. Barry and others promptly set up the Royal Standard Company: by 1872 there were two further quartz-crushing companies working in the Carrick Range, and five operating with success by 1876. Several little townships sprang up, including Quartzville and Carrickville, each with its bakery, butchery, general store, etc, and these flourished for some years until the mines were worked out. Remnants of

the enterprise remain today attracting archaeological research and the occasional curious tourist.

In December 1870, having diligently gathered his biographical data, he mounted the stage to give his first lecture, 'Forty Years of Colonial Experiences', which proved to be a great success, for both lecturer and audience fully enjoyed the performance.

In May 1872 he travelled to Australia, having informed friends that he had a claim to land which had been purchased on his behalf many years ago. Once there, however, due to the fact that he held no birth certificate nor any other documentation verifying his identity, he found that his claim to the properties was not recognised. Having at that stage no means of support, he began a lecture tour, relating his life experiences and adventures; but although he gained the attention of the media, the tour was not a success. Keen to return home to New Zealand he relied on his Dunstan friends who rallied to raise his return passage.

The return to Central Otago signalled a change to a new vocation. The Prince of Wales Hotel in Queenstown was known to be doing good business so when its owner, by the name of McLaren, offered to lease it for three years Barry, with a partner, took up the offer. With the sale of their Cromwell home the family moved to Queenstown. The first year went well. Then one day, his wife Adelia told him she felt strange and ill, and he urged her to rest in bed. Next morning, she fell on the floor in a fit, the first of many. Ten days later, at the age of 54 years, she died. Barry was bereft. After 22 years of marriage which had produced six children (four sons and two daughters, one of whom was very young), he had lost the woman who was the stabilising force in his life. The business foundered, and in 1875 he was held to account for its bad management. A charge of theft brought against the partners, which historian James Parcell described as 'a silly business', was dismissed. The Barry family broke up, with the older children deciding to go their own independent ways.

Resident in Cromwell, in 1877 he decided to take a voyage back to England. A general meeting, which he may have called himself, was held at the Cromwell Town Hall to hear details of his latest project. The result was a 'testimonial' signed by 200 people, addressed to Sir George Grey, recommending that William Jackson Barry be appointed to go to England

to undertake a series of lectures to advertise New Zealand on the government's behalf.

Gathering together the notes he had made of his experiences and adventures over the almost half a century he had spent in Australia and New Zealand, he advertised for an amanuensis to shape these into a cohesive whole. It is believed that a man named Douglas undertook this editing. The *Bruce Herald* quoted one who had read a portion of the manuscript as saying, 'Daniel Defoe in the book *Robinson Crusoe* cannot hold a candle to our latest colonial author whose yarns are well known to all with whom he has ever come in contact'. The hope was to have this manuscript published in England.

In June 1878, on his way to Wellington, Barry stopped in Dunedin to give a reading of his work at the Library Hall, interspersed with songs by himself and others. A good audience received him warmly. It had been observed that Barry's stage image was impressive. He was described as being tall and well built, altogether a fine figure of a man and a person of strong individuality.

In anticipation of his planned new role, Barry's luggage was distinctively marked 'Captain W. J. Barry.' This status-increasing designation was retained for the rest of his life, enabling him, he believed, to 'stand well with the swells'. The captain's powers of persuasion are to be admired, for the government of the day was induced to subsidise the endeavour, advancing £40 for his passage to England and £20 for his initial expenses. This was a lesser sum than had been requested, but at the same time the granting of this sum indicates that Barry had won a degree of support from the Premier, Sir George Grey.

Barry duly arrived in England in July 1879 and set himself up at the Queen's Hotel, London. He later claimed that he had stayed on that site with Sir John Alcock prior to sailing to Australia on the *Red Rover* as a child. Armed with letters of introduction, he made the acquaintance of several people of importance who were able to guide him in a variety of directions, including smoothing the way for publication of his book. Titled *Up and Down, Fifty years of Colonial Experiences* and dedicated to Sir George Grey, this became a reality in the same year.

Startled to see a likeness in a newspaper of the 'Tichborne Claimant',

believed to be a man named Arthur Orton, he made it known that he had been acquainted with this man in Victoria. In the company of Lord Rivers, a Dr Kenealy and Mr Guilford Onslow, he travelled to Portsea gaol for the purpose of identifying the man claiming to be the Tichborne heir who had been lost at sea. Presented with a line-up of five men, Barry announced that Orton was not among them, though he did recognise one of the five. The prisoner said he had been given seven years for swearing he was not Arthur Orton and a further seven for swearing that he was Tichborne, which he was not. Captain Barry made it clear to the authorities that he knew both the prisoner and Orton, for they had worked for him in Victoria. The true name of the man in question was Thomas Castro. A large crowd had gathered outside the prison to hear news of the identification of the claimant in the sensational case. Castro was relieved to be freed from seven years imprisonment imposed for denying he was Orton.

This interlude led to what was, for Barry, an undesired investigation of his own credentials. The Home Office, in corroboration with the Dunedin police, gathered confidential letters which gave unfavourable evidence against some elements of the captain's own depiction of his origins and past life. One police comment was that he was a notorious character who created a vast amount of trouble.

With his books at last in his possession he promptly sent off a copy to Queen Victoria, and was gratified to receive an acknowledgement of its receipt. This letter was to be given prominence in future lectures as 'a letter from the Queen.' The publicity he had gained from his involvement in the Tichborne affair was good publicity for his lectures. Funds were raised from these and from the promotion of his book, but expenses ran higher than his earnings. He later confessed that at this stage he was 'in a fix after spending £450 in lecturing all through England,' and that he was bailed out by Lord Rivers with a cheque for £20 and a further £10 from Guilford Onslow. With a change in government in New Zealand, the captain could not look for sympathy from that quarter. His only option was to call on the Agent-General in England, Sir Julius Vogel, explaining that he had lectured on 'one hundred and twenty platforms to induce the right sort of people to come to New Zealand.' Vogel's only concession was a promise to send him back to New Zealand when he was ready to go. Barry chose to

return to his adopted homeland on the *City of Florence* in 1880. Although eager to see his family in Cromwell, on reaching Dunedin he took the opportunity of portraying his recent experiences in a new lecture entitled, 'What I saw in England' and was gratified to perform to a full house.

Among those who were eager to secure a copy of the captain's book were the poet and novelist Dugald Ferguson and the journalist Thomas Bracken. Ferguson was inspired to write a six verse poem on Barry and his adventures, which appeared at about the same time as Bracken's whimsical verses in the same vein.

While Captain Barry was a man who attracted adventure and interesting experiences, he also had the talent and enthusiasm to capitalise on these. Thus his recent contacts, however brief, with members of the English aristocracy, Mr Gilford Onslow, Lords Rivers and Roseberry and the Duke of Cambridge, were now incorporated into his performances, along with his involvement in the Tichborne affair. His top card was the receipt of 'a letter from the Queen'.

In entrepreneurial mode and full of vitality at the age of 60 the captain made a refresher tour of Lawrence, Clyde and Dunedin. With the reassurance gained from recent successes he joined the throng of itinerant entertainers—musicians, actors, lecturers, hypnotists, circuses and so on from home and abroad who travelled the length and breadth of New Zealand in the Victorian era. He had learned to enliven his own act by including others, sometimes to give credence to his own stories, but would present musical items, sometimes singing himself. Readings from his book were included, promoting its sale at 10/6d per copy.

Barry could be relied on to provide a highly entertaining performance, even side-splitting hilarity. Audience participation was an essential element in Barry's act. Never one to allow the truth to get in the way of a good story, he was the master of applying exaggeration in liberal measure to enhance his tales and please his audience, which would respond with hoots, whistling and catcalls. The more he was accused of gilding the lily, the more he would elaborate and exaggerate. His claimed experience of having ridden on the back of a whale may have had its origin in an incident in Cook Strait in which a harpooned whale dragged him overboard and down to a depth of 'ten to fifteen fathoms' before he could free himself and

rise to the surface, to be picked up by a boat. In later years, newspapers reported Barry's whale ride variously, as having lasted for 40 hours, or even four days. Perhaps the papers, too, were given to exaggeration.

Young blades of the day attended his 'lectures' for the opportunity to indulge in high spirited heckling and banter, behaviour which Barry was adept at handling. On the whole his audiences were good humoured, but on occasion the high spirited young men could become boorish. At a performance in Timaru a gang of young louts thought they would have fun at Barry's expense. Arriving at the theatre armed with rotten eggs they proceeded to hurl them in the direction of the stage even before the programme was under way. When eggs struck the finely dressed chairman, Barry called a halt to the night's entertainment. The behaviour of the 'Timaruffians' was widely reported as deplorable.

Adding interest to 'lectures' given in the North Island, he introduced an old whaler whom he claimed to have met in New Zealand while whaling in 1835, along with three Māori chiefs. He broke his journey north to enter the still sanctioned territory behind the aukati line in the King Country where, in July 1882, he was granted a long audience with the pacifist king, Tāwhiao. Barry obviously used his charm to good effect for he was made godfather to a son of the chief Te Ake. The child was given the name William Jackson Te Ake. Another chief offered the widower one of his daughters as a future wife. Irresistibly drawn to fossicking around for new mining opportunities, he won the king's approval to undertake mining in the district, though it was some years before the government approved the concession.

Popular in Auckland, he could fill the opera house for several nights. On 4 August 1882, while in this city, he attended the execution of Hare Winiata (Henry Wynyard), described by the papers as the 'Epsom murderer'. Seeking interesting comment, a journalist approached Barry for his opinion of the notoriously inept hanging of the man, whose trial had left much to be desired. In the mode of the hyperbolic entertainer, Barry stated that he had attended the spectacle in order to obtain material for the closing chapter of his new book. Claiming that he had seen many hangings, including 'eighteen Chinese strung up before breakfast', he stated that Winiata's execution 'licked all'. A hard-hearted comment such as this from a man who had recently accepted hospitality from King

Tāwhiao, a kinsman of Winiata's, and who planned to work a tin mine in the King Country was probably less than well advised.

Several years later however, in May 1891, when Captain Barry was a passenger on the *Wairoa* steamer, a conversation took place between him and a young fellow passenger. Barry confirmed they had met ten years before, at Mt Eden gaol. '... it was at the execution of Winiata,' he said, 'which if I remember rightly, was very badly performed.' The young man reminded him of his callous-sounding claim to have seen eighteen Chinese strung up before breakfast. "Which was a fact," stated Barry, "and now I look at you, I think you're the young scoundrel that remarked, 'Liars have no show in this company.' Glad to have met again with you; suppose now we liquor up?" And the two went off together as friends. The acknowledgment after these years that the hanging had indeed been badly performed would indicate that Barry's comments at the execution were merely for effect, and his friendly actions towards the younger man demonstrated that he was not one to bear a grudge.

During his travels the captain took note that the complete skeleton of a 75-foot whale had been washed up at the entrance to the Waimea river in



Barry's whale skeleton
Otago Museum

Nelson. Realising its potential he took ownership of this, and while travelling around the country displayed it for an admission price of 6d. On reaching Dunedin in 1883 he sold it to the Otago Museum, where it was displayed as one of only a few complete fin whale skeletons in the world. Unfortunately, a few bones had been lost during the skeleton's tours and displays, but these were replaced by Dr Bourne of the University of Otago who made substitute bones from wood.

In Marlborough the captain refreshed his patter at a lecture entitled 'Kings and Chiefs I have met and Cannibals I have seen.' He was not perturbed when he was exposed as having lifted some of this new material from a book by Archibald Forbes. For him the priority was to entertain to the best of his ability. Later he was to be compared with Louis de Rougemont who became well known for publishing a book on his unlikely adventures, and also with Baron Munchhausen, a famous liar, though these gentlemen each made their debuts at a much later date than the 'old original' drawer of long bows, Captain Jackson Barry.

Ever the showman, to add variety to life, the one-time member of the Cromwell Racing Club dressed comically in full jockey's attire and took part in a horseracing match with a much younger man for a bet of £10, defeating his competitor by a neck. The antics of the two raised much hilarity among the onlookers; one Marlborough racegoer was reported as saying that this was the best event on the day's programme.

In Australia once again, for the purpose of conducting an extended 'farewell tour', he found himself in the Sydney Court where he was fined for assaulting a man at an outdoor lecture. In a strange flashback to the Tichborne case his man had given his name as 'Tichborne Daniel Smith'. Barry, as the accused, addressed the court for an hour on diverse subjects, apparently to the enjoyment of all, and produced a witness named Edward Orton whose identity had been used in the Tichborne case. The lenient bench believed that the complainant had got what he deserved. This added publicity did Barry no harm. He stayed on in Australia, giving successful farewell performances. In 1884, at the age of 65, he participated in a boxing match conducted at a circus; his opponent was also in his sixties.

It was not until 1891 that he returned to update audiences in New Zealand on his latest experiences. The Native Land Court had finally

granted him his tin licence; he returned to the King Country, still fossicking continually for minerals and seeking coal mining rights. His second book, *Past and Present and Men of the Times*, was published that year, dedicated to Sir Robert Stout and edited by Thomas Bracken. Barry, still smarting from what he saw as a past injustice, persisted in his claim to the New Zealand Government, endorsed now by Julius Vogel, for the outstanding payment for services in promotion of the country in England, but to no effect.

Under the newspaper item headed 'Turning the Tables', an amusing incident from the past was revealed. Captain Barry had written to the doctor in charge of Seacliff Asylum near Dunedin asking permission to give a lecture to the patients, asking the doctor to take the chair and this was agreed. At the last minute the doctor was called to an emergency. The hospital staff then decided to ask a patient named 'Albert' to act as chairman. The latter was then dressed in a frock coat, white shirt and vest, etc. This gentleman was introduced to Barry as 'a squatter from the north.' The two men chatted together, getting on famously. Albert took the chair with dignity. The captain was introduced to the meeting and performed in his usual style. After the lecture when Albert had departed Barry, impressed with the chairman, asked just who he was. He was then told that Albert was 'as mad as a hatter'. Barry was incredulous. He said, "Gentlemen, I have been had only twice in my life, but this is the biggest have of all."

Still on the move around the country, at the end of January 1899, Captain Barry celebrated his 80th birthday in Auckland in the company of a large gathering of old colonists who spent a very enjoyable evening. An *Otago Witness* item recorded that Mr Wrigley proposed a toast to the health of Captain Barry. In reply the captain related a few reminiscences. Undaunted by old age he sang 'The Death of Nelson' and treated the party to some dancing. Indicating his popularity, this was only one of several dinner parties held in honour of his birthday by Auckland friends.

When his third book, *Glimpses of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand* (dedicated to Sir Robert Stout and edited by Thomas Bracken) was published in 1903, papers noted the rarity of a man of his age (84) having published 1000 copies of a book. Not one to rest on his laurels, Barry visited Sydney once more to promote his latest literary effort. In fact

though, perusal of the books demonstrates that the second and third books were revised and expanded versions of the first; each included his more recent adventures plus biographies of prominent New Zealanders.

By August 1905, Captain Barry was a shadow of his former self. The leg which he had broken at New Plymouth when he had 'saved a lady from being run over by a train' was slow to heal. He was still promoting sales of his latest book, now priced at just 5/-, though some said this was often purchased as an act of charity. Comment was made that 'although he was in poor health, he was a wonder for his age and still able to stand the fatigue as he does'.

He became a sad and decrepit old man, fading to the stage where he needed to fall back on charity. On learning of the captain's failing health, James Wilson of Lyttelton wrote of an incident which had taken place in Dunedin in the winter of 1878 when unemployment was high. Barry, in conjunction with Sandy Inglis of A&T Inglis (a prominent department store), started a meat market to supply the poor who were on the verge of starvation. Wilson told how parcels made up of a fresh leg of mutton, a smoked leg of mutton and a dozen oysters were sold for nine pence. No one who asked was refused, money or no money. Wilson knew (because he personally had acted as cashier) that it had cost Barry almost £2000 to supply the needy. He had never known a more benevolent man. The writer contrasted the way the captain was then, dressed in sealskin coat, white vest and a silk hat, inviting the poor to come and get their Sunday dinner, and how he had become a helpless old man, now himself in need of charitable assistance. Suffering from ill health and memory loss he was admitted to the Samaritan Home in Christchurch, later dying at Sunnyside Hospital, aged 88, on 24 April 1907.



An older Captain William Barry

Cosmo magazine 2020

The passing of this well-known man was a signal for the papers to review his colourful past. Lengthy obituaries appeared reviewing his life, his adventures, his achievements and his performances. It was noted that probably no man in Australasia had a record so unique; he had spent 78 years in the colonies. The *Free Lance* prefaced its obituary with the statement 'Anything written about him might be true,' and followed with a long collection of stories. In a more serious vein was the *Otago Witness* obituary, which included in part, 'Captain William Jackson Barry received but little education, but what he lacked in this direction was made up by a strong personality and much self-confidence, close observation, a kindly disposition, good oral descriptive powers, and a style of writing which was peculiarly characteristic of the man. The news of his death will be read with regret by many residents of the colony, and also by many in the Commonwealth.'

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Money money money

by Jeanette Grant

Early commerce in New Zealand from the 1790s to the 1850s included both barter and the use of coins from a range of countries. The first paper money arrived with the Europeans, and the design of these early 1800s banknotes was usually simple. They would have the name of the bank, its coat of arms and the value of the banknote on the front. The reverse of the banknote was blank but by the end of the century some had added elaborate designs on the reverse. Privately owned banks continued to issue banknotes into the twentieth century. Banks from both New Zealand and Australia issued notes that were legal tender.

The first banknote to feature Māori designs was the 1881 Bank of New Zealand £1 note. The Bank of New Zealand issued a series of notes featuring a portrait of King Tāwhiao, the second Māori king. The colours and design would be later incorporated in the first national banknotes, released in 1934.

Coins were more popular than banknotes for trading because of their lower denominations. However, they were often hard to get because the authorities did not bring in enough. In 1857 a group of Auckland and Dunedin businesses issued their own penny and halfpenny copper tokens, and from 1857 until the 1880s, traders' tokens were circulated by over 40 mercantile firms, companies and individuals. They were not officially authorised, but were widely accepted because of their convenience. British coins were legal tender in New Zealand from 1870.

The traders' tokens died out as the supply of British coins increased, and in 1897 British coins became the official legal tender in the colony. At the time, it was one of two 'common' coin series, the other being Australian-minted gold sovereign and half-sovereign coins. From 1914, gold coins were gradually withdrawn from circulation. In 1920, the silver coin was debased from .925 fine (sterling silver) to .500 fine. British coins were no longer legal tender from 1 February 1935.

How much was money actually worth? The original deed of purchase of the site of Auckland relates to an area of land approximately 3,000 acres in extent, bounded roughly by Brighton Road, Remuera, Mount Eden and

Cox's Creek. "The price was £50, 50 blankets, 20 pairs of trousers, 20 skirts, 10 waistcoats, 10 caps, 100 yards of gown pieces, four casks of tobacco, one box of pipes, 10 iron pots, one bag of sugar and one of flour, and 20 hatchets." (Deed of Sale quoted by *Horowhenua Chronicle* (1937), Papers Past.)

In the early twentieth century, there were issues with coin smuggling and a shortage of lower-value coins. It was decided that the country should start issuing its own banknotes and coins from a single bank. So in 1933, a unique New Zealand coinage was introduced by the Coinage Act 1933. Based on a fractional system, the new coins used the same weights, sizes and denominations as the British coins. These new coins featured either a native bird or Māori iconography on one side and the current British monarch on the other.

In 1932, work on the new banknote designs began. These first banknotes were meant to be temporary as they were designed in a hurry amid heated debate over what they should look like. The Reserve Bank of New Zealand issued the first banknotes in August 1934, and they were signed by the first Governor, Leslie Lefeaux. They included features of banknotes already in circulation—a kiwi, the Arms of New Zealand, a sketch of Mitre Peak and a portrait of King Tāwhiao. They were printed by Thomas De La Rue and Company Limited, in London.

The colours were similar to the previous banknotes. All the notes carried the same design, but different colours distinguished the denominations. Notes of 10/- (10 shillings), £1 (one pound), £5 and £50 were coloured orange, mauve, blue-green and red respectively. The banknotes were all the same size (7 x 3½ inches).

The second banknote series was issued on 6 February 1940. The design of the notes was more varied and included a separate watermark panel. King Tāwhiao was replaced by the British navigator James Cook on the front of the notes, appearing instead as the watermark. There were also new designs for the 10 shilling and £50 notes. A green-coloured £10 banknote was also introduced at this time. These banknotes stayed in circulation until the change to decimal currency in 1967.

The first call for decimalisation had come as early as 1908, and the idea gained momentum during the 1930s. Labour MP Rex Mason submitted a

series of private member's bills about decimalisation to Parliament in the 1950s, while in opposition. The bill that eventually resulted in the Decimal Currency Act 1964 was a government bill from the National government, which in 1963 announced New Zealand would switch to decimal currency. The process was overseen by then under-secretary for finance and future Prime Minister Robert Muldoon, and came into effect on 10 July 1967. A pound was worth 20 shillings and a shilling was worth 12 pence, so one pound was worth 240 pence. Under the decimal system two dollars was equivalent to one pound, one dollar was equal to 10 shillings, 10 cents was one shilling, and 5/6ths of a cent had the same value as one penny. To ease transition the five, ten and twenty cent coins were the same size as the sixpence, shilling and florin they replaced.

However, since then virtually every aspect of money has also changed, from wage rates and taxation systems to ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines, which issued and accepted cash), credit cards, mortgage finance and attitudes to debt and inflation. For instance, on 24 January 1944 my parents paid £1750 for a villa in Mt Eden on a large section of one third of an acre. They got a mortgage from the Auckland Savings Bank at 3% for 25 years!

To modern ears, this sounds incredibly cheap but it needs to be put in the context of the wages of the day (typically £1–£2 per week). Both my parents were working. My mother, Olive Stubbs, was a primary school teacher. She started in 1923 and did two years of 'pupil teaching' as she was a few weeks too young to enter training college. She taught through 'The Depression years' when married women were given the sack, as they were considered to be taking a job away from a man. Because of this policy, my parents were engaged for four years, as they could not afford to live on my father's salary alone. Finally in 1932 Mum wrote to the secretary of the Auckland Education Board asking if there was any way she would be permitted to keep her job if they got married. A favourable answer arrived on a Saturday in January 1933, and they were married by special licence the following Wednesday. A week later the school year started, and she was in the classroom at Taupaki School as Mrs Reay Clarke.

Dad was a photographer. He and his brother and a friend had set up the Walter J. Thompson Advertising Studio in Wyndham Street, but in

Depression times, advertising budgets were often the first to be cut. Business did not boom. It was 1939 before Mum and Dad felt financially safe enough to start a family. By the time I was born, World War Two had started, Dad was in the Home Guard and Mum had to leave me in her mother's care and go back into the classroom, as there was a shortage of teachers with so many men called up.

She had been teaching for 20 years when she gave up to have another baby, and was earning the grand total of £4.19.9 per week. Their goal was to live on Dad's wages and save hers. By this means they had managed to save enough to buy an architect-designed two-bedroom house in Mt Albert. In 1943 they had a sale agreement, but during wartime a Land Court had been set up to prevent profiteering. After months of delay it decided in its infinite wisdom to order that the agreed sale price be reduced by £250 because of its 'proximity to the Avondale Asylum'—a good mile as the crow flies. This meant that there was no money to tidy up the Mt Eden place, so we became a family of do-it-yourselfers.

Everyone is so used to PAYE (Pay As You Earn) these days, and to banks deducting tax at source, that it is often forgotten that until its introduction in 1958, no tax was deducted automatically. Instead you got an annual tax bill for the full twelve month amount. This created real problems for those who were no good at budgeting and saving.

Modern governments moan about our bad savings record, but in the 1940s the schools and the Auckland Savings Bank had an arrangement whereby children paid in what they could afford once a week at school to be banked for them. There was an annual 'Thrift Essay' competition. Children all over Auckland from Std One upwards wrote essays on the virtues of saving, and the best were rewarded with book tokens. I still have the copy of A.W.B. Pownall's *Native Animals of NZ* I bought in 1948 with mine.

A more recent and wide-spread change has been the switch to internet banking, allowing people to make and receive payments using their computer or smart phone. This became so popular that eventually New Zealand banks stopped issuing or accepting cheques, after centuries of convenient use. Each bank had a different date when they made this changeover, during the years 2020 and 2021. For a time the banking of overseas cheques was allowed to continue.

These developments created a society where the banks themselves felt the need to issue advice on avoiding ‘scams’. A very common scam involved people who were selling goods online and accepting a foreign cheque as payment. The seller would bank the cheque and either send the goods straightaway or wait until the hold period ended, thinking the cheque had cleared. It is hard to believe, but a foreign cheque could subsequently be dishonoured even after the recipient had accessed the money—and then the seller’s bank debited his or her account to cover the cheque amount. If the customer had insufficient credit funds in the account, the account would be overdrawn.

In 2024 all New Zealand banks ceased accepting overseas cheques, and this meant that if the cheques were for an overseas government pension you had to register to receive the payments electronically.

All this has been accompanied by a drastic reduction in the number of bank branches, leaving many rural areas bereft of all hands-on banking facilities. Here in Mt Eden we have lost six local branches. Now there are none between St Lukes and Royal Oak. As long ago as July 2021 an article in *Consumer NZ* stated that 366 bank branches had already closed over the previous decade. In June 2024 it was announced that a trial of regional banking hubs in New Zealand had flopped, and so instead NZ’s five largest banks would extend their current commitment not to close more regional branches—for the next three years.

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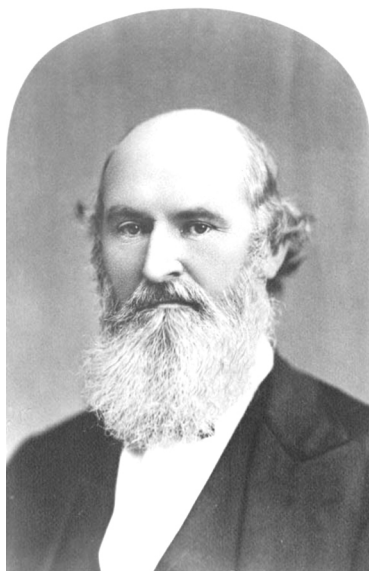
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Judge Thomas Bannatyne Gillies, 1828–1889

by Val Sherwood



Judge Thomas Gillies

Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand

Thomas Gillies, after whom Gillies Avenue, Epsom was named, was born at Rothesay, on the Isle of Bute, in 1828. He had a strict Scottish upbringing with an emphasis on religion and hard work, and, like many Scots of that era, had a keen interest in engineering. His father, however, persuaded him to train for the legal profession.

Sailing to New Zealand on the *Slains Castle*, he arrived at Dunedin with his wife Catherine (née Douglas), his parents, and other members of his family, at the end of 1852. His father took up a partnership with the legal firm, Hyde Harris, in Dunedin, while Thomas and his two brothers ran the family farm at Tokomairiro.

Two years later Thomas and his wife moved to a bush block at Warepa. Here he was able to draw on his engineering and farming skills to build a farmhouse, fashion farm implements, clear bush and plant the land. He was also stock enumerator for the southern part of Otago, and this work involved long journeys on foot. His self-acknowledged ‘rude good health’ stood him in good stead in these demanding years. Thomas and his family enjoyed the challenge of the farming settler life style, but made the decision to move to Dunedin to take over his father’s practice when the latter was appointed magistrate.

In Scotland, Gillies had shown some talent as a lecturer. By 1860 his ability as an orator drew him into politics and in that year he was elected member of the House of Representatives for Bruce. He was appointed Attorney General in Domett’s government and Postmaster General in the Whitaker Ministry. The strength of his opposition to the removal of the

seat of government from Auckland to Wellington, led to his protest resignation.

Tragedy overtook the family early in 1865, when Catherine died following the birth of their fourth child. Bereft, he turned away from all he knew; his family, his work and his religion. Having made arrangements for the care of his children, and dealt with his practice, he rode off overland to Picton, crossed to Wellington, and eventually made his way to Auckland. After a short time in this city he recommenced the practice of his profession. He then purchased land at Epsom, and in January 1866 signed a contract for the building of his home. His next step was to arrange for his children to join him in his Auckland home, with his sister Bella keeping house. However, Bella married before long, and Thomas Gillies in his own words, “was fortunate in persuading Miss Agnes Sinclair to join her lot with mine and be a mother to my children.” They married in April, 1867.

Having previously made his mark as a politician it was to be expected that his interests and talents in this direction would lead him back into this area. After a stormy campaign he became Superintendent of Auckland; then, in 1870, was returned to the House of Representatives as the member for Auckland City West. On his appointment as Judge of the Supreme Court, however, his political career necessarily came to an end.

Along with his Epsom neighbours, George Owen (1819–1893) and Thomas Shipherd (1837–1866), Gillies was passionate about trees. The judge’s garden at Rocklands (in Gillies Ave) was noted for its wide variety of flowers and exotic trees. While he planted many pines, which he prophesised would become of commercial importance, Gillies warned about the loss of native forests. He was the first president of the Auckland Acclimatisation Society, and a prominent member



Rocklands Hall, 1977

Heritage Collections Online—Auckland Libraries

of the Auckland Institute and Museum. He recognised the need to record the pre-European culture of the Māori, and called on members of the Institute to help in this. Gillies welcomed both extended family and friends to his home; Rocklands was seldom without guests. Among names mentioned in his autobiography when writing of picnics with friends and visitors to Rocklands Hall, were those of the colourful Judge Manning and Baron von Tempsky.

Thomas Gillies was considered to be a 'sound judge'; he was credited with being quick to grasp the salient points of a case, and with having a sound knowledge of human nature. Nor did he flinch from decisions which did not win favour from the government, as when, following the Parihaka incident of 1881, he declared that the several Māori appearing in his court as a result had been wrongfully arrested. Both in parliament and in court he displayed a quick tongue and lively wit; however, as he was sometimes regretfully aware, these were not always appreciated.

Thomas Bannatyne Gillies died suddenly in July 1889 at the age of 61. He was survived by five sons and a daughter, his second wife Agnes having predeceased him in 1884. Thomas, Agnes, and her mother, Agnes Sinclair, are all buried in the churchyard at St Andrew's, Epsom.

A very lengthy and detailed obituary appeared in the *NZ Herald* on 27 July 1889. It began:

DEATH OF MR. JUSTICE GILLIES.

Yesterday morning His Honour Mr. Justice Gillies died suddenly at his residence, Rocklands, Epsom, from an apoplectic seizure. The deepest sensation was caused when the news was circulated in the city. His Honour had been at business at the Supreme Court on the previous day in his capacity as President of the Compensation Court, and then seemed in excellent health . . .

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Photography mid-20th century

by Olive Clarke

Introduction

My father Reay Clarke (1902–80) was a commercial photographer. He gave me my first camera—a Brownie which I still have—for my 7th birthday and, while he would do the developing and printing at work, I had to buy my own film. As a 20-shot black and white film cost 2/6 and my pocket-money was 1/- a week, it made me very careful what photos I took.

In these days of digital cameras/cellphones, etc, etc, there are by now a couple of generations without experience of using actual film. This is an extract from my mother's *Memoirs* concerning the years between 1949 and 1953. JG [Editor]

When my daughter Barbie (born 1944) started school, at Maungawhau Primary of course, I had spare time on my hands, something I had never had before. What was I to do with it?

My husband came up with an unusual solution. Tom Ohlsen, an old friend of Reay's, solved the problem for us in an unexpected way. He managed Kodak's photographic shop in Queen Street and was in deep trouble. The firm was remodelling its darkrooms, and while they could still handle the developing of films, they could not cope with the enlarging and printing. Could Reay help? Reay could not. To process films all day and then continue doing the same thing when he came home, was just not on. Where would he fit in any family life? So I gaily said, "Teach me and I'll do it."

Reay laughed and told me I'd never manage with no prior experience, but I persuaded him to let me try. We bought an 8mm strip enlarger and a bigger one to take different sized negatives, and set them up in the little room (now Jeanette's workroom) off the back porch. This became my darkroom where I spent many many profitable hours.

At first I was hopeless. Reay showed me what to do and then left me to it, saying that it was only experience that would teach me—and he was right. I wasted much time and paper before I could finally gauge the density of films and work out the exposure needed for a good print. Talk about trial and error.

At last Reay pronounced me ready to begin. I was most apprehensive about it all. There is a terrific amount of handling in this work. Reay would collect the films and the orders from Kodak and bring them home to me at night. When the children were off to school in the morning and I had rushed around and finished the housework, I would busy myself in the darkroom. (Fortunately there was no telephone to interrupt me. Did I mention that we were on a waiting list for almost 13 years before we got one in 1956?)

First, I opened the envelope, took out the film and the order, and perused it. Next I put the film in the enlarger and put the photographic paper in place. I gauged the exposure time as best I knew how, removed the print and placed it in the developer. When it was perfect (?) I removed it, washed it around in the stop mixture and from thence into the fixer where it stayed until I had enough to take out and wash. This I did under running water in the washhouse tub and the water rates rose accordingly. (The first year our water bill jumped astronomically, the council sent men out to look for the leak they imagined must have developed.) When washing was completed, I lifted out the prints and placed them on a butter muslin cloth rack that Reay had rigged for me and left them to dry in the washhouse. After drying, they had to be pressed flat, trimmed with or by my guillotine, sorted, priced and put back in their envelopes.

It was quite a business, for no matter how expert you were, you could not hurry. A second too long exposed, a second too long in the developer, and you had a ruined print, which you had to redo. At first my reprints were many, but I learned. Postcard sizes cost 9 pence (9d) a print. Of this, Kodak allowed me 3d to pay for my materials, 3d for my profit and they kept 3d for handling charges. Not much by today's standards, but some months I actually topped Reay's wages.

My hours were long and arduous. Sometimes I came out for lunch, but this depended on the size of the orders. I always shut up shop when the children came home and changed over to mother, cook and bottlewasher, in that order. When homework was done, family chat over and Jeanette and Barbie in bed, Reay checked and criticised what I had done and I finished anything left unfinished. Weekends were more or less free as Reay collected Friday's orders and nothing more came in until Monday night.

I did this for over two years, and our bank balance began to look a little healthier, for we shared my takings. When this piece-work was finished, I was not sorry for it was a great tie, but once again spare time did not appeal much. I tried the social life but cups of tea and chatter left me with nothing to show for my time. I'll admit it wasn't all spare time, for we papered different rooms and painted the house ourselves, and these jobs were long and quite difficult for just the two of us. By now Jeanette was a bit older and could paint the bottom boards, which was a great help.

Another opportunity for further photographic work then occurred. Harry Rose, a 'Candid Camera' man, became so overwhelmed with work that he applied to Kodak for help. They referred him to me, and for the next six months I was kept on my toes, keeping his work up to date.

Then in 1953 I got asked to go back teaching at Maungawhau . . . but that is another story.

My final, really final story, that of a bungalow

by Cynthia Landels

As I wrote what I thought was my final story for *Prospect* Volume 23 in 2024, I thought I was finished. All I knew was that I was to go to a yard. Well, I have now discovered what happened next. I, a Californian, 190 square metre bungalow (I am quite large), had been sitting in the yard for a while. I had been put together again, and was hoping, not with my fingers, but with my joists crossed, that as the man had said, I would be sold. At least, I had not finished up as firewood or in Hunua or Kaukapakapa—yet.

I have learned that the yard was in Silverdale, north of Auckland. I presume I made the perilous journey from Epsom across the Harbour Bridge, but I have no real memory of that. I think I had my eyes shut! So there I am, just waiting, until one day a young couple with a little boy came and looked at me and walked through my rooms, and fell in love with me! They loved my stained glass windows and the high beamed ceilings with their plaster panels. The lady said that she just had a feeling that I was right for them. They had seen me advertised on Trade Me (whatever that is).

They bought me! I was happy, as I might actually see my 200th birthday after all, as my 100th was a bit of a non event.

But this of course meant that I would be split in half again—more agony. You know what it's like when an old wound is opened up. Next, the two big trucks who had brought me here backed their 26m-long trailers in under each half of me, as all my 40 tons was carefully balanced on them, taking care to evenly distribute my weight. I wondered where I was going?



Half of me is in the yard, loaded ready to go



Then we were off! It was quite dark with two flashing pilots in front and one behind. Myself, I looked like a couple of mobile Christmas trees, I was be-decked with so many flashing lights, front, back and all along my sides. And

Left: This is my bedroom half and I am on my way

would you believe that the man who bought me came along for the ride? We joined the motorway at Silverdale and all went well until we came to a tunnel.

What a squeeze! My two halves just fitted. I held my breath for the whole two minutes as we travelled very slowly the 400m metres through the tunnel (Johnston's Hill tunnel). We both made it, which was amazing as there were only a few inches between either half of me and the tunnel walls. Thank goodness those amazing men can drive straight!

Going through the Dome Valley was twisty but I managed, as the pilots had stopped all the traffic coming towards me, so I had the whole road to myself. I needed the extra space on those bends. There were road works to negotiate too. Next we had to stop because one half of me couldn't fit under some power lines but the men soon had that sorted.

On we went to Kaiwaka where we turned off the main road. So that I could fit around the corner, the men had to remove road signs and then put them back after me. I am starting to feel quite important! All this activity for little old me.

Not far to go now, they were saying. But the next obstacle was a one lane bridge. I, both halves of me, was wider than the bridge. I was jacked up on the trailers so that I was above the sides of the bridge. The trailer wheels were touching the sides of the bridge, it was such a tight fit. However one half of me could not quite make it across, so I watched with my heart in my mouth as they just jacked up one side of me! I was at such an angle I was sure I would fall off the trailer into the river! Later I heard that the



Stopped by power line problems



With one of my pilot vehicles

angle was only 10 millimetres but it certainly didn't feel like it at that time. Even though my nerves by now were shot, we did manage to get across!

Then there were more, much lower power lines. One half of me just couldn't fit under them. Once again they jacked up one side of me so I could squeeze under the lines. It was so scary that once again thought I might fall off!

The next obstacle was turning off the road into the driveway of my destination. My lounge and kitchen half was backed in first. What a squeeze! However my other half was a little bit wider and didn't fit through the gate. What will they do?

Will I be stuck here for ever? They produced a pole saw and removed a branch off the tree that was scratching my side. And then another branch was removed. Even then I could feel the tree scratching me as I crawled through with literally only an inch to spare. They finally backed the rest of me in. I had arrived at my new home at 4.30am after a totally nerve-racking trip. As the night was stormy, I was covered with big tarpaulins thank goodness, and everyone went off to get some sleep, including me. I, too, was exhausted after the exciting trip.

Next morning, I found I still had a little way to go, up a hill to a flat section. The lounge half of me was going first but became bogged down after the rain last night. So I wasn't going anywhere! The men produced

big yellow mats which they put under the trailer wheels, so that they could get a grip. But that didn't work. I was just too heavy. So next thing I know, they had a tractor with a winch cable and I was slowly pulled up the slope and put in place. Before long, my other half was beside me and we were one house, once again. I had finally arrived. I had travelled 82 kilometres overnight. What a relief to have arrived and be in one piece again!



Backed up and I am together again; now I just have to get off the trucks



Here I am, sitting on nice new concrete piles

What has happened since I arrived? So much! I have been painted white, which is great as I have been white for as long as I can remember and I like it. I no longer have my brown trim, which was previously green, but that



Water supply for the house

doesn't matter. As the section is flat I no longer have a basement underneath me. I have lost my three chimneys but I do have a lovely new roof. My water supply now comes from big white tanks, not piped in from a reservoir across the other side of Auckland.

I have had an almost complete internal makeover, and I am feeling great. At last I have lost my scrim and wallpaper. The scrim was a bit saggy in places and a bit

uncomfortable, like a badly fitting suit. I now have Gibraltar board on my walls that has been painted, which I think is a big improvement on the scrim. My third owners had intended to remove the scrim 50 years ago but never got round to it!

So much of me remains the same, but some things have changed. Inside, I have a new kitchen and scullery. It is interesting that the wall in the original plans which had a buffet joining the kitchen and the dining room has been removed, so they are now joined by a doorway. That was a bit painful, but compared to my other sawings up, it was actually quite minor. Now the dining room flows through to the kitchen and on to the scullery. It is nice to have a scullery again, just like in the good old days. My hall arch is back in place, as at least they had not cut that in half! And there is a resident dog. It is nice to have another dog in residence.

But perhaps the most exciting thing to happen to me, was something which has never happened to me before. A baby has been born in me, a totally new experience. What joy! I do not think there are many houses around who have had this unique experience. Once again there are two children living in me. I have always had two children in all my years. I do enjoy having young ones around.



So here I am sitting on a hillside, with a fabulous view of countryside . . . hills and trees. It is so peaceful after my 100 years in Epsom, with the bus stop across the road and all the traffic going up and down. I must admit it is much nicer to look at countryside, rather than the houses in Epsom, which were so close I could almost reach out and touch them.



My view

There is a large garden with a pear tree in a circle in the driveway. Outside my front door here is a little lake with pukekos and an island with a tree! You don't get that in Epsom!

I am so happy! My new life is going to be amazing and I can't thank my



new family enough for rescuing me and giving me a new lease of life. I also thank those marvellous men and their amazing trucks which got me, in two pieces, here so safely. I have discovered too, that I have made it on to TV. I am a star, maybe?

I can't think of a better place to move to than Mangawhai. I am sure it will be better than either Hunua or Kaukapakapa. I will hopefully now live to be 200, and I will celebrate that with balloons, lots of them.

Source

'Moving Houses', *TVNZ On Demand*, Series 3, Episode 3, 24 November, 2024.

With thanks to Andy Ellis, and the new owners
who also provided some of the moving photos.

Author's note

Watching 'Moving Houses' on television one evening,
we saw our *own* house being moved to its new site,
and were able to contact the movers and subsequently
the new owners to put together this account.

School lunches—then and now

by Jeanette & other Grants

New Zealand's free school lunch programme, Ka Ora, Ka Ako—Healthy School Lunches—was launched by the Labour Government in 2019 with the aim of reducing food insecurity, and 'putting students in a good place to learn'. Initially a two-year initiative for primary and intermediate students, it was expanded to secondary schools in February 2020, meaning that almost 230,000 students from over a thousand schools and kura got a free lunch every school day through the programme. That's around a million lunches every week.

While in opposition, the Act Party campaigned on abolishing the programme, with leader David Seymour calling Ka Ora, Ka Ako 'wasteful', 'unaffordable', and a 'marketing stunt'. National, meanwhile, last year said it supported the programme, but promised to make it more efficient should it get voted into parliament.

How did it work? According to the programme's website:

Eligibility is mostly dependent on a school's rating on the Equity Index, which last year replaced the decile system. Schools in the top 25% of the index, which indicates the greatest socioeconomic barriers faced, are eligible. Currently 1,023 schools with 229,811 students on their rolls are taking part. Students are not assessed individually because this could cause stigma, discourage families from taking part, and add complexity and cost to the programme.

It was up to each school where the lunches came from. Food could be made on site (following proper hygiene and employment practices—staff had to be paid at least \$26 per hour) or schools could choose from a panel of suppliers approved by the Ministry of Education. There was no menu set by the ministry, but it said typical items were wraps, salads, soups and hot lunches. Meals had to meet set weight requirements for vegetables, protein, grains and starchy vegetables.

In November 2024, Associate Education Minister David Seymour said businesses had worked with the government to 'transform' the existing programme, 'delivering for children and saving for taxpayers'.

Every student receiving a school lunch today will continue to do so from day one of Term 1 next year. The programme will deliver nutritious hot and cold meals, such as butter chicken curry, chicken katsu, lasagne, chicken pasta salad and wraps. These meals will cost \$3 each. All students in years 0 to 8 will receive the same sized meals (240 grams) and older students will receive larger lunches (at least 300g)—which will include additional items such as fruit, yoghurt or muesli bars.

By the end of February, principals across New Zealand were pleading with the government to revert to the old school lunch system saying the new scheme was beset with issues so bad that meals needed replacing with bought pies, while the former option was ‘superior’ even if it cost more.

Then, in early March 2024, it was revealed that the Libelle Group, a major provider of the government’s troubled free school lunch programme, owed more than \$14 million to hundreds of creditors after going into liquidation the previous week. Before the revamped programme, Libelle had supplied lunches for \$9 per head to 17,000 school children—and then scaled up to supplying 125,000 lunches for \$3 per head each day as part of the Ka Ora, Ka Ako programme, but after its liquidation, Compass agreed to buy the business.

A Radio New Zealand report on 31 March said:

Doctors and researchers at the Public Health Communication Centre have analysed the nutritional value of the School Lunch Collective meals which were brought in as a cost-saving scheme by the government this year. The meals were falling well short of expected energy requirements.

Depending on the age group they were for, the energy level in each meal was between 13 and 17.8% of daily requirements. That should be closer to 30%, the standard in other high-income countries, the researchers said.

Given that 27% of children in New Zealand live in households where food runs out often or sometimes, the very low energy content of the meals is especially worrying. Based on available information, the SLC is delivering substandard lunches to children, which is a major breach of their contractual requirements.

None of the 13 meals the researchers had information on met nutrition standards. The researchers said they wanted to analyse more examples, but

were not able to because the collective did not make enough information public. The report said:

The meals should be reviewed by the supplier and qualified nutritionists/dietitians to ensure they meet the nutrition standards for each of the year groups supplied. The analysis found the energy levels in the School Lunch Collective meals were significantly less than those analysed in 2022 under the old system, which ranged from 20 to 25% of daily needs. That amounted to a 30 to 40 % drop.

In the light of the current (2025) controversy about the ineffectiveness of this new 'one size fits all' NZ lunch scheme, I felt it appropriate to ask for a variety of memories of 'the way it used to be'. Luxon is being slammed for his so-called derogatory comment about 'taking marmite sandwiches and an apple', but for several generations, this had been taken for granted as the kind of food convenient to take to school.

Here are a few memories from three generations of school children

1. Val Sherwood b.Dunedin 1933

The first school which I attended was the Caversham School in Dunedin in 1938. Although I pestered my mother to allow me to take a lunch to school, she insisted that I go home each day for a light meal. So I would run as fast as I could to reach my home in ten minutes. I would eat Mum's carefully prepared meal—my favourite was a hard-boiled egg and lettuce, and then hurry back to school as fast as I could to join my friends who had the 'privilege' of cut lunches. I felt that they were the lucky ones to be free to play together as soon as they had finished their sandwiches.

In 1944, at the Macandrew Intermediate School (which I cycled to), I took sandwiches and an apple or a piece of cake, which I ate quickly to join my friends in practising shooting goals at basketball. I don't recollect any complaints about my sandwich lunch; after all, it was the sort of thing that all the children ate, although some went across the road to a little shop where a mince pie could be purchased as a special treat. I don't remember any child coming to school without a cut lunch.

I believe that all today's children should take their own lunch to school. For those unable to do so, food which keeps well, such as a plastic-wrapped

cheese slice, apples, small bottles of milk (as we used to have) or perhaps a banana, and a rusk type biscuit should be available for purchase (or otherwise) by those who don't bring a lunch—I'm sure that a roster of older ladies could be happy to donate their time for this. Teachers should not have to be involved.

In my opinion there's no need to provide every child with a free hot meal every day. Religious and dietary factors make this too complicated.

2. John Grant b.England 1935

He was educated at St John's School on the Wirral. Rationing in England lasted for many years long after the war ended. There were low wages and much unemployment, so for many children the security of a school lunch made a real difference to their lives. John remembers queueing up in the school lunchroom to get his helping of the kinds of foods which could be cooked easily in bulk. There was little variety—cottage pie, steak & kidney pie, mashed tatties, boiled cabbage and peas. There was no choice; you ate what had been cooked that day. There were no desserts and no sandwiches.

3. Jeanette Grant née Clarke b.Auckland 1940

I was educated at Maungawhau Primary School, Normal Intermediate and Epsom Girls Grammar School. Like everyone else I knew, I took home-made sandwiches to school for lunch, plus a piece of home-made cake and an apple or a banana. The sandwiches consisted of four slices of bread cut from a bought loaf and filled with honey, home-made jam, marmite or peanut butter. As bread was not sold in the weekend (the only businesses allowed to open then were dairies and petrol stations), it was stale by Monday—if there was any left. The school used to give permission to leave the school grounds and walk up Wairiki Road to the Betsy-Ann Bakery and buy a pie for fourpence and a doughnut for twopence. It was the treat of the week.

There were two oil drums: one for apple cores, banana peel and any other food scraps; the other for the greaseproof paper the lunches were wrapped in, which the caretaker burned daily in the school incinerator. The food scraps were taken home each day by one of the Misa family, who were still keeping pigs in Balmoral Road. (Today they grow Christmas trees there.)

Later on, in the 1960s, EGGS had a ‘tuck shop’ where it was possible to buy sandwiches and filled rolls. Note: ‘to buy’.

At Maungawhau School there were no official school lunches—until the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) began making them to sell in the 1970s, once there was a school hall with a kitchen to make it possible. However they were still just sandwiches and filled rolls—no cooked meals—and not many pupils took advantage of them.

4. Reay Grant b.Auckland 1968; Alex Grant b.1969, Mike Grant b.1972

All three went to Maungawhau School, Normal Intermediate & Auckland Grammar School. Secondary schools had tuck shops, but you had to pay. Not many people did, though. We could buy slightly warm Big Ben pies, slightly warm soft drinks, filled rolls, cream doughnuts or crisps to choose from. Not very exciting; the potato top pie was the best bet. Most of the time we made our own lunches—sandwiches mainly.

5a Nicholas b.2006 and Emily Grant b.2008 in Auckland.

They took their own lunches at most schools i.e. Bailey Road, Baradene and Sacred Heart. When Nic changed to One Tree Hill College, there was a lunchroom.

5b Archie Grant b.London, UK, 2008.

He says that their lunches are free and eaten in a dining room. He says, “I can order any food I want or they can stick to the menu. Fish and chips and burgers on Friday usually. I usually have cheese and bacon turnovers, chicken nuggets, fish fingers, chips or wedges.”

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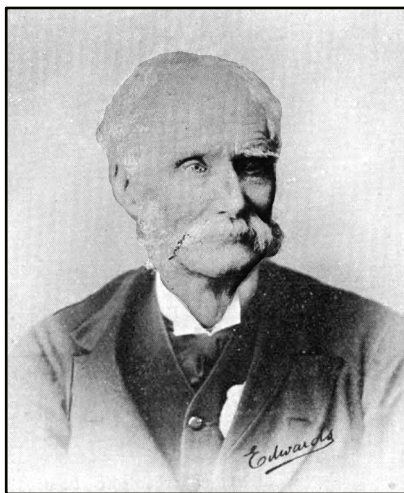
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Thomas Moore Philson 1817–99: doctor, soldier, administrator and philanthropist

by Iain Wakefield

*From the talk given by the author to the Epsom & Eden
District Historical Society on 3 June 2024*



Thomas Moore Philson

Wikipedia

Thomas Moore Philson was born on 10 August 1817 in Londonderry, County Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He attended Foyle College, Derry, in 1834. His father Matthew was a mathematics master, likely at Foyle College also.

Philson graduated MD at the University of Edinburgh and LRCSE at the Royal College of Surgeons at Edinburgh in 1839, winning the Ballingall Prize in Military Surgery. His younger brother, William Ball Philson (1819–1899), qualified at the same time. John Logan Campbell (1817–1912) graduated MD, LRCSE, from the University of Edinburgh in absentia in the same year.

Philson then moved down to Gloucestershire where he spent three years as assistant in a medical partnership in the Forest of Dean. He married Matilda Willmet Anderson at the Zion Chapel, Chatham, Kent, on 24 December 1844 after a six week romance and a two week engagement.

He was commissioned on 6 October 1843, and appointed assistant-surgeon to the 58th (Rutlandshire) Regiment ('The Black Cuffs') on 30 September 1844.

Assistant-Surgeon Philson travelled with a detachment of troops to Port Jackson, Sydney (via Hobart), in June 1845, on board the military transport barque *Ann*. He was stationed in Parramatta until September 1845.

Afterwards 223 officers and men, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Wynyard (later Lieutenant-General, Lieutenant-Governor of New Ulster, Superintendent of the Auckland Province and Acting Governor of New Zealand) set sail for Auckland on the *British Sovereign* on 22 September 1845 together with howitzers, field-pieces and their ammunition. This deployment of the 58th Regiment was its first since the Peninsular War of 1808–1814.

He served in the expedition against Kawiti's Pah at Ruapekapeka (10–11 January 1846), and his contribution was referred to in despatches. Colonel Henry Despard, in a despatch to Governor George Grey dated 12 January 1846, noted: "Every kindness has been shown to the wounded men by Doctors Kidd and Pine, the Senior Medical Officers, and all the medical officers, both naval and military". (Barthorp, 1979). This battle heralded the end of the hostilities of the Northern War.

The regiment subsequently served in Wellington at the fight on 16 May 1846 at Boulcott's Farm at the Hutt, on 6 August 1846 at Horokiri (or Horokiwi) and later still at Whanganui. He witnessed the consequence of the murder of four of the Gilfillan family at Matarawa outside Whanganui on 18 April 1847; five Māori were tried on 23 April, and four hanged on 26 April 1847.

The 58th Regiment was then transferred to Auckland in November 1847 on the *Eleanor Lancaster*. The 58th Regiment left New Zealand for Portsmouth in November 1858. Over 1100 soldiers had settled in New Zealand meantime. (Wynyard, 1983).

In 1849, the Philson family was living in a cottage on Albert Street, probably associated with the Albert Barracks. Philson resigned his commission on 9 May 1851 after 7 years and 7 months in the army.

He commenced private practice in Auckland from 1851—the family home and practice were located at 'upper High Street' (near the current site of the Central Library) until about 1878, when they moved to 'Glen Eden', Grafton Road. He was the Medical Referee in Auckland for the Liverpool & London Fire and Life Insurance Company from that first year. In sequence, he was appointed:

1. Surgeon to the Auckland Regiment of the New Zealand Militia on 8 December 1856 and again on 26 April 1860.

2. Coroner for the Auckland District on 11 January 1858; this post was extended by Governor Sir George Grey on 17 January 1862.
3. Member of the Central Board of Vaccination on 11 February 1858.
4. Provincial Surgeon and Superintendent of the Auckland Hospital from 1859 until January 1883.



The first Auckland Hospital, 1850s, which Philson would have known

Te Ara: Encyclopedia of New Zealand

He succeeded Dr Thomas Francis McGauran as Provincial Surgeon on 1 June 1859. McGauran had been forced to resign on a charge of incompetency, although this was never proven. This may have been related to 'too great intimacy with a female patient'. Philson continued at the first Auckland Provincial Hospital from 1859 to 1876 and at the second Auckland Hospital from 1877 to January 1883. In this role, he was also Surgeon and Visiting Medical Attendant to Her Majesty's Gaol at Mount Eden, the Fort Cautley prison at Devonport and the Auckland Lunatic Asylum. After retiring, he was then appointed a member of the first tranche of honorary consulting staff later in 1883.

5. Health Officer to the Port of Auckland on 20 January 1860 inspecting inbound ships and their passengers.
6. Coroner to the Whau Lunatic Asylum (later the Avondale Asylum, and then the Oakley/Carrington Hospitals).
7. Member of the Medical Board and Medical Assessor under the Medical Practitioners Act of 1867 as registration and assessment were introduced into New Zealand.

8. Visiting Medical Officer to the Whau Asylum 1878.
9. Brigade Surgeon (with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel) in the New Zealand Defence Forces on 3 April 1887.

He himself had applied for registration under the new Medical Practitioners' Act of 1867 on 10 March 1868.

Dr Philson conducted the coronial inquest following the wreck of HMS *Orpheus* on 7 February 1863. The inquest for John Pascoe, chief boatswain's mate, took place on 3 February 1863 [sic]. Pascoe was found to have "drowned and suffocated in consequence of the wreck of HMS *Orpheus*." (Gluckman, #354.) This was a representative inquest for the 189 victims (out of the total of 259 officers and men on board) and led to a recommendation "that enquiry be made by the Government into the cause of the wreck of HMS *Orpheus*". Subsequently, New Zealand's first kerosene oil-powered light was placed at Manukau Heads in 1874.

In 1864, Dr Philson was asked by the government to report on the state of health of Auckland. The request arose following a difference of opinion between Sir George Grey and the government on the disposal of nearly 200 Māori prisoners who were incarcerated in the coal-hulk *Marion* in the



*Māori prisoners of war captured at Rangiriri
on the hulk of the Marion, Dec 1863*

New Zealand History

harbour. These prisoners had been captured in the battle of Rangiriri in 1863 (20–21 November), and they were eventually confined in shocking conditions from 24 December 1863 until 12 April 1865. When sickness broke out among them in 1864, it became politically desirable to establish that health and hygiene in the hulk *Marion* were no worse than in the rest of Auckland generally.

Dr Philson's official report must be one of the strangest that has ever been rendered to a government. "I am unable to account for the increasing prevalence of fever although something is due to the increasing population, to the hardships and exposures of the present war. I think that we shall look in vain for the second causes such as defective drainage, overcrowding, want of fresh vegetables, etc. The true cause you will find in the 90th Psalm, 8th verse . . . 'For we are consumed by thine anger and by the wrath (due to us for sin) are we troubled.' And as to the remedy repentance toward God, and faith in Jesus Christ issuing in general reformation will prove a never failing specific." (Scott, 1977.)

Various professional comments over the years included:

Whilst speaking as Provincial Surgeon at a Coronial Inquest, "With reference to the cause of the disease (later attributed to natural causes), I think that the deceased's drinking cold water while he was hot and working might have had something to do with it [his death]."

Daily Southern Cross, 20 January 1868, p.3

While not being in a sound mind, memory and understanding, but lunatic and distracted, from the effects of drinking ardent spirits . . . with a certain razor . . . did strike stab and penetrate . . . the throat with a mortal wound . . . the length of six inches and the depth of three inches . . . did kill himself.

(Gluckman, #226)

While in a state of intoxication, the force of the wind, and wilful management by him of a sailboat resulted in suffocation and drowning.

(Gluckman, #243)

By Visitation of God in a Natural way . . . by convulsions caused by bursting of a blood vessel in the brain, to which he was predisposed by habitual drinking.

(Gluckman, #292)

Did labour and languish under a grievous disease . . . enlargement of the heart . . . died by Visitation of God in a natural way. (Gluckman, #363)

As hospital superintendent, Philson detailed generally makeshift conditions with lack of accommodation, an inadequate water supply and a requirement for better facilities. For example, water had to be carried from the adjacent asylum to the hospital by the convalescent patients. The hospital was a charitable institution, looking after seamen, Māori and indigent white people. Settlers, by and large, were nursed and gave birth at home at this time.

Philson was known as an ‘extremely kindly and compassionate physician’ and rarely involved himself in the collection of fees from those who were unable to pay. For those who had funds, the charge was 1s 6d per day (\$14 per day in 2024). His refusal to concern himself with their collection meant that the hospital had become a rest-home for the indigent, and the average duration of stay in hospital was 92 days.

In 1866, Daniel McKay reported that the hospital had:

. . . seven wards—two on the west side appropriated to the females (of whom there are about 20), and five on the east side occupied by about 80 males. The female patients are attended to by a matron, and the males by a nurse and three assistants; this gives on an average one nurse to every 20 patients. In hospitals in England, I believe, there is a nurse to every 15 patients.

Every patient received daily 1 lb. of bread, 2 pints of tea, 1 pint soup, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. beef, and 1 lb. of potatoes. Besides, extras are given to those who may require them, consisting of milk, eggs, sago, arrowroot, beef tea, mutton and fowl.

Dr T.M. Philson . . . attends daily from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, visits all the wards and examines all the patients. His residence is adjacent and he is at hand ready to attend in case of emergency.

Daily Southern Cross, 30 June 1866, p.6

[Philson also visited the Auckland Gaol daily.]

In his 1866 annual report, Philson complained, “There is urgent need of increased accommodation for female patients who are at present crowded into two small wards and a garret.” He was distressed that he could not

segregate the women, many of whom were of ‘the most degraded sort’. Though only one in seven of the 716 admissions in that year were female, they appear to have upset Dr Philson’s Victorian sensibilities for he claimed that the unavoidable association of the young and virtuous with such patients ‘must be contaminating’. He proposed that all the women be banished to the neighbouring asylum to leave the whole of the hospital to the males. Failing this he proposed ‘partitions in the hospital passages and a separate entrance for each sex.’

As the design of the second hospital was being discussed in 1868, Dr Philson ‘felt that any plan which would exclude wind and rain from the wards would be a great blessing to the sick.’ This was a reference to the deterioration and weathering of the original kauri planks lining the inside of the timber frame (of that first cottage hospital). As a consequence, patients would sleep on the floor of the dining room and in the lofts. The second hospital was to cost £25,000 (\$4.658 million in 2024).

About Christmas-time 1872, Philson (‘spiritually and medically’) treated a case of smallpox in a sailor who had arrived from Sydney on the mail-steamer *Nebraska*. There were three other fatalities from this infection and three non-fatal infections.

When the poor fellow succumbed to the loathsome disease, [Dr Philson] coffined the body with his own hands in order to prevent any spread of the infection, remaining away from his family for some weeks. For these services, which prevented any possibility of the spread of the contagion, he received the thanks of the Provincial Council and a ‘handsome gratuity’ of £100 in 1873 (\$16,730 in 2024).

Philson had been a victim of smallpox earlier in his life, and this had given him subsequent protection.

The cottage ‘in the Hospital paddock’ where Philson treated this case of smallpox was transferred (under the threat of demolition) in 1983 from the Auckland Hospital site to Mount Albert, and was then rebuilt there as an artist’s studio.

Typhoid was a problem in the 1870s. Philson advised his patients to take cordials, mainly alcohol, with milk and beef tea day and night, as well as opiates, astringents and turpentine fomentations. He could not accept the

possibility that the agent was invisible to the eye and he did not believe in a microbial explanation for many diseases. He commented, “The existing cause of the disease is very difficult to be ascertained. Some attribute it to drinking water contaminated with sewage, but something more must be required. The cause will be obviated shortly in the city by the supply of pure water.”

However, about this time, the cottage hospital had been

ill-kempt with unsatisfactory cleanliness of the bedding and the patients themselves. It was apparent that the organisation and disciplined running of the hospital was beyond the powers of the staff, and Dr Philson after almost two decades of toil and latterly, personal episodes of septicaemia (blood poisoning).

The second hospital was ready for occupation in July 1877. However, a report in 1883 confirmed widespread vermin, filthy mattresses, and generally poor sanitation in the male wards although the female ward and particularly the male fever ward were clean and tidy. This had developed because there was inadequate funding for and training of the staff with, for example, only a single member of staff on duty overnight.

A report on the Auckland Lunatic Asylum in 1879 commended significant improvements in the conditions. There was less overcrowding, greater liberty for the patients with fewer restraints, and more options for industrial occupation. Knives and forks were still not allowed at meal-times, yet white tablecloths were now provided. There were fewer beds, but not enough in total, so many patients slept on the floor and, with little or no heating, would often stay under their blanket all day.

Another contributing factor (in 1883) might have been that six per cent (£235 1s, i.e. \$50,449 in 2024) of the Whau hospital's total annual expenditure of £3,727 (\$800,000 in 2024) was for wine, beer and spirits.

Dr Philson suffered at least four episodes of septicaemia in his career at Auckland Hospital. They led to controversy concerning his surgical abilities with the loss of ‘dexterity of [his right] hand and delicacy of touch so necessary for the successful performance of the higher class of surgical operations’. He was awarded a gratuity of £300 for ‘injury received in performance of duty’ in 1883–84. His retirement followed soon afterwards. He could not be granted a pension.

On his retirement in 1883, he was presented with a gold watch and chain costing £102 13s 6d, (\$21,900 in 2024) ‘the finest ever sold in Auckland,’ a purse of 270 sovereigns (\$58,000 in 2024) and an illuminated address. Dr Philson set up a trust with the money in December 1887 to create a medical students’ library in connection with the District Hospital and the imminent University of Auckland. Initially, books that were bought were added to the Auckland University College Library which was later housed in the Davis Memorial Library. The Philson Library of the Auckland Medical School was finally opened 87 years later, in August 1970.

The illuminated address included these words: ‘Your skill as a surgeon, devotion to your professional duties, unremitting attention and almost paternal solicitude for the sufferers under your care, are universally acknowledged and your noble self-sacrifice when the smallpox was first introduced here, will be gratefully remembered by us all.’

He was also presented with a carriage and pair. Mrs Philson received a solid silver and gold inlaid card case.

He continued in office as coroner (‘by permission of the Government’) and Port Health Officer and in private practice until soon before his death.

Philson died on 22 November 1899 at his upper Grafton Road house aged 82. He had made an official visit to Fort Cautley prison at North Head as medical officer on 9 November 1899, and then developed probable influenza. His younger brother, Dr William Philson, predeceased him by two months (on 8 September 1899) in Sussex, England, but the news of his brother’s death only arrived from San Francisco on the day before his own death (21 November 1899). He was buried in the Presbyterian part of the Symonds Street Cemetery at Grafton. His wife Matilda Willmet Philson was buried next to him after her death in 1908.

An editorial on the day after his death praised him thus:

The deceased gentleman was highly esteemed and respected by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance—a man of unbending integrity, who took the course in what he conceived to be his duty as a Christian man without the slightest hesitation.

NZ Herald, 23 November 1899, p.6

Dr Philson was a member of the Baptist Communion and attended the Baptist Tabernacle for many years. He led his family in daily prayers and accompanied their singing of psalms on the flute or harmonium. Philson

and his wife Matilda contributed largely to the foundation of the denomination in Auckland, the preliminary meetings being held, prior to the denominational services, in their residence.

The family's residence was situated on the corner of Lorne and Wellesley streets in the 1870s, on the site of the current Central Library.

The couple had 3 sons and 6 daughters. His eldest daughter, Matilda, married Dr Robert Elliott Fisher, Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum, in 1868, and subsequently the nephew of the succeeding Superintendent, Dr Graves Aickin, in 1872.

Assistant-Surgeon Philson's 58th (Rutlandshire) Regimental uniform is preserved at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, but was damaged in an accidental fire at the donor's house prior to it arriving at the museum.

Several medical manuscripts are held at the University of Auckland Special Collections Library (in the General Library on Alfred Street):

1. Casebook—case reports, annual reports on the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, returns of fatal cases in the Auckland Hospital and returns of sickness treated in Mount Eden Prison (or Stockade) 1859–1876. Many records included the words 'Native of Ireland' with the addendum 'addicted to drink'.
2. Papers—certificates from Philson's career, documents of appointments to various medical and military positions 1835–1887.
3. Testimonial—list of 667 subscribers 1883.
4. Comparative atlas of ancient and modern geography 1828—given to Philson by his father on 12 August 1833 (two days after his 16th birthday). This was then passed down the family tree until 1965; it is now in the Special Collections Library, University of Auckland.

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