



# C O N T E N T S

## Featuring TAUMARUNUI

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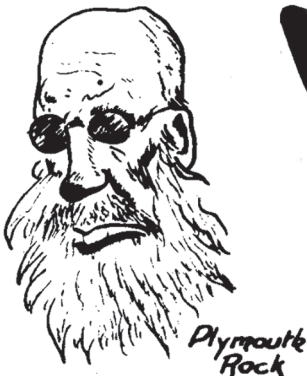
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*Presbyterian*



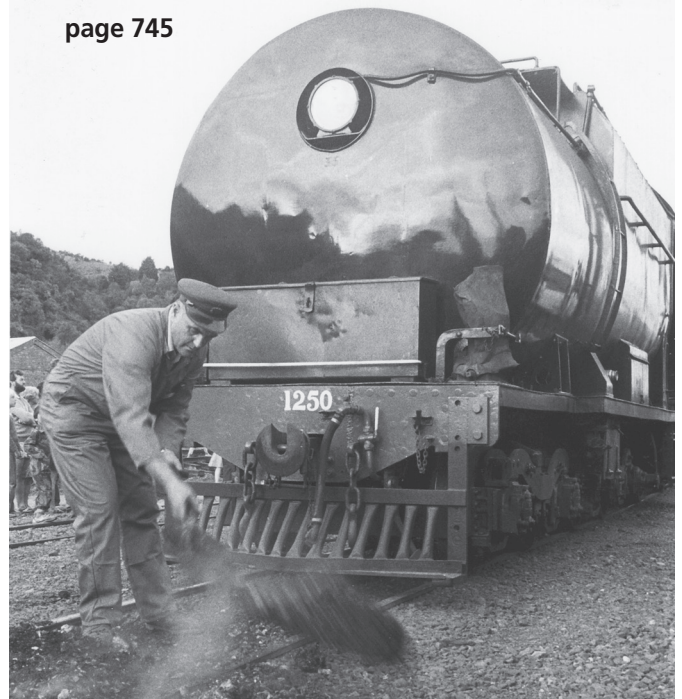
*England*



*Plymouth  
Rock*



*P.C.*



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The Coogan family, in April 1940 when Jack Coogan was on final leave. BACK ROW (from left): Noel, Ray, Joseph Coogan, Jack, Frank. FRONT ROW: Mrs May Coogan with daughter Shirley, Mrs Nora Coogan, Mrs Corrie Coogan with daughter Thelma.

- photo courtesy Noel Coogan collection (ref: 16388).

# Good samaritans of the Valley

*Every area must have its pioneer and in the Taringamotu Valley that person was Joseph Coogan. He arrived in June 1906 with his wife and eldest son Jack, who was then four months old . . .*

**J**oseph Coogan was born at Kilkenny, Ireland and came to New Zealand at the age of two in 1879.

His family first settled at Geraldine, South Canterbury and Joe Coogan, as he was known to all who knew him, was later apprenticed to Mr Connolly's saddlery for five years. He eventually went to Taihape where he had his own saddlery business.

In his youth Mr Coogan was an outstanding athlete, a great runner, a hurdler and wrestler. He was also an outstanding rugby player and captained the Taihape rep team for three years.

While he was in Taihape he married Miss Nora Cecilia O'Sullivan and then about 1905 drew a farm at Matamata and after about 12 months sold out and took a leasehold farm in the Taringamotu Valley.

The lease was for 86 acres and was in the area known to the Maori as "Papawaka" which later became a pig farm operated by his son Ray.

It is interesting to note here that since Ray started his pig farm in 1954, he is one of the

very few in New Zealand who has never had to call a vet to his farm.

## EARLIEST MILK ROUND

Ray Coogan takes up the story of his father's arrival when he drove his herd of 30 milking cows down from Matamata to his new property at Papawaka, Ngakonui.

With this herd, a horse and trap, he started the first milk round in Taumarunui and according to Ray his father also had the first milking shed in the district with a concrete floor.

Access from the farm to Taumarunui was down the Taringamotu River bed which in those days was a wide shallow river with a flat shingle bed. "He used to cross 14 times between home and the other side of the Taringamutu Totara Sawmill," Ray recalled.

Unfortunately, his father's milk round finished tragically one night while returning home. His horse, *Hector*, lost its footing in the flooded stream and drowned. "With no horse Dad's milk round had to finish," he sadly recalled. "I think Mr (Stephen) McCarthy who lived in Taumarunui took over the deliveries from then on."

However, the Coogan family continued to supply milk to the families who worked for the Taringamutu Totara Sawmills but they used the bush locomotive to transport the cans and billies up and down the valley.

In a letter dated 1984, Jack Coogan also recalled as a young lad supplying the families working for sawmills. "There was a tray under the side of the loco body, forward of the cab, where the billies would be carried," he wrote.

Empty billies would come up in the morning from the "yards" at Taringamotu and the Coogan boys had the job of taking them off and replacing with full ones to go up to the bush and sawmills at Meringa and Waituhi.

"These would come back empty in the afternoon," Jack recalled. "We would then fill the billies that had come up in the morning so that the loco could take them down to the people at the yards."

Jack could not remember when the service was discontinued but it could have been around 1918.

## CONFLICT WITH CANOE

According to Joe's youngest son Noel, who was farming at Owhango, the meaning  
ROLL BACK THE YEARS . . . . . 647

# Photographs are important

*Sports teams come and sports teams go. Some are quickly forgotten while others are fortunately recorded forever with a team photograph. This was the case recently when a negative of a rugby team was found among the records of Colin Seccombe, a retired professional photographer . . .*

**This particular team was taken outside a Maori meeting house which was eventually recognised as Kaitupeka. The wheels were put in motion and before long details of the Tuhua Football Club came to light.**

Charlie and Alf Love were able to fill in most of the details and names of players featured in the photograph. They also had several other photos of other teams and officials taken around the same period.

According to the Love brothers, it seems a group of locals wanted to get a football team going, so an approach was made to their father, William (Bert) Love, to coach them.

Alf told us: "The old man didn't actually coach them—he shifted them." When asked to explain he said he never had them trained. "If a player wasn't right in one position he would shift them somewhere else."

This was perhaps a unique way to coach a rugby team but he did get results. In 1952, in their second year in the Taumarunui Sub-Union competition, the Tuhua Junior team beat Athletic in the final for the shield, 3 nil.

Athletic were the leading team at the time but their boys didn't like being beaten at all.

Charlie said one of their supporters told the team they were solidly beaten and to take it like men and not cowards.

The club also had a senior team but they were not as successful as the juniors. Only one senior reached rep level and that was Pat Baker.

A lot of their senior players used to turn out for the old Hikurangi Football Club which had an excellent following in the late 1940s.

The Tuhua clubrooms and playing grounds were next to Kaitupeka. Being more of a social team many "friendly" games were played. They used to travel to Piopio and Kihikihi in Buster Osborne's bus.

During their years in competition games players were carted around alternatively on Charlie Love's lorry or Harry Hickey's truck.

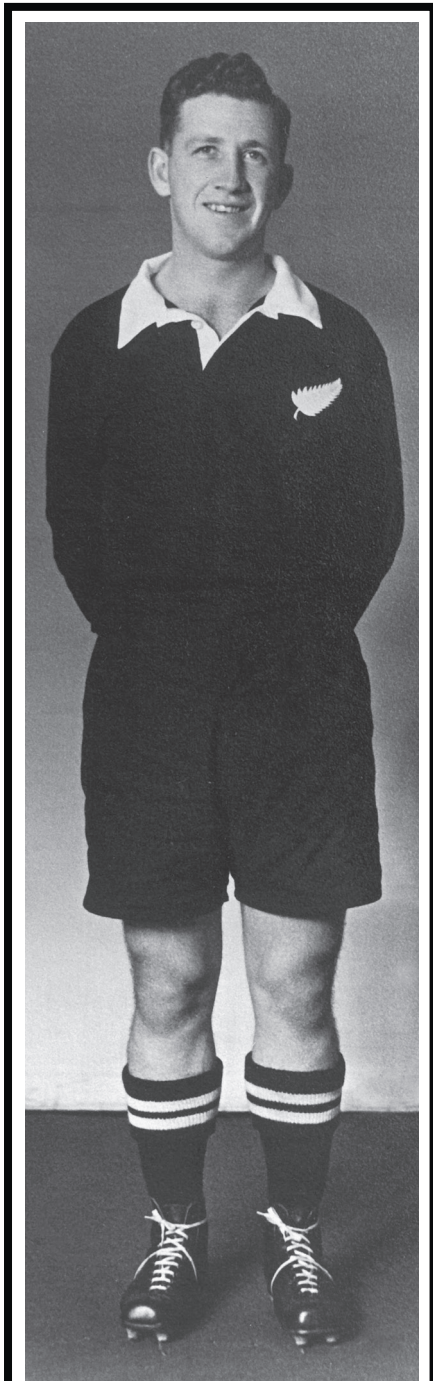
However, the success of the club was short lived and while they won many other minor trophies, support gradually dwindled and after about four or five years the club disbanded.

The trophies won during their years of existence were handed on to the Kaitupeka Chopping Association and many are still being competed for.



**TUHUA FOOTBALL CLUB COMMITTEE, 1951: BACK ROW (from left): Thos Houpapa (Secretary), Frank Sulfa, Mick Adams (Treasurer), Charlie Love. SEATED: Rangī Hurst, Maurice Knox (Chairman and President), William Love (Deputy Chairman). ABSENT: Pat McGuinness, Harry Hickey, Johnny Hoeta.**

*- photo by Colin Seccombe, Taumarunui (ref: 16568).*



*- photo courtesy Ngakonui School (ref: 16398).*

## **A NGAKONU I RUGBY ALL BLACK**

*William John Conrad, son of Mr and Mrs George Conrad, was born in Taumarunui and received all his primary education at Ngakonui School and later at Taumarunui District High School. Vern Satherley introduced Bill to the game of rugby, in which he was later to leave his mark. He played 10 matches for King Country before moving to Hamilton where he also represented Waikato. The climax of Bill's sporting career was his selection for the 1949 All Black Tour of South Africa where he played in 10 matches and scored one try. Bill Conrad was solid and strong with the ability to vary his play, but it was reported that his slow pass prevented him from reaching true international class.*

These include swings and see-saw, booth equipment (crochery, etc) hockey field, additional gateway, dressing shed repairs, earthworks, cycle track formation and maintenance, re-laying sports fields, power installation and numerous other worthy projects. The swimming pool at the No 2 Domain also received contributions.

The athletic and cycling events held during the Labour Day sports were always conducted under the amateur code with the exception of 1949 and 1950.

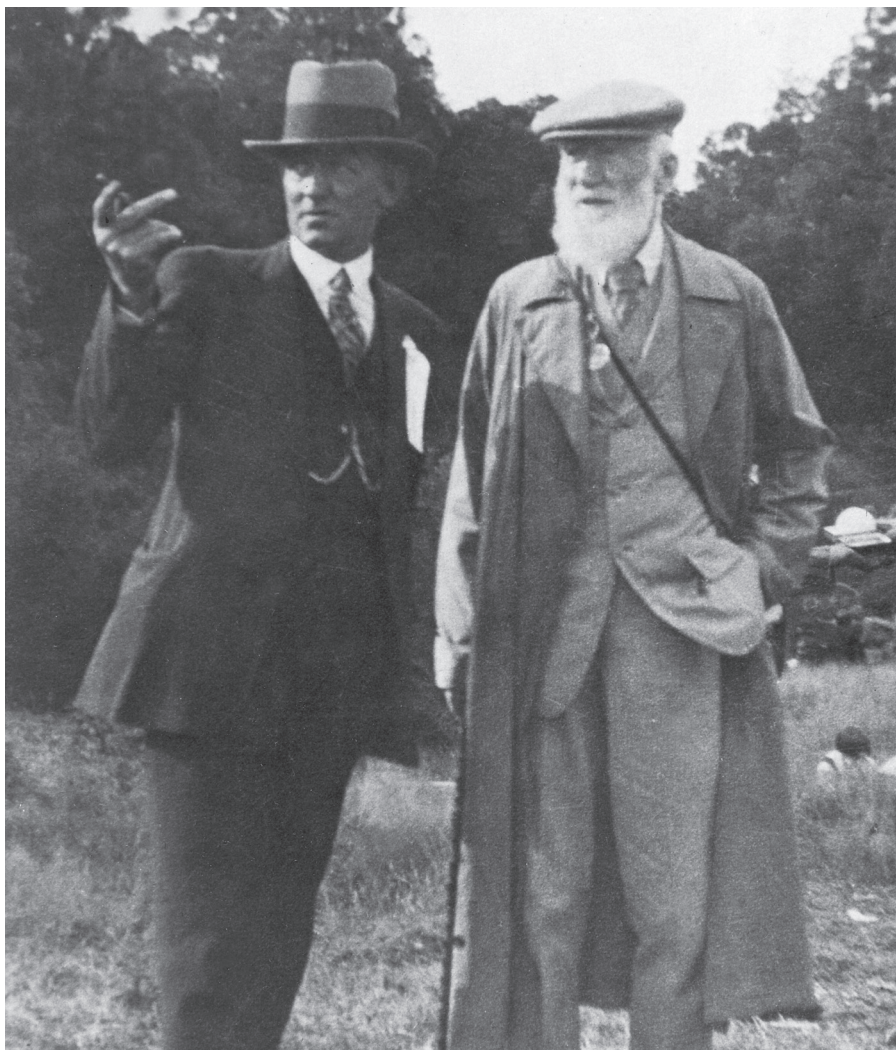
The Citizens' Sports Association is no longer in existence and the exact date of their last meeting, thought to be in the early 1960s, is proving very elusive.

The only other annual event which brings in a large number of outside competitors is the five-a-side hockey tournament run by the Owhango Hockey Club during the last week of the August school holidays.

Started in 1953 as a local event to raise funds for a school movie projector, it later attracted an average of 60 to 65 teams from areas such as Auckland, Wellington, Napier, New Plymouth and Wanganui.

The instigator was Bill Peacock and in recent years the event has been kept consistently strong through the untiring efforts of Rex Donald. He always breathes a big sigh of relief when the day is finished but is proud of the fact that outside teams view the tournament as a prestigious event to win.

He said Wanganui and Hamilton teams are consistent winners although Kakahi and Taringamotu have been previous winners. Owhango men and ladies teams have each been runners-up but have yet to take the major prize.



**Many distinguished visitors have attended the Easter sports and axemen's carnival at Owhango. At the 1934 meeting Les Barber talks to George Bernard Shaw.**

- photo courtesy Doris Porteous collection (ref: 16413).



**Members of the Taumarunui Amateur Cycling Club at the 1955 Owhango Labour Day sports. From left: Gary Seigal, Neil Smith, Ron Campbell, Lindsay Seigal, Brian Zuppich, Bruce Shepherd, Terry Haywood, John Phillips, Ron Phillips, Ray Loane, Barry Oliver, Barry Donaldson, Les Miley, Derek Wells, Eric Best, Len Gordon.**

- photo courtesy Barry Oliver collection (ref: 17144).

# The mystery of Bootleggers' Cup

*One of the most colourful and talked about trophies from the old days was the "Bootleggers' Cup" originally competed for between Kakahi and Owhango rugby teams. Details of this interesting cup surfaced during research for the Kakahi School 75th Jubilee in 1984 but all efforts to trace the cup failed. No-one knew what had happened to it and despite a plea through these columns it remained a closely guarded secret . . .*

**W**hen Owhango held their official "turning the water on" ceremony in 1984 the old "Bootlegger's Cup" mysteriously appeared for display along with another long-lost rugby trophy known as the "Froth Blowers Cup".

Yes, Owhango knew where the trophies were all along but they were not going to tell Kakahi (or the world) until the time was right.

Most would know that a bootlegger is a smuggler of alcoholic liquor although this rugby trophy would not hold any liquid as the air vents and centre hole of the Miller lamp base, from which part of the trophy was

made, has not been blocked off.

If it had been made waterproof, the top portion, made from an old dipper (used in the days when clothes were boiled in a copper), would have held three litres, enough for a couple of good headaches.

Details of the presentation, "engraved" on the cup with black paint, reads on the front: The Bootleggers' (Challenge) Cup. Rugby Football, 1933; and on the rear: Presented by an anonymous sport. Won by Kakahi 1933 and 1934.

According to locals Te Rena later joined the "competition" and it is thought the "challenges" lasted until the late 1940s.

Readers were asked if they could help with further details of both cups and before long a letter arrived from Mrs Gwenda Dunn of Mt Maunganui which said her father, Chris Morris, made and painted the inscription on the Bootleggers' Cup.

"I was a young child but remember it well. Dad did quite a lot of posters for dances, concerts, etc at the time as he had quite a flair in that direction. I remember the cup caused a lot of amusement wherever it went and was seriously vied for when the rugby season started."

Later, during research for other items, a lucky discovery was made in the *Taumarunui Press* of 2 August 1933 of the following report that explains it all:

"At the conclusion of the hockey match the Rugby team took the field to strive for the Bootleggers' Challenge Cup.

"The suggestion to provide this cup for competition originated with Mr J Kelly and the work was entrusted to Mr Chris Morris in whose expert hands the trophy soon materialised and at once became the envy of Owhango who considered that the trophy was worthy of a very special effort, both for its symbolic and intrinsic value.

"The Kakahi players, however, had no intention of allowing this valuable work of art, which by the way, is suitably inscribed, to be lifted lightly and any hints that Owhango was a more appropriate setting for such a trophy was treated with the contempt they deserved.

"Although Kakahi were unable to raise a representative team for the season, the players, realising the seriousness of the position, came in from field and factory and took the field with a determination to win which could have been inspired only by a realisation of their responsibilities.

"That, of the 15 players, no two had jerseys alike troubled them not a bit. They were out to win and would not be denied, and in spite of the gallant efforts made by Owhango,

under the able leadership of Mr Percy Watson, the Kakahi players carried all before them the final scores, Kakahi 15, Owhango 0, placing Kakahi in proud possession of the Bootleggers' Cup.

"Rumours are already afloat that other teams are envious of Kakahi's good fortune in possessing this valuable and already historic trophy and apparently Kakahi is not to be left in undisturbed possession.

"When interviewed on the subject the team stated in their usual modest manner that they were prepared to meet and beat all comers. Mr Delves gave every satisfaction as referee."

This report obviously covered the first challenge for the cup and while other later reports will undoubtedly be discovered in the future, another news item appeared a week later that its fame was already spreading throughout New Zealand:

"Football enthusiasts will be interested to know that following a request from outside sources arrangements have been made for the Bootleggers' Cup to be on show at the next meeting of the Rugby Football Union (Auckland). Mr Cowie (Hawkes Bay) has kindly consented to make all arrangements for the conveyance of the Cup to Auckland and for its return to Kakahi."

That is all that's known at this stage but we leave the last word to Mrs Dunn: "Many years later when he (my father) had moved to Putaruru (and later Kinleith) he made another one. Gwenda said her mother was Nora Humphrey whose mother taught singing and piano in Kakahi whose brother Basil was postmaster at Kakahi for over seven years from 1916.



*The unusual Bootleggers' Cup has been preserved for posterity and is being jealously cared for in the hands of a pioneering Owhango family. The "engravings" in black paint have also stood the test of time as can be seen by the enlarged portion below. It was first won by Kakahi in 1933 and again in 1934 but it is not known how many challenges were made or when it was last played for.*

*- cup courtesy Owhango archives (ref. 16415).*



*Details of competition for the "Froth Blowers" cup are not known. According to the engraving, done professionally this time, it was donated by T W Doake (a Kakahi storekeeper) and presented to Kakahi Rugby Froth Blowers in 1940.*

*- cup courtesy Owhango archives (ref. 16416).*

## Double dose of nostalgia

by Rex Brown

**W**hile attending the monthly meeting of the Railway Enthusiasts' Society in Auckland in September 1984, an important announcement was given by President John Chamberlain which brought a comfortable round of applause.

After negotiations between NZ Railways Corporation and NZ Federation of Railway Societies, the green light had been given for an April 1985 steam excursion to travel from Auckland to Wellington and return to celebrate the opening of the King Country at Puniu River south of Te Awamutu 100 years ago.

But of special interest to me were the two steam locomotives to be used. I had previously driven Ja 1250, ex South Island, on part of its delivery trip to the Glenbrook Vintage Railway during Easter 1972.

As a fireman at Frankton over 20 years ago I had worked on Ka 945, the first Ka built. This engine is now preserved by Steam Incorporated of Paekakariki.

Though based in Taumarunui, Ka 945 made occasional sorties in the Waikato Auckland area working different trains before working back to its home depot.

I also remember firing 945 between Taumarunui and Frankton on the return journey of a railfans' excursion that ran from Auckland to Taihape on 27 July 1963.

Ironically, my driver Ian Donahue, and I had worked Ka 959 southbound and 945 was used on the northbound journey—959 was the last Ka built at Hutt Workshops and, as mentioned already, 945 was the first built.

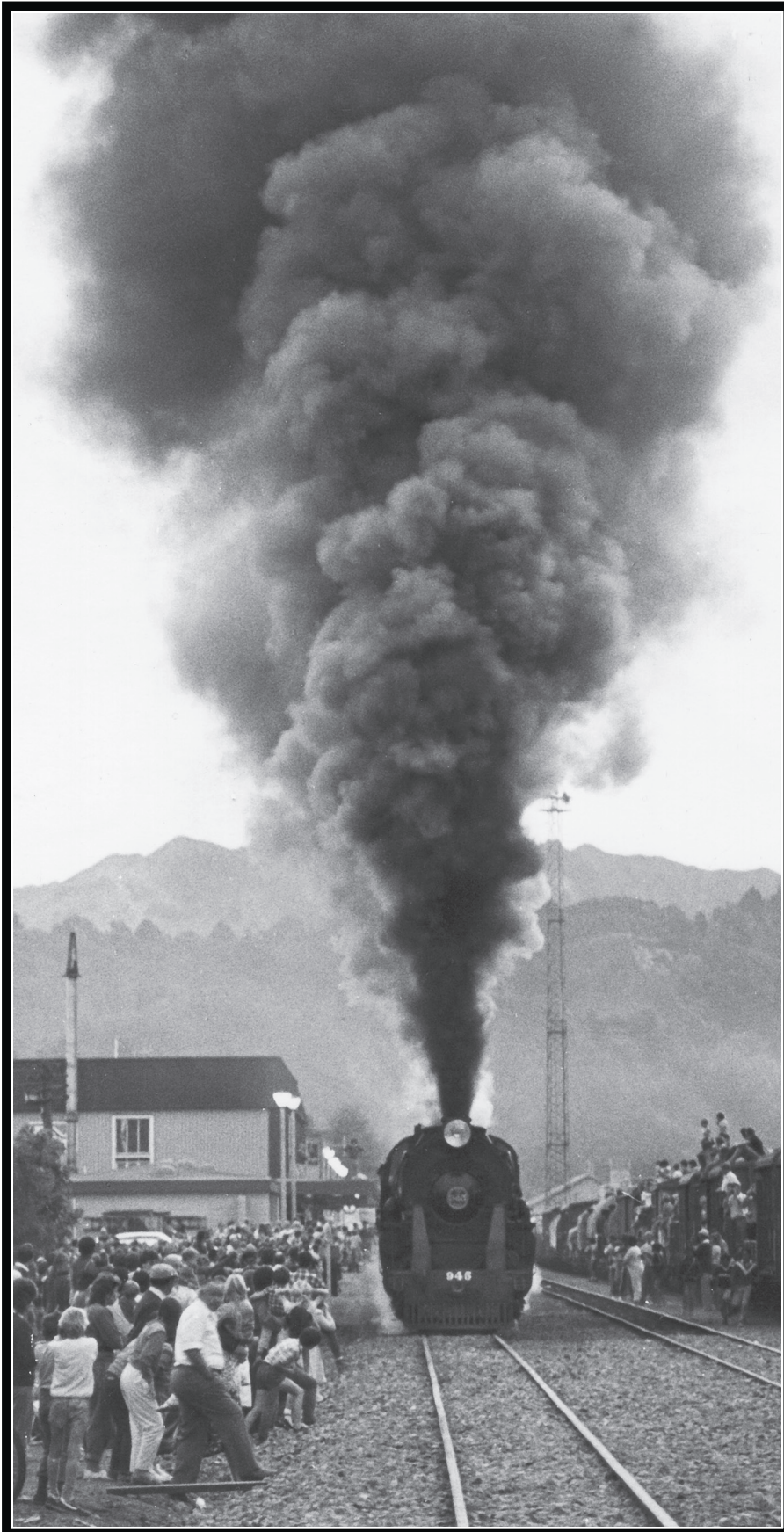
I feel thankful that in my early railway life I was able to fire and drive some steam locomotives before the diesel invasion.

My next meeting with Ka 945 was after I transferred to Taumarunui in 1967. My notebook shows 945 on Work Train No.5 to Kakahi on 29 June 1967. On that occasion my fireman was Norman Burnand.

Now it is 1985 and Ka 945 has come out of retirement completely restored and is to work a passenger train on the Main Trunk again. It is with this thought I went to Wellington to travel on the return journey of the Centennial Steam Excursion.

It was an early start from Wellington in pouring rain but that did not deter the thousands of onlookers—I was told about a family group who set up a barbecue in the station yard the previous Sunday evening while waiting to see the steam train arrive from Auckland.

The departure from Wellington was heralded by loud long whistles from the two locomotives as the train charged up the grade heading for Paekakariki. Diesel horns barked their encouragement as we passed the loco depot and while rain was with us to



*The return of smoke belching steam locomotives is something a lot of Taumarunui people do not want to see again. They can remember how dirty and grimy the town used to be in the old days—those in the vicinity of the railway had to regularly paint their houses every five years or so. However, supporters of steam will quickly tell you that emitting huge clouds of black sooty smoke is purposely done for the photographers and that serious railfans consider black smoke as being unnatural and would become annoyed at the firemen who overdid it. They also point out that properly fired engines will burn with very little smoke and are a lot cleaner than some of the modern diesels.*

- photo by Ron Cooke, Taumarunui (ref: 16474).





*The Brown family pose outside their Taumarunui railway house in 1905. The only identification of the people shown is what Nora Brown had written on the original photo mount (from left): Auntie Meggie, Uncle Charlie, Mother, Uncle Ernest. Ernest was Mr E C Brown, Taumarunui's first stationmaster. Tom Brown, a popular teacher at Taumarunui Primary School during the late 1940s and early 1950s, was able identify his relations: Ernest Brown married Meggie (nee Margaret Rust) with Nora being his niece. Nora's mother was Meggie's sister Katie Brown (nee Rust). Both sisters married brothers with Ernest's brother being Charlie, a handicapped man who died in June 1909 soon after this photo was taken. The house shown was the largest of the six which were situated behind the original Taumarunui Railway Station and on the site later occupied by the railway goods shed. At the time they were classed as the best homes in Taumarunui.*

*- photo courtesy Taumarunui Borough Council collection (ref: 10020).*

## Ernest's railway memories

*The following story by ERNEST BROWN, Taumarunui's first Stationmaster (June 1904 to May 1909), was first published in the Taumarunui Press, 28 February 1940. Mr Brown wrote this article in response to Mr A J Langmuir's request for pioneers to pen their early impressions as contributions in celebrating New Zealand's Centenary. As Taumarunui virtually grew up with the railways we thought Mr Brown's recollections quite appropriate . . .*

**I**n June 1904, I was appointed stationmaster and postmaster at Taumarunui and left Onehunga on a Saturday. When the train left Frankton Junction it was raining heavily and my brother James who accompanied me, jokingly remarked, "What will we do if there is a slip on the line?"

True enough there was trouble ahead. About seven miles north of Taumarunui the train stopped and Guard Beere advised us that there was a wash-out on the line and it was unsafe for the train to proceed further until daylight.

The passengers could remain in the  
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carriages or go on by jigger. As it was still raining my party of four decided to remain; the other passengers went on.

Fortunately we had plenty of food with us and the driver was able to supply boiling water for tea, so the train crew and ourselves had a good meal.

Next morning (Sunday) the train was able to proceed and reached Taumarunui about 8:00am. Such was my introduction to Taumarunui.

### RAILWAY STAFF

The railway staff comprised a stationmaster guard, porter, engine driver, fireman, cleaner and ganger.

There was one train daily (except Sunday) to and from Frankton Junction, leaving Taumarunui at 6:50am and arriving back at 8:10pm—sometimes. It was the event of the day and all hands met at the station to get their letters and newspapers, and to hear the news.

The only connection, other than the train, was a telephone to Te Awamutu, and Frankton Junction. As the same telephone line served Ongarue, Te Kuiti and Otorohanga, the service was not very satisfactory.

The Public Works Department, with headquarters at Piriaka, maintained a railway service of their own, and it was simply marvellous the loads their little engines