

The Papakura Sentinel



Number 65

Contents:

“Turama: illustrating Matariki”page 2

Ardmore’s Aircraft restorers, Alan Knowles page 2

Lower Waikato, Janet Pates page 7

Water transport, Rob Finlay page 11

What’s on? page 17

Greetings/ Kia ora koutou to all our readers,

So winter is here. Still wet, just a bit colder. Here’s something to read in a cosy warm room.

The Museum has been a hive of energy. In the last two months, the Anne Frank exhibition has brought large numbers of thoughtful visitors, work is proceeding on the new Rings Redoubt standing exhibition (drawing much outside interest), a growing team of committed volunteers is working on the collection, and scientists Andy and Laura provided a lot of excitement and interest for children and adults with the ‘gee-whizzery’ of the International Day of Light, which is becoming an annual fixture. (Imagine air-powered rockets shooting up the outside of the building and rides on airblower-powered hovercraft.) There have been several sessions with teachers and students. The new quarterly Museum Talks got under way, the first being a Virtual Heritage Walk—the talk of the walk, which took place on a very wet evening. (The next Museum Talk will be in early July on a Saturday afternoon: the *Sentinel* is now advertising these talks along with monthly meetings on page 17.) The PDHS and Museum staff hosted the Local Board to express appreciation for their continued support.

The next two months promise to be as busy. See notices on page 2 and page 17.

This *Sentinel* has an air and water transport theme. It includes a story about restoring heritage aeroplanes at Ardmore Airport, and we begin a series on water transport in the Manukau Harbour and Pahurehure inlet, which takes us into the distant past. This is reinforced by a visual presentation of the talk given by Janet Pates at the April Members’ meeting on the Lower Waikato —when the projector did a hissy-fit on us. Thanks Janet.

So, wrap up, find a comfortable seat, and enjoy.

Rob, ed.

Late News: with sorrow we hear that our stalwart Patron Annette Gunson passed away peacefully on Wednesday 14 June. Love and sympathies to Corallie and the family. More next issue.

PAPAKURA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monthly Members’ Meetings: 4th Thurs, 1pm – 3pm
Regular Saturday heritage Trips to places of interest

PAPAKURA MUSEUM

**Open: Monday—Friday, 10am—4.30pm,
Wed open till 6 pm, Sat 10 am—3 pm**
Accent Point Building, 209 Great South Road
Ph.: (09) 298 2003 www.papakuramuseum.org.nz

OUR NEXT EXHIBITION: "Tūrama: Illuminating Matariki" is

an immersive exhibition that celebrates the rich cultural significance of Matariki, the Māori New Year, through a diverse collection of contemporary and traditional artworks. Hosted by Papakura Museum, the exhibition aims to educate and engage visitors in the traditions, stories, and symbolism associated with Matariki, fostering a deeper appreciation for our Māori culture and our connection to the celestial realm.

By blending traditional and contemporary art forms, fostering cultural exchange, and providing interactive and educational experiences, "Tūrama: Illuminating Matariki" offers visitors a transformative journey into the heart of Māori culture, celebrating the New Year and its enduring significance.

Hollie Tawhiao is a Tainui multi-media artist who is currently Curator of collections at the Waikato University Library. She also has a Diploma in Museum Studies and qualifications from Elam. Her art combines tradition and innovative style. We are privileged to be able to host some of her work.

Precious metal (and wood) - Ardmore's aircraft restorers

Alan Knowles

During the Second World War New Zealand's air force well and truly punched above its weight. The Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) participated in the thick of the action in every major theatre of the war. Kiwis were among the best leaders and produced many well-known fighter aces. New Zealand had also produced many pilots for the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) during the Great War, 1914- 1918. Many of the pilots then were trained at the Walsh Brothers' New Zealand Flying School based in Kohimarama, before being shipped to the conflict in Europe. Fast forward to today, and their achievements have not been forgotten, as New Zealand has one of the most exciting and vibrant historic aircraft scenes in the world. Rare types of aircraft fly at world-renowned airshows across the country and attract enormous worldwide audiences. Visitors marvel at the incredible diversity and experience the thrill of watching aircraft that perform at these airshows, including WWI, interwar, WWII and postwar types flown by some of the world's best display pilots. New Zealand is also one of the world's leading centers for aircraft restoration, from well-known companies such as film director Sir Peter Jackson's Vintage Aviator (TVAL) to private restorers. The level of activity and types that are restored are the envy of the historic aircraft scene across the globe. Even more remarkable from a local perspective, many of these aircraft are restored right here, at Ardmore Airfield.

The Papakura District has a long and rich aviation history. The Walsh Brothers made the first powered flight undertaken in New Zealand at Glenora Park in 1911 using an imported kitset aircraft which they named *Manurewa*. Ardmore Airfield, today the country's busiest airport, was originally built as an RNZAF base for the defence of Auckland during the Second World War. It has a long and diverse history (with the Teachers' Training College, Engineering School and the formula 1 grand prix held there also). Gliding also plays a major part in the area as the Auckland Gliding Club operates out of Drury; this was also previously based at Ardmore. Ardmore Airfield today is home to a diverse range of tenants including aviation maintenance businesses, charter airlines, helicopter operators, flying schools and the New Zealand Warbirds Association. Residents literally have history flying above them, as historic aircraft such as the P-51 Mustang, Supermarine Spitfire, Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk, Harvard, Tiger Moth, Great War types, DC3, to name a few all, are all kept, maintained, and flown by the New Zealand Warbirds Association. And if all this isn't enough Ardmore Airfield is home to two of the world's leading aircraft restoration companies, Pioneer Aero and Avspecs.

Pioneer Aero was originally called Pacific Aircraft and had been formed in the early 1990s with the specific aim of restoring the Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk series of aircraft, a type which saw service with the RNZAF during WWII. The first aircraft completed was a static P-40E for the Museum of Transport & Technology (MOTAT). While this work was proceeding, the restoration of another P-40E, NZ3009, for world famous New Zealand pilot Ray Hanna (a for-

mer leader of the RAF Red Arrows aerobatic team) was also in progress.

In 1995 another project, a P-40N5, was begun, and in April 1997 as the work on Ray Hanna's P-40E was concluding, a further project, a P-40N1 Kittyhawk owned by Charles Darby and Garth Hogan, was started. Unfortunately, in June 1997 the directors of Pacific Aircraft decided to cease trading. This left those jobs yet uncompleted in limbo. At this time, Garth Hogan (a well-known motorsport identity) purchased the assets of Pacific Aircraft, hired the remaining staff, took over the lease on the building, and Pioneer Aero Restorations Ltd was in business.

Initially the intention was only to complete the Darby-Hogan P-40N to airworthy status; however, very early in the piece Pioneer was contacted by Ray Hanna with a request to complete the almost finished NZ3009 which had served with the RNZAF. This was agreed to, and Pioneer staff completed this aircraft to flying condition. The P-40N model was now coming up to competition and it flew in early 2000 performing at the Whenuapai Airshow and Warbirds Over Wanaka in the same year.



One of the many P-40 Kittyhawk's Pioneer Aero has been responsible for making airworthy, Ardmore Based P-40N-1, ZK-CAG. Source www.warbird.co.nz/

Pioneer Aero has since completed work on several P-40 Kittyhawks and the company has now established themselves as the world's leading experts in the restoration of P-40 Kittyhawks. Clients from all over the world send their projects to Pioneer for rebuild. Incredibly about 1/3 of the world's flyable examples have been restored at Pioneer Aero at Ardmore. Pioneer are not confined to P-40s; the

company rebuilt a rare Lavochkin LA-9 and a Yak 3, both Russian piston engine fighters, and have continued to service and maintain a variety of aircraft including P-40 Kittyhawks, Harvards, a P-51 Mustang, a F4U Corsair, a CT4 Airtrainer, a BAC 167 Strikemaster advanced jet trainer and a Yak 52. The company has recently completed work on a rare Bell P-39 Aircobra fighter of WWII vintage, which was successfully test-flown and shipped to its happy U.S.-based customer.



Left: The latest P-40 to be completed, P-40E. Test flying complete and off to its new owner in Italy. Image courtesy of Pioneer Aero. Right: Bell P-39 Aircobra on a test flight from Ardmore. A far cry from when it was discovered in a Russian lake! Copyright: Photo Copyright Gavin Conroy

As well as more P-40 Kittyhawks waiting their turn for restoration, the company has many exciting projects waiting in the wings for overseas and locally based customers including a Vought OS2U-3 Kingfisher, a super-rare Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless dive bomber and a unique De-Havilland Hornet (the successor to the famous De-Havilland Mosquito). The Dauntless also has a strong local connection as the type was operated by the RNZAF based at Seagrove on the Manukau Harbour. When the rebuilds are complete, all aircraft are test



Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless fuselage starting its journey to Ardmore for restoration. The aircraft was recovered from a lake in Michigan. Image courtesy of Pioneer Aero.

flown from Ardmore airfield so lucky viewers can see these rare machines being put through their paces before heading to their overseas owners.

If one world class restoration company wasn't enough, Ardmore airfield is home to another, Avspecs. Originally formed in 1997 by Warren and Colin Denholm and based at Rotorua New Zealand, the company was established to provide a fully dedicated restoration facility for Warbird and Vintage aircraft. The company moved to Ardmore in 2000.

The staff at Avspecs have a wide range of expertise rebuilding Vintage and Warbird aircraft since 1986 and have experience with such exotic aircraft such as Tiger Moths, Harvards, the Boeing Stearman, Spitfire, Mustang, the De Havilland Venom jet and even more P-40 Kittyhawks, to name but a few! There are plenty of future restoration projects waiting in the wings, one of the most interesting being a Japanese Ki-61 fighter aircraft from WWII known by the Allies as Tony. Authentic Japanese aircraft from WWII are extremely rare and airworthy ones can easily be counted on a clumsy butchers hand! In recent years Avspecs has made news round the world for returning a De-Havilland Mosquito fighter bomber from WWII back to airworthy condition. (The last flyable example unfortunately crashed in 1996.)

This story is a remarkable one so deserves a bit of detail on how Avspecs managed to get a Mosquito back into to the air. . . The Return of the 'Wooden Wonder', as it was affectionately known, after thousands of hours of restoration work over eight years by Avspecs, and its subsequent return to the skies, was a major event for the New Zealand warbird scene. The restoration was a mammoth task, with multiple challenges to overcome and there are many who said, "It cannot be done". Through the determination of owner Jerry Yagen (the U.S based owner), local restoration experts Warren Denholm, Glyn Powell, and the dedicated team at Avspecs, the aircraft returned to the sky amidst much popular fanfare. One of the few WWII combat aircraft constructed almost entirely from wood; the Mosquito earned the nickname 'Wooden Wonder'. With the bombing of England's heavy industry by the Germans, the Mosquito's wooden construction became even more important. Without having to rely on the heavy engineering carried out in factories, the aircraft parts could be constructed over various dispersed locations, such as furniture companies, and brought together to produce the finished aircraft. The aircraft was extremely light, could sustain severe battle damage and have repairs carried out at forward operating bases. It was fast, manoeuvrable and could deliver a punishing blow, being commonly armed with four 20mm Hispano cannons, four .303 Browning machine guns and a payload of up to 2000 pounds of bombs or rockets. The De Havilland Mosquito was converted into many different variants and carried out numerous roles in WWII, performing medium bomber, tactical strike, anti-submarine, anti-shipping, night fighter, reconnaissance and battlefield air-interdiction missions. Initially developed in some secrecy, the existence of the Mosquito was announced on the BBC Home Service radio after the controversial Oslo Mosquito Raid of 25 September 1942, an attack on Gestapo HQ in Norway that left 80 civilians dead, and one Mosquito destroyed. The aircraft has a firm place within the fabric of New Zealand's history, being flown by many Kiwis within the RNZAF while under RAF command in Europe during WWII. One of the most famous missions undertaken by a New Zealand aircrew was the Amiens prison raid in 1944, which saw a group of Mosquitos destroy a wall surrounding a prison in France. This was a risky operation performed under urgency that saved the lives of many French Resistance fighters, who were about to be executed imminently. The successful mission saw 258 prisoners escape although unfortunately 102 inmates were killed by the bomb damage or shot by German soldiers. Fifty guards were killed, and one Mosquito was shot down with the loss of both crew. The last official European war mission was on 21 May 1945. The Mosquito was a major contributor to the Allies' victory in Europe, increasing German night-fighter losses so badly that the Luftwaffe is said to have awarded two *victories* for every one Mosquito shot down.

Many years later, in a workshop at Drury, near Auckland, Glyn Powell began an attempt to restore a Mosquito T43. Although using wood in the airframe had been a brilliant idea during WWII, these airframes were not built for longevity, with deterioration of the wood and break-down of the glues and fabric taking its toll on the parts of the aircraft that remained. It became obvious that reproducing the wooden airframe would be the most

uniquely challenging aspect of restoring a Mosquito. Glyn Powell wanted the work to be done using the original specifications, but using modern glue, fabric and other materials that would help his Mosquito stand up to the test of time. He enlisted the services of a boat builder to help produce moulds for the fuselage as well as build the wings and tail section. Inspired by Glyn's work, Warren Denholm, managing director of Avspecs, and Jerry Yagen (the founder of the Military Aviation Museum at Virginia Beach), saw a great opportunity to take up the challenge of returning a Mosquito to the skies. Glyn knew of the incomplete airframe in Canada, and Jerry financed him to fly over to have a look at it.



What Avspecs started with! The wreck of Mosquito KA114.

(Source: <http://www.warbirdrestoration.co.nz>)

Following Glyn's advice, and without having set eyes on the airframe himself, Jerry Yagen purchased Mosquito KA114 in 2004 and had it shipped over to Avspecs in New Zealand. Unfortunately, its wings needed to be trimmed with a chainsaw to fit it into the container, which must have been a difficult choice to for all concerned to make. The pair had discussed the possibility of future restoration projects together, and, finding inspiration in Glyn's passion for a Mosquito restoration, these determined and resourceful people came together to work on a project that would produce history. Once the remains of the airframe arrived in New Zealand, the Avspecs team unloaded the aircraft and set about removing all of the useable parts and fittings. Although the woodwork was in terrible condition, most of the metal

parts could be used again. Patterns could be drawn up from damaged components to produce new ones. This was easier than starting from scratch, especially when the plans were extremely hard to come by.

The project was initially slow to get going because the wood that was required to build an airworthy machine was very hard to source. After a worldwide search a suitable supplier was eventually found and the project picked up pace. It took Glyn Powell just under three years to build the wooden wing and fuselage structures from scratch, and the aircraft was then handed over to Avspecs at Ardmore for fit-out and completion, which was a mammoth task. The team there had been restoring hydraulic and electric systems, making pipes, and constructing new cowlings and other parts that would be required. The cowlings were fabricated by a team of four, and were particularly challenging, with hundreds of hours spent building the complete set for both engines. A multitude of new parts were going to be needed, as the aircraft had no engines or undercarriage, and many other items were extremely difficult to locate. Parts were found including a brand new pilot seat, with the maker's tag still attached, via an internet auction site. Two former RNZAF Merlin 25s complete with genuine engine mounts were found in Australia and were purchased for the project. These were sent to California to be restored by Vintage V-12s. Each is rated at 1610hp at 3000 rpm. The propellers, overhauled by Safe Air near Blenheim, presented another challenge to the team. They only had one original Mosquito propeller blade, the other five being cut down Lancaster propeller blades. Many other New Zealand based companies have helped to make components like radiators and fuel tanks. The significant task of making radiators (none had been produced since Mosquito production ended) was taken on by Replicore, a company already experienced in fabricating aircraft radiators such as those for the P-40 fighters. The Mosquito radiators were totally different however, but following hundreds of hours of research and painstaking work, the end result is stunning. The Mosquito used a complex hydraulic system, which was another huge challenge to replicate. After years of tireless effort by the Avspecs team working through each of the aircraft's systems, by 2012 things were starting to come together. The wheels would go up and down, some electrical systems were working in the cockpit, and the cowlings and other sheetmetal work were moving along well.



The Wooden Wonder nickname for the mosquito is obvious in this image. (Source: <http://www.warbirdrestoration.co.nz>)

Warren Denholm predicted that the aircraft would fly in the third quarter of 2012, but he did not have a specific date in mind. Warren's friend Peter Fahey came up with the idea of having an airshow at Ardmore to celebrate the Mosquito's return to the sky before it would be shipped to the USA to join Jerry Yagen's collection in Virginia Beach, and eventually the date of 29th September was set. The team started working longer hours and sometimes seven days a week, with a few extra pairs of hands brought in, to ensure they would have the aircraft completed and flying on time, with Warren as project manager ensuring that all the parts were ready when required, as well as tested and built to the highest standards. It would soon be time for painting. A paint scheme was chosen and done by another Ardmore based company who completed the job in 11 days. Once the paint job was done the aeroplane was towed back to the hangar and the team finished

off a huge amount of smaller jobs, including the addition of four machine guns and the fitting of four 20mm cannons under the nose, complete with original ammo boxes. The first flight was getting near. The Flight Test Regime on September 19 would see a major milestone passed with the first starting of an engine. Apart from a couple of minor fuel leaks the engine ran sweetly. The leaks turned out to be just two loose bolts and were fixed quickly. On September 20 the aircraft's weight and balance was checked and on September 21 the right-hand engine was started successfully. September 23 saw both engines running, the chocks removed and Warren Denholm taking the aircraft for its first taxi. Everything went fine and after a short taxi he stopped at a holding point and ran the engines up to 2700 rpm and 6 psi of manifold pressure. The noise was deafening but demonstrated that the aircraft wanted to fly. September 24, 25, and 26 of 2012 were very busy for the team as it took the CAA two full days to do all of the inspections. Work progressed well on the cowlings, radios were operational and the gear doors, freshly returned from the paint shop, were installed and checked. Following sign off and the issue of a Certificate of Airworthiness the only thing left to do was fly it! The Mosquito was airborne for the first time about an hour later under the command of Dave Phillips, with Warren Denholm as the other crew member, the plane roared into the sky accompanied by cheers and clapping from the onlookers.

The Mosquito looked great as it took off and the test flying phase could then be carried out. The aircraft was flown at different speeds and different configurations with flaps up and down, undercarriage checks were performed along with the confirmation of many other systems. The aircraft landed at Auckland International Airport 45 minutes later and apart from an issue with the airspeed indicator the flight was a total success. The media and enthusiast hype that surrounded the first public display of De Havilland Mosquito KA114 was intense, with thousands of people converging on the usually quiet Ardmore airfield from across the globe. Under the expert command of Dave Phillips and Keith Skilling the aircraft performed three displays at the airshow, much to the delight of the crowd, and



De Havilland Mosquito back on her element! Source: <http://www.airic.ca>. Eric Dumigan photography

especially the restoration team, who had put so much hard work into the project over so many years. Performing alongside a plethora of other classic aircraft, KA114 was the star attraction that everybody had come to see. The sound of those twin Merlin engines tearing up the sky as she passed overhead was exhilarating, leaving both the crowd and commentators initially in a stunned silence until cheers and clapping burst forth. There were several Veteran Mosquito pilots in attendance at the show, seated comfortably in their own VIP area. Many of them were visibly in tears as the thundering flybys of the aircraft brought back long distant memories.



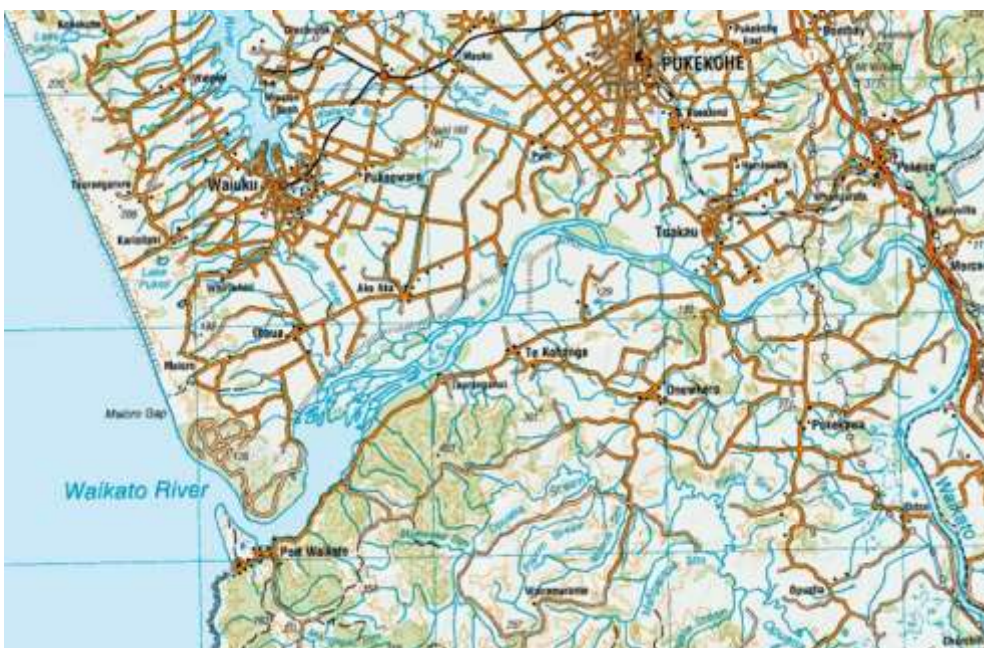
De Havilland Mosquito on public show after its first public display, Ardmore, 2012.

Source <https://akahandbag.wordpress.com/>

For Avspecs, producing more aircraft will be an easier procedure with the moulds that have been produced and since this historic occasion Avspecs have now produced another two examples, with a fourth currently being worked on. The story of De-Havilland Mosquito's return to the air is set to remain one of the highlights for many aviation enthusiasts for many years to come. It's incredible to think that all this happens literally on our backdoor step in Papakura. So next time you want some free entertainment, go to Ardmore Airfield, park up or even take a picnic. You never know what you might see! You might be witnessing history!!

Waikato River—the Lower Reaches

Janet Pates



These are the photos we were unable to see when Janet gave her very interesting talk in April. Thanks to Janet for providing her slides and brief complementary notes.

The photos and notes begin just to the east of Tuakau on the southern (Pukekawa) side, and move west towards Port Waikato at the River's mouth.



Above: Smeeds Quarry, Smeeds Quarry Road, Pukekawa. Begun by Smeed family in the 1920s, taken over by Winston's in 1970. As well as metal and rock, it now also supplies sand from the Waikato River bank.



Left: Punt—river crossing at Tuakau, 1880s—1903. Charges: Person 2d, Horse 2d, Sheep 1/2d, Goods 1/- per ton. Ferryman was Esau Gale, ex 65th Regiment, who settled in Tuakau.

Below: Old Bridge, completed 1903. Driving first pile, celebration of the occasion at the Tuakau Hotel: every man and his dog attended.



Below: The old bridge collapsed 1929 (centre). Left: two bridges side by side, the old bridge propped up for careful use and to help construct new bridge. Right: New bowstring bridge opened 1933.





Above left: During World War II, ready for Japanese invasion through Port Waikato, with log poised to be let down, and explosives laid under the bridge. Right: The bridge today with Batkins Reserve. Below: Namuheiriro (Sandfly) Island, just below the bridge, 1930s. Houses were prone to flooding and were deserted in the 1950s. Photo *NZ Weekly News*



Above left: Alexandra Redoubt, constructed by 65th Regiment in 1863. Canoes are manned by British soldiers. (Note forage caps)
Centre: Members of the 65th Regiment Reenactment group on the 150th anniversary of the Alexander Redoubt in 2013.



Left: Steamer loads at Tuakau landing for excursion to Port Waikato. Right: Frost's flaxmill at the Tuakau Landing



Left: Flax boats. Flax harvested from the islands and swamps

Right: In 1901, Frost and sons built the first Waikato river whitebait canning factory next to the flax mill.



Left: Plan of Camerontown, named after the General. The town was planned to be the river terminus of the Mauku tramway, but neither eventuated. Today Camerontown Road is an area of lifestyle blocks.

Below:

Left: Remains of whitebait canning factory at Te Kohanga run by Dunedin firm Irvine & Stevenson 1913 to mid-1960s. Now partially rebuilt by owner Ralph Dwen. Centre: Former accommodation building next to the factory adapted and rebuilt by Dwen in his unique style. Occupied by family members. Right: Factory boiler.



Left: View of Lower Waikato.

Right: Moreton Bay fig tree marks site of old Army barracks, burnt down in 1980s before it could be shifted.



Below Port Waikato jetty, now much reduced in size.



Left: Memorial to Susan Maunsell, first wife of CMS missionary Robert Maunsell, died 1851.

Right: the Waikato meets the sea.

Photos permission of Tuakau Museum (including Smeeds Quarry) or taken by Janet Pates herself.



Pahurehure and Manukau—Watercraft and Landings

Waka and Cutters

Rob Finlay

In 2020-2021 I wrote a series for *Sentinel* called Tracks and Stations about the nine stations centred on Papakura between their first conception in 1863 and the 1970s. But before the railways, then alongside them, was water transport. In this issue I dip my toes into a less muddy Pahurehure prior to 1863.

Our nation's history begins with boats. Until relatively recently, everyone arrived in the country on a waka hourua (double-hulled waka), sailing ship, or steamship. Our Pacific and Antipodean location made sure of it. This is also true for local travel. Today we think of road, rail and air—motorway, suburban trains and Ardmore Airfield, but people used to get about by water supplemented by foot tracks. The transition from water- to land-based transport is a sign of change from a Polynesian to a European environment.

This article is about water transport in the Pahurehure Inlet: locations of interest include Papakura wharf at Chalky Point and adjacent Waipapa and Youngs beaches, the Hingaia Creek, the Drury and Slippery Creek wharves, deep water at what became Bottle Top Bay, and Weymouth at the entrance of the Papakura Channel. There were numerous other landings, especially on the Karaka shore. At high tide parts of the inlet look like a lake with a few surviving sandy beaches, at low tide a sinuous line of water snakes through mud banks. Ross Agnew mentions the legal implications over whether the Pahurehure is an inlet (Auckland Council) or a river (Crown Law Office) [*History of Bottletop Bay*, 2014]. Between Bottle Top Bay and Drury there is no doubt at all.



Papakura, Auckland, 6/11/1957. ATL 32953108 ???>

A watery (and muddy) world

Jamie Belich in *Making peoples* says that arrivals from the Oceanic Polynesian world, Te Moana Nui a Kiwa, ancestors of Māori, saw Aotearoa as an archipelago. Travel was by waka from one landing to another. Narrow and deep footpaths (Māori usually walked single file) came to link landings or reach inland locations, but waka were the staple means of transport. For Māori and the first generation of Pakeha explorers, missionaries, officials and settlers, the Manukau Harbour with its creeks was the focus of local communication, except for the direct paths across the isthmus, from Otahuhu down to Papakura and Drury, and from Papakura through the Hunuas.

The Manukau is an askew quadrilateral, almost a diamond, with three main tidal inlets of similar size, linked by deep water channels amidst wide mudflats. The largest area of deep water is just inside the Heads, and the channels run off that in three directions like a giant letter F (with the top arm extended back through the Heads). At high tide, shallow draft boats can traverse it more directly if the navigator knows the 'swatchways' or slight depressions in the mudbanks. (Laxon, p 5) See map over.

Here is a quick summary of the inlets:

To the northeast is the Mangere inlet, formerly centre of a large Māori population, connected by portages to the Tamaki estuary of the Waitemata. Over this portage the Tainui waka was hauled on its way from the



Manukau Harbour, surveyed by Commander B. Drury, Messrs H. Kerr, and P. Oke, second masters; A. Farmer and C. Stanley, Masters Assistants, and W. Blackney, R.N. 1853.

Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections Map 890

Waitemata to its final resting place at Kawhia: it refused to budge until necessary incantations and sacrifices were

made to atone for misconduct. (*Nga tohu a Tainui: landmarks of Tainui*, FL Phillips, Tohu, 1989. p 6-7) The village of Onehunga, 9 miles/11 km across the isthmus on rough tracks from Auckland, became Auckland's second port in the 1840s, giving access, through the turbulent and dramatic Heads, to the Tasman. There is deep water under steep shores on the northern side of the Harbour - the North or Wairopa channel, and the more direct Purakau or South Channel. Some argue that the Manukau should become the Port for Auckland.

The second inlet is the shallow Waiuku River to the South. From the port of Waiuku waka used to be dragged over the portage to the Awaroa tributary of the mighty Waikato, the heart of the North Island and the seat of the great Tainui iwi.

The Pahurehure inlet with its multiple-fingered creeks is accessed through the Papakura Channel between Weymouth and Karaka Point, and reaches to Papakura and Drury. There was also portage access across to the Wairoa stream that flows into the Firth of Thames and Hauraki Harbour. Tidal range most affects this branch, although for waka with their shallow draught this was not a problem. At the Papakura Channel, known as 'the Ferry', there is a 5½ knot rip at half tide. (Higham, p 51) Of the three inlets, accessing the Pahurehure from Onehunga involves the greatest distances, except for smaller boats with skippers experienced in the waters of the Manukau who were able to sail directly south from Onehunga on a good tide.

The Manukau has drawbacks for travel: tidal creeks, mud banks especially in the East and South, and rapid weather changes that bring squalls which can be challenging when they blow from the low southern coasts or through the Heads. It has been described thus: (Hawken and Walker ed. p 70) "The Manukau is a huge harbour, but at low tide, the available safe waterways are few. At low tide it has been described as 'the largest mudflat in the world'. Because of this, traffic was governed by the tides, with many of the wharves reached only at high tide." Furthermore, a boat leaving one port on a flood tide would arrive at another on an ebb tide, and would in most locations sit on the mud while unloading and loading, leaving on the next flood. Even with faster steamers, skippers were reluctant to spend much time at intermediate ports because that could cause them to miss the tide at the end of the run. So it made no sense for boats sailing between Onehunga and Waiuku, for instance, to call in at the Pahurehure.

Mangroves were not significant until well within the lifetime of people living today. But lest we condemn the mangrove, we have our own technology and industry to blame, with siltation and pollution as consequences. Mangroves cleanse pollution, protect against erosion and act as a nursery for marine life.

For Māori this Manukau world was a link in a network of internal waterways that reached from near Whangarei to as far south as Taupo, with rivers from the Northern Wairoa to the Waikato and Waihou catch-

ments, the sheltered Kaipara, Waitemata/Hauraki and Manukau harbours and relatively short portages linking the headwaters of streams. These waterways provided links for trade and social visits, and passage for war parties. Ngati Paoa, one of the Hauraki tribes, retained a link with the Papakura area through the Wairoa portage. The Manukau also provided a large part of their diet; kai moana was not only obtained locally but also involved seasonal camping expeditions to other sites, often joining with other hapu or iwi. Large swamps provided birds and eels. In the Papakura Channel close to the Karaka shore a small island bears the name of Shark Island, because Māori fisherman used to catch and dry sharks here on rows of poles. "The dried shark meat was traded for produce which was brought from as far as the Waikato in canoes which had been brought over the portage." (Higham, 51) The *Archaeological site survey* of Pahurehure Inlet (Russell Foster and Paul Simmons, NZ Historic Places Trust, 1980/3), while testifying to the effects of agriculture and erosion on the shoreline, shows several pa sites, a few pits and multiple middens all along the inlet shores and down the streams, especially the Hingaia or Drury Creek and the Whangamaire, evidence of multiple landings and intensive use of kai moana. Place names bear witness too. 'Pahurehure' indicates passage through. 'Tauranga', a name in the Drury district, means anchorage. 'Waihoehoe' is a stream where waka were paddled (hoehoe).

While an iwi might own a large waka taua or war canoe, ornately carved, smaller simply constructed waka tiwai were owned by individual families and used for trade and local travel. 'Some fishing canoes were perhaps 10 metres long, but most were smaller. Many were only large enough for a single fisherman and his fishing nets woven from flax. (See photo right) ... Small canoes of 2 metres or so were used to move about quickly and efficiently in swamp-land, or to bring shellfish from estuaries to pa and villages some distance away by travelling along quite small creeks and streams.' (David Johnson, *NZ's maritime heritage*, 1987, p 20). With their shallow draft they could also be hauled up swampy streams and portaged.




Maori eel fishers on the Waikato River at Rangiriri. *NZ Graphic and Ladies Journal*, 26/2/1913. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections NZG-19130226-0024-01

Early Pakeha travellers used this network, usually in waka with Māori guides and paddlers as companions. For their part, Māori seized opportunities to trade with Pakeha. Rua Cooper, quoted in *Big hats, scent pots and old Joe* (ed J Hawkins), said: "Some of our people grew corn, wheat, vegetables, fruit, poultry and meat. We had our own mills, cattle and horse breeding, and we also sold firewood. Our people welcomed the trade with the Pakeha." "By the beginning of 1847 Māoris from the Waikato and the Thames Gulf and as far afield as the Bay of Plenty were bringing produce to town in their canoes and were accumulating considerable wealth." (J Rutherford, *Sir George Grey*, quoted N Morris p 55) In the first three months of 1853, 45 waka landed Waikato produce at Onehunga. (Johnson, 47-8)

Governor Grey took the opportunity to encourage trade and the purchase of ships – cutters or schooners. The government (and missionaries, with different motives) also encouraged the growing of wheat and the building of mills to effect change in the relationship between chiefs and Pakeha, and to develop trade. For Grey, this was a way of strengthening the colonial economy and increasing political cohesion. Māori would provide necessities for settlers, purchase manufactured goods, and contribute to Government revenue. In March 1849 he sent a despatch to the Colonial Secretary in London, informing him that he had made loans to some of the principal chiefs to help them purchase trading vessels. (Hazel Petrie, *Chiefs of industry: Māori tribal enterprise in early colonial NZ*, p103-4) Ihaka Takaanini Te Tihi of Te Akitai living in Kirikiri in the early 1850s bought a 17-ton two-masted schooner in 1852, launched in June, and offered it for sale in December. The name *Te Tere* means 'The Speedy'.

The purchase and resale of *Te Tere*, wheat growing round the Manukau, the erection of Cole's Mill at Wai-papa, and the sale of much of Te Akitai's land raises questions about the dynamics of the relationship between the iwi and local Pakeha and Government. The sale of land by Te Akitai was intended to encourage trade and access to goods. Was it also to encourage George Cole's mill and help pay for the schooner? Was Government support offered to Cole to construct his mill; was he therefore an agent of Government policy?


 FOR SALE.
T H E S C H O O N E R
TE TERE,
 17 tons burthen, the property of the Chief,
 Ihaka **Takaanini** of Papakura.
 Apply to
 C. O. DAVIS,
 Interpreter.
 Auckland, Dec., 1852.


 HEI HOKO.
T E R E W A R U A
TE TERE,
 17 tana no Ihaka **Takaanini**, Rangatira Maori
 o Papakura, tenei taonga.
 Anga mai
 KI A 'TE REWETI,
 Kai-whakamaori.
 Akarana, Tihema, 1852.

*Maori Messenger/ Te
 Karere Maori,*
 13/1/1853, 7/3/1853.

To what extent did Grey subsidise the building of *Te Tere*? Why did Takaanini seek to sell it three months after its launch? Did he intend from the beginning to capitalise on it, did he come to realise that for Manukau trading purposes waka did just as well, schooners being perhaps less suitable for the Manukau? (It was mainly the East Coast and Bay of Plenty tribes who bought and used European ships: Waikato and Manukau Māori made good use of waka.)



This carefully researched and well-executed painting by Ernie Clarke (permission Papakura Museum) brings to life the mill built by George Cole in the early 1850s at Waipapa (the bottom of Coles Crescent). It was the bustling centre of the small village, and in effect where the south 'road' met the sea route. The seaward landing was where waka from round the Manukau came in with wheat or maize.

A son, William Cole, recalled the scene:

'Canoes were continually going and coming – some departing with their cargoes well stowed and protected against any weather they might meet. Other canoes were landing their produce, it being swung inboard by block and tackle from the canoes to the floor of the Mill. One would think, from the noise and commotion of the Maoris that there was confusion. That was not so. The owner of the Mill had a system, firm and well-defined, but elastic enough to meet all cases.

"The Mill was really the 'Queen St. wharf' of Papakura with its loading and unloading facilities for shipping. It was also the point on which all connecting districts focussed. It was the "Great South Road" of the Maoris, for of course at that time there was no road of that name known to the Pakeha. . . Another factor that added to the business importance of the Mill site was the connection with the Keri Keri (sic) Settlement.' (By which he meant IhakaTakaanini's kainga at Te Aparangi.)

"Operations at the Mill were now in full swing. The avocations of peace were carried on under normal conditions. Prosperity and peace prevailed. The peach groves at Keri Keri (sic) Hill was noted far and wide for the quality of its fruit. Māori from various points around the Manukau Harbour brought the products of the sea for exchanging with the product of the grove. There would be great meetings, speechifying, feasting, merry-making. The visitors would take away large quantities of fruit.

"The natives of the Settlement had a large number of canoes, some of them very fine. At times, some of the local Maoris would return with the visitors to their various places on the beaches of the Manukau and engage jointly in fishing, the resulting catch making a large supply of food for the Papakura natives."

"At times, the natives from Keri Keri, both from the hill and from the lower levels, would come down in numbers and embark in their canoes for a visit to their friends at any place on the Manukau. The visits might be merely social, or they might attend a tangi, or perchance a meeting to discuss matters of vital importance to their race. It was always an inspiring sight to see the fleet of canoes move off under proper regulation."

“What with the Maoris passing towards Auckland, and from the Auckland direction to the South, there were generally a number camped by the ford. These were added to by others arriving by and departing in canoes from various parts of the Manukau. It was a suitable camping ground. They used the clear water flowing over the rocks for domestic purposes. There was firewood in the nearby bush. When the tide was out, they could get large quantities of shell fish, mostly cockles, from the mud flats. In the channels running through the flats, they could get a fair amount of flounder and eels. When the tide was in, the waters of the Bay were prolific in fish of several kinds.”

I have quoted extensively from William Cole’s memoirs because they offer a rare glimpse of the last period of a traditional way of life before it disappeared. The mill was also a catalyst for change.

In any case, from the 1830s, Pakeha ships were visiting the Manukau, or sailing out the Heads to other West coast ports or Australia, while schooners and cutters were plying its waters. ‘The first boats were rowing boats and small sailing cutters, hardly suitable for the vast area and fickle weather which prevails near the Manukau Heads.’ (H&W p 70) ‘The coastal craft were generally small, locally built and of relatively shallow draft to enable them to nose into creeks and inlets, often drying out as they lay on sand between tides. They were single-masted cutters or two-masted schooners, ketch rig becoming popular in later years. Many of them were open boats, 8 or 9 metres in length. The larger vessels of from 12 to 15 metres or more were usually decked.’ They were made locally. Johnson cites a list of 118 Auckland-owned vessels of 10 tons or more: the largest was 43 tons and only eight were of more than 30 tons. 37 of the owners were Māori. ‘For 50 years or more the small sailing vessels were the main means of getting goods about the coast. They went everywhere – tide and wind willing – for extremely small cargoes. They were the horses and carts of the first decades of settlement.’ Johnson 48-50. (To begin with, they plied these waters along with Maori waka.) By the 1850s cutters were regularly plying between Onehunga and Waiuku and other intermediate ports. In 1849, Governor Grey provided a cutter called *Māori* to run between Otahuhu and Waiuku. (My great great grandfather George Bregmen was said to have been the captain, or coxswain, with £60 in wages allocated for the 1851-2 year, with additional funding for another man and for contingencies. (Morris 55) He was sick and Captain Smales was in command the day in 1851 when a sudden squall off the Mangere Spit wrecked the cutter in full view of Onehunga with the loss of 3 lives, including the captain. 22 passengers, mainly Māori, swam to safety.)



Cutter in full sail on the Manukau Harbour. JT Diamond collection, Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections JTD-19M-02633-1

The settler population increased. An 1848 census recorded 23 Europeans in Papakura. Of the 16 males, 7 were recorded as farmers, 5 as farm servants or labourers, and the remaining 4 as boatmen. (Craig 43) In those early days a relatively high proportion of immigrant men had worked as seamen.

Access by water was a clear attraction for would-be settlers. In the *New Zealander* of Oct/Nov 1853 Thomas Poynton advertised 5 - 10 acre sections on the ‘Pahuri-huri’ accessible to boats of up to 20 tons. In that same year Papakura Village was designated and surveyed into sections. For some districts, in particular the northern Franklin coast at Karaka, water access would remain the only link to the outside world for the whole of the nineteenth century. Each water-accessed property had its own landing: the first map for the Papakura Town Board in 1882 illustrates this. At the foot of Wellington Street a section was designated ‘landing reserve’. Today this site is land-locked.

In the meantime, settlers continued to arrive. The Pahurehure inlet was the point of access for Drury, Papakura, Karaka, Takaanini and the Papakura Valley, and Weymouth, but Ardmore and Alfriston were accessed originally from the east through Wairoa valley.

Between early 1852 and 1856, an extensive coastal survey of New Zealand was provided by two naval

ships sent out by Admiralty: HMS *Acheron* made a preliminary survey, and then HMS *Pandora* under Captain Byron Drury was sent out to complete the survey. The survey of the Manukau Harbour was undertaken by Drury and HMS *Pandora* between 5 February and 29 April 1853. A lot of the work on the various inlets and estuaries was done in small boats, and involved local pilots as guides (did Cole or Runciman or members of local iwi act in this role?). The map on page 12 was the result. The village of Drury owes its name to the captain, who bought land there, presumably as a speculator like so many other wealthier immigrants or visitors.

After HMS *Pandora* had moved on, its steward George G Walter remained or returned. In 1855 and 1856 he advertised in the *New Zealander* that he had bought George Cole's Papakura Hotel. His land was around Don Street, then known as Walters Road. He assured readers that with his experience he could ensure comfort and satisfaction, and also informed the public that the establishment could provide a 'Boat' in which they could fish or shoot, 'which can be had in abundance' on the Papakura River, or take a pleasant trip to Onehunga. (The boat was probably moored close to his land on the northern side of the Waipapa inlet.) He also had a 'Car' for those who wished to explore on land. The 'car' would have to have been a sturdy dray.

Road transport was developing as an alternative to water transport. Footways were becoming dray and bullock tracks. Papakura and Drury were on the direct land route south of Otahuhu, passing mainly through fern and scrub land until it reached the extensive area of bush at Papakura which had to be hacked through on the way to Drury. The main problems were the large number of streams that needed to be crossed on fords or wooden bridges, and the pervasive mud that hardened into ruts and corrugations when it dried out. Nonetheless, the rough South Road had reached Papakura by 1855, and this direct land route south was an alternative that Waiuku and the portage from there to the Waikato River lacked.

Thomas Runciman and his family arrived in Drury around 1850 to set up a 2000 acre cattle run. Some settlers may have initially come by boat, but it is of land access that we hear. 'The first bridge over Slippery Creek, North of Drury, was erected in 1856. Previously drays were hauled over the rocky outcrop by bullocks. Thomas Runciman is reputed to have been the first settler to cross with a loaded dray'. (Lennard, p 4). One account of the Runciman home reports 'on his left a tidal creek connected with the Manukau'. The first sale of sections in that village took place in Auckland in 1855.

By 1858, waka (especially), dinghies and cutters busily plied the Pahurehure and local streams and rough tracks were spreading out from the landings. In the next issue we will explore the dramatic changes of the later 1850s and 1860s.

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NOTICES

MEETINGS: (held in the Papakura Library Meeting Room):

June: Thursday 22 June at 1 pm. Pip Batty, local, retired engineer, Auckland's water supply.

July: Thursday 27 July at 1 pm. Phil Sai-louie, National anthems of the world.

MUSEUM TALKS quarterly series in the Museum:

Saturday 8 July, 1 pm: Iain Wakefield, News from the history books – General Sir Duncan Cameron's life story 1808–1888.

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS:

March—June: Anne Frank exhibition with school focus.

July—September: a Matariki display of Māori art by Hollie Tawhiao, both educational and artistic.

TRIPS:

In hibernation over the winter months, resuming in September.

Meetings held on the fourth Thursday of each month in the Library Meeting Rooms opposite the Museum, the talk first at 1 pm, then business and afternoon tea provided by PDHS members (for \$2 gold coin). Phil Sai-Louie & PDHS arrange interesting speakers.

Museum Talks quarterly in evening or Saturday.

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

Trips are usually held on the fourth Saturday of each month two days after the meetings. Watch notices for transport arrangements and cost. Cost is \$5 more for non-members, but anyone is welcome on a first come first aboard basis. Please register early and advise if unable to attend as numbers are limited.

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