Featuring TAUMARUNUI

A compulsory greenbelt ........................................................................ 489
Taumarunui Borough Council had visions for greenbelts

Was it Ngapuwaiwaha or Ngahuinga? .............................................. 492
The answer to the mysterious location known as Ngahuinga

Real cherries grew there ................................................................. 494
The name Cherry Grove was named for a reason

Alexander Hattrick arrives ............................................................. 496
His foresight was to provide a link using riverboats

First sports meeting ........................................................................ 500
Langmuir was responsible for the first organised sports meeting

Mayor Boles donates fine set of gates ............................................. 501
The gates were officially opened in December 1932

Motorbike enthusiasts in action .................................................... 505
Track formed at Cherry Grove in 1953 to support Queen's Carnival

River metal extraction ..................................................................... 506
New channel cut from Victory Bridge by B Bullock & Co in 1947

“Lest We Forget” ........................................................................... 506
Peter John Lawrence accidentally killed during Jaycee project in 1963

The “eel’s nest” ............................................................................. 507
Taumarunui Rugby Football Club develop modern sports facilities

A meeting place for jetboaters ......................................................... 510
The invention of the jetboat responsible for new era in riverboat travel

Location identity reinforced .......................................................... 512
Beautification programme benefits the Cherry Grove area

Taumarunui: King Country’s first Catholic Parish .......................... 530
Priests travelled by train to say Mass at Taumarunui and Kakahi

Following the faith .......................................................................... 533
The Sisters of Joseph of the Sacred Heart arrive in 1916

Full weekend for Golden Jubilee celebrations ............................... 544
Frank House donates historic locomotive Wj 386

Two tennis clubs on Rangaroa ......................................................... 557
Some of the mysteries are untangled of where both courts were located

Dedication to education ................................................................ 587
The struggle to improve educational facilities meant wheeling and dealing

Overcrowding was a problem ........................................................ 588
The first High School classes were held at the primary school

Memories of the 1920s .................................................................. 590
The fascination of being a newcomer at a new school

Hockey history .............................................................................. 591
Mrs Lu Tidswell will never forget beating the “big girls”

Never to be forgotten .................................................................... 591
William Thomas courageously survived a world war to become a teacher

Bill Hill: A respected teacher ........................................................ 592
With apparent ease he took on a class of 38 boys

A valuable record ........................................................................... 593
School magazines made task of research much easier

“It looks like the Ark,” she said ..................................................... 594
The story of how a name was given to a block of classrooms

Anxious to leave school ................................................................. 596
The unsettled war years when school teachers were enlisting

School cadets compulsory ............................................................. 597
Basic army training was part of school life for almost 25 years

Never ending changes in education .............................................. 598
Free secondary education became available for primary school pupils

School sport not well documented .............................................. 599
Pupils participated in rugby, basketball, tennis, athletics, cricket, hockey

An unique experiment ................................................................. 600
Commercial students spent a long day running Fanthorpe’s store

Some recollections ........................................................................ 601
Last years for the secondary department attached to the primary school

A new era begins .......................................................................... 603
Brand new high school built on 33 acre Gold Road site

Academic and sporting choices .................................................. 604
Nobody could complain about being bored or had no challenges

The golden era ............................................................................ 605
Terry Moyle picks the best decade in the high school’s history

Lodge: Harmony without Hassle ................................................... 606
The mountain lodge was a mammoth undertaking

Hostel: Hassle without Harmony .................................................. 607
Education Department hoped hostel scheme would be forgotten

Outdoor Education developed quickly ....................................... 608
The concept changed considerably over the years

Sport plays big part ....................................................................... 609
Example set by early coaches carried on by hundreds of teachers

Leadership .................................................................................. 611
The prefect system was changed in 1969 to student administrators

They come and they go ................................................................. 612
Many teachers have passed through the high school and some stayed

Governing Bodies over first 30 years .......................................... 613
Board of Governors had statutory rights and complete autonomy

It’s worth preserving ................................................................... 615
The “Tower House” must be one of the best loved old buildings

Life of band rotunda .................................................................... 619
This landmark enjoyed only a short life before falling into disrepair

Taumarunui 1948 style ................................................................. 623
How much has Taumarunui changed? Is growth still spectacular?

The almighty pie .......................................................................... 628
Were orange peels better than meat pies on Main Trunk rail travel
KAKAHI

Kakahi—perfect NZ ........................................ 564
   The way that Peter and Pattie McIntyre wanted it
A peep into the past ..................................... 566
   An update on the business life of Kakahi from the early days
The magic memory of movies ............................ 570
   Kakahi had two picture theatres who were in stiff opposition to each other
Post Office history ....................................... 572
   From primitive premises to the invention of famous trout flies
Formation of Kakahi pa .................................. 574
   An account of the “Battle of Five Forts” which is legend in the area
Kakahi Railway ........................................... 575
   Unique railway station plus men who removed piles in 1936
A long serving industry .................................. 576
   The Allen twins, Jim and Andy, bring back many bakery memories
Dick showed tremendous courage .................... 578
   Dick Barnett had first taxi but other early car owners also remembered
A busy sawmilling centre ............................... 581
   With the railway came the logging era and the State Sawmills
Sport in Kakahi ........................................... 584
   Rugby was first then hockey, rugby league, chopping and rodeo

NATIONAL PARK

Galloping Gertie built by blacksmith .................. 547
   The ingenuity and good old fashioned enterprise of bushmen
Sawmilling personalities ............................... 550-552
   The men who kept the wheels turning for Weir & Kenny

OHURA/MATIERE

What happened to this steam excavator? .............. 553
   It was used to build the SOL railway but did it end up at a coalmine?
Was Jack Allen a member of the Ned Kelly Gang? . 556
   An interesting theory but who knows the real truth?
Fact or fallacy ........................................... 625
   More interesting theories for the Jack Allen connection to Ned Kelly gang

PIPIRIKI

Pipiriki on the Whanganui River ....................... 513
   An introduction to an old settlement along with meaning of name
Early accommodation at Pipiriki ..................... 514
   Huddle Bros built a boardinghouse in 1891
The romance of Pipiriki House ....................... 517
   A 1903 Wanganui Herald article covers history of this tourist attraction
Fires were an occupational hazard ..................... 524
   Pipiriki House was destroyed by fire in 1909 and again in 1959

RAURIMU

Raurimu Police also fought against sly-grog selling ... 554
   Special tactics applied by police to bring sly-grog sellers to justice
Private enterprise led the way .......................... 626
   Costs spelt doom for services being provided to rail travellers

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK

The mystery of the Haunted Whare ..................... 536
   Several versions covering the history of this mysterious whare
The case of the Lady of the Plaits ..................... 537
   The ghost of murdered shepherd’s wife seen in vicinity
Haunted Whare had its source in fact .................. 562
   A slightly different version with some additional facts to ponder
Whare haunted cars as well ........................... 562
   Only very high powered cars succeeded in getting past Haunted Whare
WHANGANUI RIVER

Alexander Hatrick arrives .......................... 496
Riverboats finally made it to Taumarunui in December 1903

Pipiriki on the Whanganui River ..................... 513
A Maori village that became well known through river tourism

KING COUNTRY

Early Catholic missions in the King Country ........ 527
The remote heartland of the North Island was visited by missionaries

SPORT

Sport in Kakahi ........................................ 584
Leisure time was put to good use through a wide choice of sport

Hockey history .......................................... 591
The 1926 girls hockey team created history for local high school

School sport not well documented .................... 599
Team photos are plentiful but written records were lacking

RAILWAYS

Turning the first sod scenes ............................ 541
Photographic coverage of Stratford/Okahukura branch and Main Trunk

Passengers travelled at own risk ...................... 543
Even buying a railway ticket was a marathon operation

Full weekend for Golden Jubilee celebrations .... 544
Photo of men responsible for organising 50th Jubilee

“WF” 386 presented to Taumarunui .................... 545
Mayor Frank House presents historic locomotive as reminder of past

Re-enactment of last spike well recorded .......... 546
There were more photographers than spectators at 75th anniversary

Kakahi Railway ........................................ 575
More photographic nostalgia of days gone by

Private enterprise led the way ......................... 626
Refreshment rooms were once run by private caterers

The almighty pie ....................................... 628
Also the last “cuppa” from Taumarunui Railway Refreshment Rooms

SAWMILLING

Galloping Gertie built by blacksmith ................ 547
A functional machine put together from bits and pieces

Sawmilling personalities ............................ 552
Ian Weir remembers some of the men employed by Weir & Kenny

A busy sawmilling centre ............................ 581
General Manager justifies the faith he had that sawmill was profitable

CAN YOU HELP?

No.22: Car amongst willow trees .................... 495
Is this scene at Cherry Grove?

No.23: Riverboats at Hatrick’s wharf ................. 521
None of the five riverboats have been identified

No.24: Excited schoolchildren ....................... 545
Can anyone help with names?

No.25: Steam excavator on blocks ................... 553
More information wanted about this old relic

No.26: Rangaroa Tennis Club pavilion ............... 561
Can anyone recognise any of the spectators?
The excellent article following was kindly loaned by members of The Whanganui Historical Society. Although it is being reproduced unedited from the original Wanganui Herald report (dated Saturday, 3 January 1903), the paragraphs have been shortened and sub headings added. Another point worth remembering is that while the article describes Pipiriki House during the ownership of Gibbons & Hatrick, some interior photographs have been used here of the last “House”. This is not meant to be misleading. The problem is a lack of photos featuring the earlier buildings especially the ones featuring in this story as it was only in existence six years before being burnt down in 1909. Meanwhile here’s the 1903 article . . .

Eleven years ago—on 18 December 1891—Messrs Hatrick & Co’s first steamer, Wairere, made her first trip to Pipiriki. What was Pipiriki then? What was the tourist traffic and the settlement on the river and in the interior?

There was a very primitive accommodation house at Pipiriki, owned and run by Messrs Huddle Bros, and a few Maori whares. There was absolutely no tourist traffic; there was then no road open for vehicular traffic, a bridle track alone leading into Pipiriki.

Raetihi was not then thought of as a township, its present site being then a standing forest, and it was not laid out and sold till a subsequent date.

There were only six white settlers in the whole of the district—Messrs E McDonell (Karioi), Geo Manson (Ohakune), Brass, Cowie, Huddle and a Frenchman who lived an isolated life in a whare halfway between Pipiriki and where the township of Raetihi now stands.

The River Trust Board, although formed before the launch of the Wairere, had done nothing practically to improve the river for the purposes of navigation, simply because they had not had the time and money to have accomplished much then and consequently navigation under the then existing conditions was very dangerous and hazardous.

The master and crew of the boat had not then the experience they have gained since and this intensified the risks.

The riverboats were not insurable excepting at excessive premiums and consequently were not insured and an accident may have spelt a dead loss of thousands of pounds.

A FAILURE

Five years, about, previous to the date mentioned at the commencement of this article the Wanganui Up-river Steamship Navigation Company’s stern-wheeler Tuhur was tried and proved a failure, and her bones are lying near Galatea.

These were briefly the conditions obtaining in 1891, when Mr Hatrick, single-handed, decided to try his fortune where others had tried and failed; where the conditions and prospects would have appalled most other men.

But Mr Hatrick laid his plans for the future. He foresaw the opening up for settlement of a fine district and what was of more importance the opening up of a tourist route which would one day become famous the world over.

The magnificent scenery of the Wanganui River would attract tourists in yearly increasing numbers and Pipiriki would be an important terminus.

With this vision before him, Mr Hatrick sent the Wairere on her first trip 11 years ago, knowing the difficulties to be overcome the first few years and prepared to meet them.

SPIN OF A COIN

The initial trips of that first steamer were fraught with an intense anxiety to the owner. The difficulties of navigation were so great that it seemed almost the spin of a coin whether the steamer would get through safely or whether her owner would awake to discover that he had lost some thousands of pounds.

However, “fortune favours the brave.” Month by month the anxiety of those weekly trips began to diminish and after a year or two the unpromising outlook was soon to be lost in the dawn of tourist traffic and settlement in the Waimarino.

Year by year the trade grew. In 1894 the first vehicle passed over the road between Pipiriki and Karioi and it was driven by Messrs J H Nixon and A Hatrick.

The road, however, was not then completed and their vehicle was at one place—the Mangaio Stream—hauled over by
The mystery of the Haunted Whare

Now and again one hears the question: “Where is this Haunted Whare that is mentioned among the older people of the central North Island?” Well, to get down to reality there was no Haunted Whare, but—there was, once upon a time, a building standing not far from the Chateau Tongariro in the National Park which bore the name, the Haunted Whare. BOB THOMAS, former editor of Taumarunui Press, explains . . .

There would be few people today who had seen, or had stood inside the so-called whare; that is, the original whare.

As the accompanying photographs show it was a typical King Country “shack,” with corrugated iron, New Zealand’s handy but un-beautiful building material, used freely. The familiar broad chimney, which often produced more smoke than heat, towered majestically above the shack.

The Haunted Whare stood on a small knoll on the left-hand side of the access road leading from the National Park-Tokaanu highway to Chateau Tongariro.

It was sheltered by strong-growing trees and shrubs most of which are gracing the site today. As far as my memory goes the whare stood there until the 2nd World War, when roofing iron became scarce and the building disappeared piece-by-piece.

It was rebuilt but some time later it vanished again, this time in flames. I cannot guarantee these disasters as fact; they have come to me from conversations I have heard from time to time.

During its chequered career the whare was occupied now and then by tramping parties who came to climb the mountains, and so I am told, rightly or wrongly, by workmen who were engaged by the Park Board.

A notice board did stand on the knoll stating that this was the site of the Haunted Whare. When I later visited the Chateau, in the Tongariro National Park, the notice board had disappeared and the knoll stood alone with its trees and shrubs and not even a single plank of the building to bear testimony to anything that man had constructed, haunted or otherwise.

How came it, that this roughly built shack, was widely known in the early days of last century as the Haunted Whare?

A Maori friend of mine once told me there were people who claimed that, during lonely nights spent in the whare, they had seen a ghost-like figure of a girl wandering forlornly about the building. Shepherds who spent nights in the whare in the early days after hours of toil among their sheep claimed that their dogs cringed and whined in the corner of the building; that they growled at something that could not be seen.

True or just a far-fetched story told by someone to the youngsters getting ready for bed? Who knows?

If it was a ghost why had it chosen the shack as its home, and for its nightly wanderings?

The story that I listened to one night during the 1920s told of a passionate love affair
The only known photograph of Weir & Kenny’s home-made bush locomotive, Galloping Gertie. This lokey only worked at Mangatepopo and came to a sad end while working on the company’s four mile tramway. Pat Joines is sitting on the bunker. The names of the children are unknown.

-Galloping Gertie built by blacksmith

Having the trade qualifications and engineering degrees demanded today might produce a better design and better looking product but the bushman went for practicability rather than good looks.

The old bush locomotive pictured above was the result of a couple of sawmill owners and their blacksmith putting together a functional machine from bits and pieces lying around the mill.

It was in the days when there was not a lot of money around to purchase new machinery. The year was 1931 and this was the first locomotive that Weir & Kenny were to own. It was said to be a true “bitsa”.

ENTERPRISE

Jock Weir sought the help of John Watkins, an enterprising character who formerly owned sawmills at Kakahi and Owhango, and Ben Le Prou, the village “Smithy” who worked most of his life around sawmills, to painstakingly assemble Galloping Gertie as she was affectionally known to all.

Weir & Kenny’s mill, which employed about 15 or 16 men, was at Mangatepopo, about 15 miles along State Highway 47 from National Park.

The mill was situated about halfway between the larger Egmont Box Company at Taurewa and the Ketetahi Timber Company which was built on the opposite side of the Mangatepopo Stream.

FIRST MILL WAS AT TE RENA

This was the third sawmill operated by the partnership of Weir & Kenny after they had successfully ventured into the timber industry at Te Rena, near Kakahi, in 1927.

Other sawmills followed later at Pukawa-Waihi and at Waimanu, near the headwaters of the Whanganui River. They also had an interest in a mill at Aitamuri, working pine logs.

In 1946 a partnership consisting of Jock Weir, A M Collier and Mr Weir’s two sons, Ian and Roy (“Tiger”), later formed the Taumarunui Timber Co Ltd, which traded from yards in Ward Street, Taumarunui.

WATKINS HELPED

Ian Weir could recall very little about the actual construction of Galloping Gertie but he thought some of the parts came from Watkins Bros sawmill at Kakahi.

After Watkins’s mill had closed in 1931 (after it was shifted to Owhango) the owner, John Watkins and his blacksmith Ben Le Prou, both shifted to Mangatepopo to work for Weir & Kenny. It was during this period that this “one-off” locomotive was built.

John Watkins was apparently the right man for the job as he was no stranger to solving engineering problems. A report in the NZ National Review summed up his ability after his tragic death in 1942.

They said: “His mechanical ability and peculiar facility for adapting and renovating mill machinery and appliances was quite remarkable, and it would appear that this particular bent, which had become almost a hobby with him, contributed to the accident which caused his death.

“For he was fatally injured when starting up a motor truck which he had renovated

ROLL BACK THE YEARS ...............547
The Mountain Lodge was a mammoth undertaking made possible only by the efforts of all the school, most of the parents and a large section of the community.

In particular, Messrs Merv Ogg, Des Hogan and their technical boys and girls must always be remembered for their efforts in constructing this building under climatic difficulties. Ken Leckie from the High School staff gave many hours to the interior decorating of the lodge as well as giving valuable assistance to Merv Ogg and Des Hogan in many aspects of the building.

The electrical work was carried out free of charge by the Taumarunui Institute of Electricians, and plumbing was done by the combined plumbers under the direction of Stan Adams. During this project a bond of understanding between staff and pupils developed. They worked together in rain, mud and snow, each respecting the other, and laughing at adversity. It was truly a memorable experience.

The Lodge was opened on 22 November 1975 by Phil Amos, Minister of Education. In the photo above are the four under whose control the building programme was carried out. From left are: Des Hogan, Terry Moyle, Ken Leckie and Merv Ogg.

LODGE: Harmony without Hassle
HAUAROA MAORI ENTERTAINMENT GROUP: As the young men of the district were called up for the Forces in the 2nd World War they were farewelled at social functions and entertained by various groups. These groups were available at any hour and would meet every troop train that passed through Taumarunui. Their performances during the early 1940s were well remembered and appreciated by these young men leaving to serve their country. One of these entertainment groups was made up of members of the Ngapuwaiwaha Marae and known as the Hauaroa Maori Group. Not all members were present when this photograph was taken but those shown in front of the Ngapuwaiwaha meeting house are: STANDING (from left): Fred Hinerau, Ray Wallace, Mrs Rangi Marie Rukuvai Toitaha, Kahurangi Kaka, “Hunka” Oneroa, Mrs Ruby Te Hore, Sam Haehae, Rangi Yates, Mrs Waikauri Thomas (or Hurst), Chief Tu Korehu Ahipu. IN FRONT: Tommy Te Hare, Mrs Rangi Phillips, Queenie Te Hore (sitting), Mrs Meri Bell, Clarance (“Gus”) Piohipi (sitting), Lucy Davis, Tommy Kumeroa (or Patu-One). Doug Bell adds that the photograph above was taken in 1940 during celebrations of New Zealand’s centenary (1840-1940).

- photo courtesy Taumarunui Press collection (ref: 14421).

HAUAROA MAORI YOUTH CLUB 1954: BACK ROW (from left): Grace Taiaroa, Taylor Fox, Kevin Amohia, Sam Hae Hae, Archie Taiaroa, Dinny Edwards, Patricia Williams. CENTRE ROW: Georgina Haddon, Hemo Fox, Lucy Allen, Rita Fox, Polly Kuru, Celia Amohia, Marion Hae Hae. IN FRONT: Shirley Fox, Doreen Thompson.

- photo by Colin Seccombe, Taumarunui (ref: 15208).