



*Above: The 64-metre high Arapuni dam under construction in 1928.*



*Above: The massive Karāpiro dam and powerhouse under construction in 1946.*



*Above: Empire Games rowing programme, 1950.*

## THE GAME OF RUGGER IN CAMBRIDGE

Initially known as Cambridge West, the Leamington Rugby Club was inaugurated in 1897, being the first rugby club in the district. Early officers of the club were: F. Fisher as club captain, R. Reynolds as patron, J. Garland as secretary, and G. Worthey as his assistant. Annual membership cost just one shilling. Twenty blue and white playing jerseys were ordered at a cost of five shillings each. They were of the finest quality with leather shoulder inserts.

Their first home matches were played on the Hughes's property on the corner of Maungatautari and Redoubt Roads, Pukekura. As more teams joined the competition, games were moved to Victoria Park in the town centre.

The Cambridge Rugby Sub Union was formed in 1903 at a meeting in the Masonic Hotel. Original clubs to be included were Hautapu, Maungatautari, Maungakawa Natives, Cambridge East (later became Cambridge City), Cambridge West (later became Leamington), and junior club Pukekura. The Maungakawa Natives were known as the Wasps because of their black and yellow playing jerseys. One of the keenest supporters was the Methodist minister, the Reverend Hudson, who attended practices and refereed most of the matches.

The Hautapu Rugby Club's beginnings started in the old bacon curing room at the Hautapu dairy factory. Men sat around on milk cans while Jack Cowling chaired. The club's original colours were red and black, but changed to red and white with black shorts. The first team was: Roy Crickett, Arthur Kelly, Durham Ashwin (captain), Charlie Shaw, Phil Goodwin, Cecil Ashwin, Arthur Healey, George Beer, Jack Cowling, Humphrey Russell, Jack Russell, Gibb Watt, Jack Milne, Ned Hall, and Tui Rangi.

Jerry Allwill gave the team use of a field adjacent to the Hautapu railway station. Jack Cowling took on the role of player-coach. They rarely won, but it was noted that Hautapu always came up smiling. First season losses were against Cambridge East 14-0, Cambridge West 17-3, Maungatautari 9-0 and 6-3, and Tauwhare 3-0. In the

Cambridge final, Cambridge West beat Maungatautari 12-0. To finish off the season Maungatautari and Cambridge West took on a combined Hautapu and Cambridge East combination, winning 3-0.

Hautapu and Maungatautari later combined to become Suburbs and the Cambridge sub-union president, James Sinclair, donated a silver cup for competition between Suburbs, Cambridge City and Cambridge West.

In 1905, Hamilton beat a Cambridge representative team 8-3, but Cambridge came back to beat Hamilton 6-0 a week later. Cambridge then lost 0-6 to Waipā, 0-7 to Rotorua and 0-3 to Franklin.

In 1910 about 20 young men from Hautapu, Bruntwood and Fencourt formed the Bruntwood Football Club with an annual subscription of two shillings and sixpence. Club colours were blue and black. At the time, other Cambridge clubs were Cambridge City, Maungatautari (revived) and Ōhaupo, while Kihikihi affiliated from Waipā as that union went into recess.

The 1910 the Cambridge representative squad included: H. Forkert, J. Tucker, J. Hally, Rex Dunning, A. Dunning, Lyons, C. Clifford, W. Potts, R. Henderson, Roy Dunning, F. Thompson, G. Maunder, J. Reese, J. Willoughby, E. Carroll, J. Kay, J. Cox, C. Hally, D. Hickey, P. Devine, J. Watters, and Cunningham. The same year, Hamilton beat Cambridge 8-3 when four 20-minute spells and substitutions were tried. Cambridge then drew 3-3 with Lower Waikato and beat Matamata 6-0. Also, Hora Hora, a newly formed club, beat a Cambridge XV 6-0.

Kihikihi won the 1911 Cambridge title when it beat Ōhaupo 14-0 in the final. Bruntwood and Maungatautari combined as Cambridge Suburbs and Hora Hora affiliated, but later withdrew. When an unsuccessful attempt was made to revive the Waipā union, Ōhaupo and Te Awamutu joined Cambridge.

In 1912 Cambridge clubs included Cambridge Oriental (replacing Cambridge City), Cambridge West and Hora Hora. The Kihikihi, Te Awamutu and Ōhaupo clubs left to revive Waipā.

The same year, Cambridge Oriental met Cambridge West on three occasions, each time the score being a 0-0 draw!

While many Cambridge players volunteered for war service in 1914, there were high hopes the game would be able to continue in the town and surrounding districts. The *Waikato Argus* reported: "Football was revived in Cambridge last night when a large number of enthusiastic followers met at the Masonic Hotel and unanimously decided to form a club. J. Hally was appointed secretary. He was asked to write to Hamilton and Waipā unions asking them if the [Cambridge] club could be granted home matches."

Hamilton decided to admit both Cambridge and Morrinsville, but matches would have to be played at Hamilton. Cambridge then decided to affiliate with Waipā because it had been offered home matches. However, only three turned up at the next Cambridge meeting. The *Waikato Argus* commented, "The game in the town has suffered a real blow. Football has been dead in Cambridge for some time." Keen Cambridge players were encouraged to link up with Hamilton clubs. So great was the call-up of volunteers for military service in 1915 that all senior play in the Waikato was curtailed.

As men returned from the First World War in 1919, there was a gradual revival of the game in Cambridge. Keen sportsman G. Sammy Burns of Fencourt attempted to revive rugby by forming a Hautapu junior team which was an immediate success. Records indicate 18 matches were played and won. Hautapu had more triumphs the following season and collected the Cambridge sub union's 1919 championship banner.

The resurgence continued in 1920 with Hautapu, Maungatautari, City, Roto-o-rangi and Leamington involved in weekly matches on Victoria Square. Hautapu collected the senior championship again. Junior clubs were Hautapu, City and Maungatautari.

Cambridge joined the new Waikato union in 1921 with clubs Hautapu, Cadets, Leamington, City, Matangi,

Roto-o-rangi, Maungatautari and Tauwhare participating.

The growth of junior players in the district continued at a rapid pace after the success of the 1924 All Blacks' tour. By 1935 the Cambridge clubs were Hautapu, United, Leamington and Northern. Again, with the outbreak of the Second World War, fewer players were available, as well as wartime petrol restrictions limited the number of games played.

In the 1990s Hautapu made a determined assault on the top prize, winning the Waikato Breweries Shield in 1998 and 1999. Later, there was another golden period when Andrew Douglas coached for three years, making the final three years in a row and winning twice, in 2006 and 2007.

Some Leamington players who went on to higher honours were Richard Myers, Kevin Putt, Craig Luxton and Aran Pene; and from Hautapu: Keith Arnold, Todd Miller, Regan King, Keith Lowen and Liam Messam all became All Blacks.

To this day the Cambridge Rugby sub-union continues its pivotal role of promoting and organising the sport in the town, and from about 1950 most games have been played at Memorial Park in Taylor Street.

*Below: Members of the 1901 Waipā representative team.*



## GETTING ABOUT CAMBRIDGE

William Kennedy "King" Carter, a tall and athletic Canadian, operated a passenger service from his stables in Kirkwood Street (just north of the National Hotel) from the 1870s. The home of Carter and his wife Mary Ann overlooked Karāpiro Stream, giving the name to Carters Flat.

Carter ran a coach service to and from Auckland, and hired out buggies, wagons, and about 100 saddle horses from his Cambridge stables. While on the road, he communicated by carrier pigeons from his various stopping places and Cambridge. The all-day journey between Auckland and Hamilton required eight changes of a six-horse team, and shovels were always carried in case the coach got bogged in bad weather.

Leaving Auckland early morning, the first team changes were made at Otahuhu and Drury. The male passengers walked the clay road up the Razorback (Bombay Hill), and on the crest the horses were again changed, with further changes at Mercer and Rangiriri, where a meal was provided for the passengers.

From Rangiriri a fresh team sped them to Huntly on a flat but often swampy

road. As the coach continued further south, the stages were longer as the running became easier. Ngāruawahia was the next stop, then another near Horotiu. Night had fallen by the time the coach arrived in Hamilton, where the passengers stayed the night.

One January morning in 1881 Mr Butler, a rival contractor, and Carter both left Hamilton about 6am. Carter had six passengers and Butler two. An impromptu race commenced. Carter kept up the lead until just before Cambridge when Butler passed and won by about 100 yards. The time taken was 1½ hours.

Carter catered for the largest share of passengers and mail contracts until the railway arrived in Cambridge in 1884. He then extended his coach service to Rotorua and Taupo.

Before the opening of the railway to Rotorua, Cambridge was a stopover for visitors from Auckland, who would travel by train to Cambridge, then by coach to Rotorua.

The first motor car in Cambridge arrived in 1905, owned by James Sinclair of the Masonic Hotel. It was a 30-horsepower White Steam Car. Apparently it took an hour to raise sufficient steam to get the car mobile. Two early petrol cars were Hugh Ferguson's Vauxhall and Frank Bunyard's French Vinot. Both were chain-driven 5-horsepower two-seaters, with tiller steering, two forward speeds and no reverse.

The *Waikato Independent* stated in 1906: "Motor cars are becoming almost as numerous as stray cows. Messrs Souter & A. Wilkinson are the latest to import one of these modern pacesetters." The car was a two-seater, 5-horsepower Starling, having a steering wheel, three forward speeds and reverse. Neville Souter later said, "Beauty was only skin deep and the car was passed on to someone in Waihi and replaced with a 10-horsepower Cadillac. This was a real car."

Also in 1906, H.J. Jefferies, the postmaster, purchased a 12-horsepower Darracq, capable of seating six people and with a steering-column gear change. Miss Jefferies became the first local to drive a motor car over the new Victoria Bridge the following year.

The first Ford in New Zealand was imported by W. Souter & Co. and sold to R.B. Cranwell in 1908. Souters held the Ford agency for the Auckland Province. Their Cadillac was sold on to W.F. Buckland and in 1908 William Thornton (Cadillac, learning to drive in one afternoon), Henry Greenslade (Oldsmobile) and Boston Couper all joined the motoring fraternity. Among others Dr E.E. Roberts bought a Cadillac, Frank Ross a Daimler and the following year Dr Edmonds and Archdeacon W. Willis both had Cadillacs, bringing the total number of cars in Cambridge to about a dozen.

Jared Allwill, a farmer at Hautapu, was to make history by buying the first Model T Ford in Cambridge in 1910. By 1916 Souters were selling on average one car per day throughout the Auckland Province.

By 1918, new motoring regulations were required to cater for the increase in car numbers. Until then, car licensing had been very haphazard, with no annual fee required once the original licence was issued. Motorists were given a number with a letter to indicate the district, this being painted on the car by the owner. New regulations required drivers to obtain Certificates of Competency, and all licensed vehicles inspected for efficient brakes, sounding signals and lamps. Drivers' licences did not become necessary until 1924.

Petrol was purchased in an eight-gallon can costing about five shillings. In Cambridge speeds were limited to 15 miles per hour in Victoria and Duke Streets – any other street was restricted to 20 miles per hour, and 8 miles per hour around corners.



*Above: A family stop for a picnic outside Cambridge in 1913.*



*Above: A couple of lads using a car for hunting with a couple of fallow deer tied along the side, outside Cambridge in 1913.*



*Above: Mr O.J. Aiken of Hamilton was killed when his lorry collided with a train in Cambridge, 1922.*

## THREE RURAL HOSPITALS COME AND GO

Three health institutions that once operated in the Waipa district: a general hospital at Alexandra, a sanatorium near Cambridge, and a mental-health hospital just south of Te Awamutu, have all long since shut their doors.

### Alexandra Hospital

In May 1887 an Alexandra man, James Daley, suffered an accidental gunshot wound which shattered his left hand. A local doctor prepared to amputate, but Daley elected to go to the Hamilton Hospital for treatment. He was driven to Te Awamutu by buggy and caught a train to Hamilton where he was successfully operated on by candlelight.

The operation is reputed to be the first of its kind at the hospital.

Prior to this, medical services were either dispensed locally, or those suffering from serious conditions travelled to Auckland for treatment. The need for medical services in early Alexandra prompted the building of a hospital in the Military Reserve (in present-day Aubin Close, Pirongia), with construction starting in September 1864.

According to a newspaper report of the day, “those who are unfortunate enough to go to hospital receive every care and kindness at the hands of our worthy physician,” which simply told of the high proportion of those admitted to hospital dying of infection. Infection was generally misunderstood, and disease was generally believed to emanate from unhealthy vapours rising from the ground or from other unknown sources.

When the new hospital was completed in March 1865, it was immediately put to use with Dr Joseph Snape, assistant surgeon of the 2nd Waikato Militia, in charge. However, Dr Snape was struck off the military list in June of the same year when the Government attempted to reduce military expenditure by striking militiamen off pay as soon as they received their land grants.

There is no clear evidence of who provided medical services at the hospital between mid 1865 and 1870. Written accounts state that in 1866 a young soldier died in the hospital of tetanus. Also in the same year, the hospital was re-painted, and was rumoured to close and be converted to barracks.

In 1869, when a local church was fortified by the Armed Constabulary, church services were held “in one room of the hospital”. The following year, when Richard Todd, a Government surveyor, was murdered on the slopes of Mount Pirongia, Nopera, his assistant, was wounded and recovered in the “Armed Constabulary Hospital at Alexandra”. He was under the care of Dr Duval who was working at the hospital until at least 1872.

Unfortunately, little is known about the hospital and its services after this date.

## Waikato Sanatorium

In September 1902 part of the Thorntons’ property on Maungakawa Hill, including the homestead, was sold to the Government for £4,000 to establish the first open-air sanatorium for tuberculosis sufferers in New Zealand. “It is difficult to imagine more magnificent scenery,” said Dr Malcolm Mason, Chief Health Officer, when reporting to the Health Department.

At the time, a sanatorium already operated at the foot of the Maungakawa hill. Cambridge had the reputation as a haven for tuberculosis sufferers because its climate was considered one of the driest in the North Island.

The road to the summit of Maungakawa Hill was upgraded at a cost of £3,000. Although the Thorntons’ homestead was large, two more wings were added. The Government built an electricity generator on the property as well as a reservoir to provide fresh water.

Once the sanatorium opened in 1903, the Department of Health was flooded with applications for patients. The maximum period of treatment allowed was six months, except under special circumstances. Initially the sanatorium could handle up to 30 patients, but with the addition of numerous one-bed chalets, this was increased to 60. At the peak of its operation the institution treated 160 patients annually. The one-bed chalets, measuring 11 by 9 feet, could be opened on three sides.

The Matron, Miss Annie Rochfort, managed the nursing and housekeeping, as well as furnishing, bookkeeping, correspondence and supervising the garden and farming operations. She introduced handcrafts to her patients. Other forms of occupational therapy followed: a craft workshop, and a honey industry. The first medical officer, Dr Roberts of Cambridge, tended to sanatorium patients as well as operating a private practice in town. Dr Penreath replaced him in 1904 as the first resident Medical Superintendent, with a house being built for him near to the sanatorium.

During the First World War the sanatorium was commandeered as a convalescence hospital of servicemen, with its capacity increased to 100 beds. Occupational therapy continued under Matron E. Brown, and Medical Officer Colonel G.M. Scott. Many old diggers recalled the good deeds of the “marvellous Cambridge ladies” who provided knitted cardigans and socks, and baskets of fruit.

In 1922, Waikato Sanatorium, known as “Te Waikato”, closed its doors. Today, all that remains of the sanatorium is one small concrete building.

## Tokanui Hospital

Tokanui Psychiatric Hospital was opened in 1912. The first patients, all male, were transferred from Porirua Hospital. The first female patients arrived in 1915, and by 1920 five wards had been opened and a full-time doctor was on site. Tokanui was deemed self-sufficient in its early days, with its own farm, bakery, laundry, and even a sewing room where patients’ clothing was made.

Buildings were added every few years, including the iconic two-storey brick wards in the late 1920s, and a recreation hall in the 1940s. In 1941, the patient population was 738, and by 1943 it had shot up to 1,008. At its peak in the mid 1960s, Tokanui was one of the largest psychiatric institutions in the country with more than 1,200 patients, and hundreds of employees. A chapel was built in 1962, followed by a swimming pool in 1968.

By the late 1960s the hospital started to cut back on admissions, and by 1974 the Government decided that no more buildings were to be erected at psychiatric hospitals, trending towards smaller psychiatric wards being attached to general hospitals in urban areas.

At Tokanui many staff found it impossible to believe that the hospital, which had been a major employer in the rural area, would ever close. Opinion was divided as to whether it should stay open, with some staff strongly believing it ought to, and others thinking it was time for a different way of doing things.

Patients who had lived for years at the hospital became thoroughly institutionalised and saw the hospital as home, while other patients who were admitted for shorter periods felt isolated, missing their families and friends. The catchment area for the hospital extended as far afield as Taranaki, Poverty Bay, Auckland and the Bay of Plenty.

By 1998 the last “long stay” patient had left the site. The modern Henry Rongomau Bennett Centre, attached to the Waikato Hospital, took over Tokanui’s role as the major mental-health institution in the Waikato.

Eventually, the Tokanui site was returned to Māori ownership, with many of the buildings being demolished. Over 500 mentally-ill patients, who died while at Tokanui, were buried in the hospital’s cemetery between 1912 and 1964. At the time the cemetery was located behind the hospital farm’s woolshed. Today the site is marked by four corner posts and a simple plaque which reads, “Tokanui Hospital Cemetery 1914-1964. May the 500 plus people buried here rest in peace.” Only two graves have headstones.

The former hospital farm is now run by AgResearch as a dairy research farm.

*Below: Chalets where patients underwent open-air treatment at the Waikato Sanatorium, Cambridge.*



## SCHOOLING IN CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge’s first school began in 1865 in the Star Redoubt, behind the present museum in lower Victoria Street, being run by Thomas Spedding. First pupils were: Robert McVeagh, Thomas Hicks, Frederick Hosking, David Carnachan, Arthur Souter, George Bowley Jeremiah McGarry and James McVeagh.

In 1869 “Cambridge and Pukekura” became one of 10 educational districts set up in the Auckland Province, under the new Common Schools Act. With £60 from the Government and a similar amount promised by local settlers, William Cunningham established a school in the disused hospital building at the foot of Duke Street hill, with Mr Bremner as schoolmaster.

At the time there were not many children in Cambridge. An 1869-70 rates assessment for the Auckland Highway Board recorded 129 ratepayers in the Cambridge district, and a census done in 1872 by Sergeant Charles Chitty of the Armed Constabulary recorded only 34 farms.

The original building of the present Cambridge Primary School was dragged from the bottom of Duke Street hill to the present site in 1874. It was initially

partitioned off to also house the town library which moved to a separate site three years later. By that time the schoolroom needed repairs which were covered by the Education Board at a cost of £45.

In 1876 the Pukerimu-Kaipaki School opened, at a total cost of £256, which included the school house. The headmaster was R. Olby. Two years later the Hautapu School opened on the corner of Pickering Road and main Hamilton Road, with 54 pupils under Reverend McLaurin. Five years later the school was moved by traction engine to Bank’s corner, and finally to its present site in 1910.

By 1880 the Cambridge School consisted of two classrooms and porches, all built of pit-sawn kauri. The staff consisted of headmaster Ralph Stewart and three assistants, and the roll stood at 191, from both sides of the Waikato River. A school bell was erected which was also used as the town’s fire bell.

During the same year, Cambridge West School opened, with a starting roll of 45, and Mr H. Hyatt as headmaster. The school was renamed Leamington School in 1919.

Rebecca and Margaret Young opened a private school for girls in Hamilton Road in 1881, and Cambridge’s first secondary school opened two years later with a starting roll of 23 at an annual fee of eight guineas (£8 8/-) each. During its operation the head teacher, Mr Shepperd, requested an assistant master, “Not some young spark for there are tolerably big girls in the school, nor a firebrand, nor yet a mere stick although his classical attainments need not be very great.” The school closed four years later due to economic difficulties.

Meanwhile, schools opened at Taotaoroa No. 1 (later Karāpiro District), and Taotaoroa No. 2 (later Whitehall) in 1885, closing eight years later.

About 1890 the chairman of the Cambridge School committee complained about the tardiness of some pupils. “Boys have been seen playing marbles on the road at times when they should have been at school!”

In 1902 the Cambridge District High School opened in Duke Street, and Goodwood School opened with a roll of 18. Maungatautari School opened the following year with Harry Atkins as headmaster, St Peter's Catholic School opened in 1904, and Roto-o-rangi School in 1905 with 18 pupils. Roto-o-rangi's headmaster rode out from Cambridge each day, and acted as the local postman after school.

Horahora School opened in 1909, with only 12 pupils, all from the Morrow, Orr and Stokes families. The headmaster was R.W. Dentith who bached in a whare. Te Miro School opened in 1920 with a roll of 17 and Mr Mitchell as headmaster. The roll was boosted the following year when a sawmill opened in the district. Later on, when Mr A. Thomson was headmaster, he transported his pupils to school in his 1929 Cadillac, previously owned by the mayor of Auckland.

In 1921 Kaipaki at last got its own school. Since 1876 it had shared a school with Pukerimu. The *Waikato Independent* reported, "The flourishing little country district of Kaipaki was en fête, the occasion being the opening of a new school."

The site of the present-day Cambridge Intermediate School in Clare Street was purchased in 1923. Four years later the Cambridge District High School moved into three new classrooms in Clare Street with a roll of 85, leaving Cambridge Primary School to solely occupy the Duke Street site. At the same time the district's first dental clinic opened at Cambridge Primary.

The first school bus service started in 1929 bringing pupils to Leamington School. A year later the school built a swimming pool, possibly the first in the district.

Gwynnelands estate in Hamilton Road was purchased in 1934 by Mr A. Broadhurst for the establishment of a preparatory school for boys which was opened two years later by Hon. P. Fraser, Minister of Education. Over 800 guests were present. With the Karāpiro dam project commencing, the Karāpiro Hydro School was opened in 1941 with Mr O'Donnell as headmaster.



*Above: Pupils pose outside the Pukerimu-Kaipaki School, near Walker's Gully.*

Leamington School was destroyed by fire in 1948, so the school was temporarily located in the Leamington Hall. During the same year, commercial evening classes for adults and woodwork classes commenced at the district high school.

The Ngāti Haua Māori School opened its doors in 1954, followed by the Cambridge East School in 1955 with Mr Leslie Bear as headmaster, a staff of three, and a roll of 146. The district high school moved in 1961 from Clare Street to its present site in Swayne Road, just outside the town belt. The school was renamed Cambridge High School.

By the centennial of Cambridge, 19 schools existed in the district. To recognise the occasion, the *Waikato Independent* wrote of Cambridge Primary, the town's oldest school, "Of greater importance in the life of the school than the growth of buildings, playgrounds and families, has been the flow of human material through its rooms and corridors – pupils, teachers, and parent helpers." The Cambridge Primary School building, with its four gables built in 1879, 1881, 1886 and 1904, is today listed as a historic building.



## FIRST SCHOOLS IN TE AWAMUTU

Education in the Te Awamutu area has a long and complex history, dating back as far as 1839, when a school for Māori children was set up at a Christian pā established at Awamutu Ōtāwhao. Rev. B.Y. Ashwell began using the pā for what he termed "daily worship, school and Sabbath services". By 1847 a building dedicated to teaching had been built, with students expected to complete five hours of learning each day, following by an additional five hours of working on the adjacent school farm of 173 acres. Officially the school opened in 1849, with teaching available only to 23 half-caste boarders. A year later there were 40 pupils, 36 of them half-caste, and the Government had supplied the school farm with horses, farm equipment, and a farm instructor for the pupils.

"Instruction was given in English only so that the half-caste children should become familiar with their fathers' language," notes one report of the time.

At its height, the school, in the late 1850s, had a roll of 80 pupils, but this figure slumped in 1860 as bitter differences grew between Māori and Pākehā over land ownership, and the school was closed in 1863. It never reopened.

*Left: Boy pupils at Cambridge school, 1901.*

Te Awamutu School opened in temporary premises on Monday, 8 January, 1877, in the Public (sometimes referred to as Volunteer) Hall, with an uncertified teacher named Rev. R. MacLaurin. Some parents, and the school committee, became unhappy with Rev. MacLaurin's lack of credentials, and after a somewhat unpleasant struggle he was replaced by a brief succession of certified – if loose-footed – teachers: A.R. Miller (August to December 1878); J. Edwards (January 1879); and then a Mr J.W.S. Standfield, who took up the role on a more permanent basis in February 1879.

A single permanent classroom was opened in April 1880 – a room of 40ft by 21ft (13m x 6.5m) with a porch either end of 12ft by 8ft (4m x 2.5m). The roll at the time is not recorded, but by May 1892 the school had 103 pupils and 18 months later there were 113.

*Below: Pupils of the Ōtāwhao Mission School pose for the camera with Rev. John Morgan (at right).*



*Below: Te Awamutu School, 1899.*



## FIRST RUGBY GAME AT ALEXANDRA

The first known game of rugby played at Alexandra was on a Saturday in September 1876, when an Alexandra team, selected and captained by Forbes, an Armed Constabulary constable, played a Te Awamutu team on a rain-affected field.

The game was played quite differently to what is played today. It was played over four 15-minute quarters, with a change of ends after each quarter. Points were scored only for goal kicks. A touchdown over the opponent's goal line yielded no points, but gave the scoring team an opportunity to a kick at goal ("a trial at goal") from a position in line with the touchdown – similar to a modern-day conversion.

The game was won two goals to nil by Te Awamutu, who scored two touchdowns, converting each to points by successfully kicking two goals.

A written commentary in the *Waikato Times* written by "Drop Kick" sounds much like a present-day match. "At a quarter-past three, goals were tossed for, the toss being won by Alexandra, who, of course, chose the wind. The ball being kicked off, the struggle began in earnest, Te Awamutu playing up well, and keeping the ball close to Alexandra's goal line. Heels were put where heads ought to be, and many had the pleasure of a shower bath in the pools of water."

Te Awamutu soon showed their dominance by having "it all their own way, for, in about five minutes, the ball was kicked behind Alexandra's goal, and cleverly touched down by Conroy. The player then held the ball while Cooper had a kick at it, and sent it flying over Alexandra's goal, thus scoring a goal for Te Awamutu."

Alexandra fought back. At one stage, one of their players attempted a drop-kick "which was blown back by a stiff

southwest wind!" Even in 1876 the players enjoyed mucking into rucks and mauls. "A real good bustle then commenced, Alexandra fighting bravely, and many a laugh was caused on seeing the players, one on top of another, in pools of water."

After an hour of playing, time was up. The usual cheers were given by both sides. For Alexandra, Forbes, Miller, Kirk, Conell, W. Higginson and Finch played well, but Forbes was disadvantaged as he had to "shepherd his men, most of them being new to the game". For Te Awamutu, Cooper, Baker, Merriman, Bond, Lablin, Culpan and Conroy played remarkably well.

All adjourned to the Exchange Hotel for refreshments and a meal.

Two weeks later, a return match was played on a field set out "on Mr White's paddock" in Te Awamutu, who won one goal to nil. Of interest, other scoring kept during the game was Te Awamutu's three touchdowns and six forcedowns, to Alexandra's four forcedowns.

This meant that Te Awamutu touched down behind Alexandra's goal line three times, but were only successful in kicking one goal. They had also forced Alexandra to touch down behind their own goal line six times. In reply, Alexandra only managed to force Te Awamutu to touch down behind their own goal line four times.

The set scrum had not yet come into being, so there were no specialist forward positions. They were simply referred to as "forwards" because they muscled the ball forward. It is hardly surprising that a Wellington report of a game from this period described the forward rushes as "fellowly fights".

Other known positions were half-back (often more than one), three-quarter backs and full backs. Early games were usually played under rules agreed to by the two opposing clubs. It was not until the 1880s that provincial unions of local clubs established regional rules, but these varied between unions. Eventually, following the establishment of the New Zealand Rugby Union in 1892, national rules were agreed upon.

# BRIDGING THE WAIPĀ

In 1864 the Waipā River separated Alexandra East from Alexandra West and the settlement of Harapepe, but there was no bridge. For nearly four years soldier-settlers relied on a ferry, comprising a platform strapped over several canoes, to transport passengers and animals across the river. The ferry followed a fixed wire and was large enough to support a horse and its rider.

The *Daily Southern Cross* reported in 1867, "I found the ferry service at Te Rore in a disgraceful state, but on paying Captain Yates the modest sum of 1s 6d, was crossed over in his canoe. When the gallant ferryman is not in the humour, travellers and residents have to cross the river as best they can, or make a circuit of about eight miles to Alexandra, where horsemen are crossed on an excellent pontoon bridge for 6d, foot passengers paying 1d. This, many ladies have been compelled to do rather than submit to the annoyance of the present arrangements." Clearly, early ferry operators were charging extortionate fares!

Construction of the first bridge began in May 1867, coming into regular use by early 1868. The bridge was located beyond the end of Crozier Street, upstream of the ferry landing. Those who planned the bridge clearly knew that the area was prone to floods, because in February of the same year, two stores on the flat near the river (the present Esplanade area) had been inundated. A newspaper reported of a Māori canoe caught in the entrance to one, and five feet of floodwater in the other.

The Waipā Bridge, as it became known, had a history of regular flood damage. During a massive flood in 1875 the bridge was put out of use for about eight months, during which time the locals returned to using a makeshift ferry. In the same flood, a bridge spanning the Waikato River at Cambridge was swept downstream.

Over the coming years the Waipā Bridge was repeatedly repaired, even after

the first Whatiwhatihoe and Te Rore bridges were constructed in the early 1880s. Eventually, the Waipā Bridge was replaced by the Baffin Street bridge, constructed above flood level in 1913.



*Above: A new bridge over the Mangapiko River just outside Pirongia opened in October 1905.*

## BRIDGING THE WAIKATO

From 1864 to the present day, the citizens of Cambridge have depended on bridges to go about their daily business. As punts initially operated across the Waikato River, only the Karāpiro Stream required to be bridged. The first known bridge, built by Mr Greville, was swept away in a flood in 1869. It was replaced the same year with one built on a much higher level by Philip Cooper. As traffic demands increased, Cooper replaced this bridge in 1882-83 with a much larger one built with tōtara timber – 14 feet wide, and 12 feet higher than its predecessor.

It wasn't until 1938 that construction of the present-day bridge over the Karāpiro Stream commenced. It consists of a main arch and two cantilevers constructed from ferro-cement. New steel handrails were added in 1960 and the four concrete light pillars were cut down to the same height as the rails.

By 1870, citizens demanded a permanent bridge across the Waikato River. Early that year the site for a bridge, where the Fergusson Bridge is today, was surveyed by Captain Rickards. At the time the river was at a record low so it was not difficult to bore holes into the rocks on

the bottom to insert foundation piles.

Sub-Inspector Newall and Sergeant Chitty of the Armed Constabulary supervised the job, which was completed in 1871. On 17 November 1874, the river rose 25 feet within a few hours. The torrent of high water lifted the bridge and swept it downstream to Hamilton, where it was rescued by the Armed Constabulary. Apparently some constables galloped beside the river before one bravely swam to intercept the bridge and secure it by rope to the shore, preventing it from taking out a new bridge at Ngāruawahia! As a result of Cambridge losing the bridge, an old punt was brought back into service.

Towards the end of 1876 a tender was let to Mr Brittan for a Howe Truss Girder bridge, 144 feet long, 14 feet wide and 12 feet above the level of the demolished bridge. The new bridge became known as the Red Bridge, as it was painted with red lead-oxide paint. The kauri piles that were driven into the banks were found in 1962 when the Fergusson Bridge was constructed. The Red Bridge cost £2,345, the Government promising half. Richard Reynolds was the first to take a herd of stock across the new bridge.

The Red Bridge had deteriorated by the end of the 1890s and the need for a bridge on a higher level was debated in 1899. The Red Bridge was dismantled around 1909 and it is believed that some of its timber was used to construct the inner chamber of the Alpha Lodge on the corner of Queen and Bryce Streets.

The present-day Fergusson Bridge, named after Governor-General Sir Bernard Fergusson, was constructed on the exact site of the Red Bridge, opening in 1964.

## Victoria Bridge

Cambridge's Victoria Bridge was the first hinged-braced arch bridge in Australasia.

The bridge pieces, manufactured as a kit set in Britain, were shipped to Auckland and railed to Cambridge and Te Awamutu on both sides of the river. Construction started in May 1907. It was erected by cantilevering – building out from each bank – over the river

without scaffolding, until each side joined in the middle. The anchorages on the banks were then slackened off, allowing the weight of the bridge to settle on the arch, making the structure rigid. This was a pioneering method of construction for New Zealand.

The total length is 462 feet (140.8m) and 17 feet wide. The decking was six inch-thick heart tōtara which was tarred and coated with sand. The total steel weighed 330 tons, and about 20,000 rivets were driven by pneumatic hammers.

On 14 December 1907 the first motor car crossed the bridge driven by Miss Jeffries, with the mayor, W.F. Buckland, Robert Fisher and John Ferguson having the honour of driving the first horse and buggy across.



*Above: The Governor, Lord Plunket, cuts the ribbon to open Victoria Bridge, 1907.*

The *Waikato Independent* reported the opening ceremony: "The town was gay with bunting, and streamers were hung across Victoria and Duke Streets, and flags were flying from the clock tower of the new Post Office building, Fire Brigade station, the flag staff in Jubilee Gardens, and from a number of business places. ... A large crowd had assembled at both ends of the new bridge and gaily coloured streamers at either end of the structure waved in the breeze." After his speech, "The Governor cut the ribbon held at either end by Mrs Elizabeth Buckland (the Cambridge Mayor's wife) and Mrs Marion Fisher (wife of Robert Fisher, chairman of the Pukekura Road Board). Headed by the town band the procession reformed and proceeded over the bridge."

The New Zealand Historic Places Trust placed the bridge on their register as being a national structure worthy of preservation for its historical significance and architectural quality.



*Above: Bridges over the Karāpiro Stream and the Waikato River, as seen in 1901.*

## "FORESIGHT, PERSISTENCY AND PRACTICABILITY"

The Waipa District, governed today by the Waipa District Council, covers an area of 1,447 square kilometres and has a population of about 46,000. Main urban centres are Te Awamutu, Cambridge, Kihikihi, Pirongia and Ōhaupo.

The districts' amalgamation in 1989 disestablished the Cambridge Borough Council, in existence since 1886, and the Awamutu Borough Council, in existence since 1915.

A total of 24 mayors served in the Cambridge Borough Council's 103 years of operation, the first being John Gwynneth (1886-1887), and the last being Mrs Pat Allen QSM (1985-1989).

But the stand-out Cambridge mayor was William Francis (Frank) Buckland who was in office 1898-1903, and for a second term of 1905-1910. A solicitor by profession, Buckland became a Member of Parliament for Franklin North in 1884-87, and Manukau in 1890-1893, before moving to Cambridge in 1896.

Buckland became dissatisfied with the Cambridge Borough Council's handling and negotiations of the building of the high-level Victoria Bridge, so decided to "make a difference" by standing for mayor. Remarkably, he defeated the incumbent mayor, Thomas Wells, by just five votes.

Before long, he set the town alight with his practical and energetic outlook and, in spite of strong opposition within council, he forced through many progressive works. One of his first improvements was to move the sale yards from the centre of town to Taylor Street, amidst bitter opposition from business people and farmers. The move cost £1,000.

Buckland then went on a course of construction: installation of a fountain commemorating Queen Victoria at the junction of Victoria and Duke Streets; town water supply from Moon Creek and water tower in Hamilton Road constructed with a loan of £1,250; channelling and kerbing of Victoria and Duke Streets, and two miles of tar sealing with a loan of £1,500; water reticulation scheme constructed at a cost of £6,000; drainage and sewerage schemes constructed at a cost of £1,250; gasworks, gas street lighting, and gas lights in the council chambers at a cost of £5,000.

Encouraged by his re-election to council in 1905, Buckland continued his impressive work. Early in 1907 the new post office with clock tower was opened, and later in the year Victoria Bridge was opened by the Governor, Lord Plunket, at a cost of £14,300. In 1909 a technical and manual training school, and nearby courthouse (which today houses the Cambridge Museum) were opened.

Early in 1909, Buckland resigned the mayoralty in a rage when the council refused to accept a tender of £5,194 for a proposed new town hall. But two days later he was back in office at the request of the majority of councillors who promised to support his latest project, "Buckland's White Elephant," as it was known for many years. The new Town Hall, with municipal chambers and public library, opened in December 1909. They built fast in those days! The Town Hall has been the envy of large and small towns ever since.

At Buckland's last council meeting in 1910 he was presented with a silver salver inscribed, "Works which would ever be a monument to his foresight, persistency and practicability."

Buckland was also a justice of the peace, on bowls, cemetery, cricket and athletics committees, a member of the Waikato Show and on the St Andrew's Vestry. He pursued his love of flowers into retirement and died at Monavale on 29 December 1915, at the age of 68 years.



Above: The Cambridge Town Hall, soon after construction.

## SHOOTING AT MYSTERY CREEK

A mysterious shooting took place at Mystery Creek on Tuesday, 8 February 1910. The exact spot is shown in the photograph.

It had been the custom since the establishment of branch offices at Ōhaupo for the Bank of New Zealand and the Bank of Australasia of Hamilton, to travel to Ōhaupo each Tuesday to open the two branches for business.

On this occasion, W. Ward (manager of the Bank of Australasia) and Joseph Jordan (teller of the Bank of New Zealand), set off together from Hamilton as usual in a horse-drawn buggy. While crossing Mystery Creek (today just south of the Hamilton Airport turnoff on State Highway 3), a shot suddenly rang out, fired from the undergrowth shown at the right of the photograph.

Jordan, receiving the shotgun charge on the left side of the face and body, fell against Ward. The blast startled the horse which dashed off along the road. When Ward finally got the horse under control, there was no sign of the assailant.

Jordan, though suffering considerably from shock, was not dangerously wounded, and was afterwards conveyed to Waikato Hospital. A young man was later arrested by police and charged with the offence.



Above: The horse and buggy mark the spot of the highwayman's shooting.

## SMALLPOX IN THE WAIPA

A significant outbreak of smallpox occurred in 1913 in Northland. Its origin was traced to a Mormon missionary who attended a hui in the region in April 1913. The disease spread rapidly with about 2,000 reported cases amongst Māori, resulting in at least 55 deaths. A mass vaccination programme was set up and travel restrictions imposed to slow the spread of infection.

A few isolated cases were located in the Waipa District, including a group of Māori at the Maungatautari marae in September 1913. As a result, health authorities took swift action by destroying the building that housed the group. The *Auckland Weekly News* reported, "The whare was burnt by the Health Department after several Māoris, suffering from the disease, were removed to an isolation hospital."

The epidemic was declared over by December 1913 with the last reported case occurring in April 1914.



Above: Maungatautari marae fire, 1913.

## WAIPĀ FARMERS TAKE UP BATONS

In late 1913 a wave of industrial unrest known as the "Great Strike", or "Watersiders' Strike", swept through New Zealand. Events saw the strikers, who attempted to occupy the wharves, and their supporters, pitted against volunteer strike-breakers who were protected by mounted special constables armed with batons.

For rural Waipā, the farmers' interests were at stake – no waterside workers, no exports. At local meetings, farmers supported the actions of the Farmers' Union, pointing out that "it is a matter of vital interest to the dairy industry that there should be no dislocation of shipping facilities at this juncture, and if the worst fears are realised it is anticipated ample free labour would be forthcoming to work the boats."

As a result of the strike, Cambridge shops ran short of flour, potatoes, sugar, kerosene and coal, and prices started to rise. Some local businesses were forced to reduce staff. Although farmers had no grievance with the watersiders or their employers, their mission was to see that the products of the country, namely butter, cheese, wool and frozen meats, were not allowed to suffer.



No. 3, MOUNTED RIFLES,  
D. SQUADRON, A.M.R.

LADIES' SHOOTING MATCHES.

**B**BAKES will leave Crowther and Bell's Stables on SATURDAY, at 12 noon sharp.

All lady friends of the Squadron are cordially invited.

W. R. C. WALKER, Captain.

Desperate for a solution, the Government called upon farmers to take up batons and help break the strike. Known as “Massey’s Cossacks”, farmers acting as mounted special constables assembled at local railway stations with their horses. Many were already members of mounted rifle units and were familiar with the drill.

Within a few days Cambridge contributed 130, Te Awamutu 63, Kihikihi 17, Ōhaupo 13, Ngāroto 4, Korakonui 6, Hairini 3, Roto-orangi 5, Hora Hora 2, Bruntwood 1, Te Kawa 1, Pukerimu 1, Mangapiko 5, Karāpiro 2, Pāterangi 8, Rukuhia 1, Pukeatua 8, Hautapu 2, Tamahere 4, Leamington 1, as well as others. In all, over 300 mounted special constables travelled north from Waipā. While they were away, their wives and children carried on the milking and other vital farming activities, and helped work the local creameries. Because of the threat of sabotage, every factory, creamery and public building in the Waipā was guarded night and day.

*Below: Mounted special constable Johann Meyer of Ngāroto with long baton at the ready.*



*Above: Cambridge mounted special constables gather in Kirkwood Street, led by Captain Jonathan Garland.*

Special trains travelled north at night, passing quietly through Huntly with lights out, hoping not to disturb sympathising miners within the town. Once in Auckland the mounted men, with long batons at the ready, and assisted by special foot constables, were put on duty at the docks protecting the free labour.

During November the *Auckland Weekly News* reported that as the clock struck 5am, “Every unit in the defence of the waterfront, comprising fully 1,000 ‘irregulars’ and regular police, was stationed in the position selected for it. As the day advanced a very angry crowd of strikers and their sympathisers congregated in Little Queen Street, which was guarded by farmers from Cambridge, and towards ten o’clock it looked as if there would be trouble. The mass of excited men forced itself nearer to the double row of mounted country men and shouted the most offensive epithets in its vocabulary, varying the theme occasionally with a chorus of howls and hoots.

“The Cambridge farmers sat quiet, calm and outwardly unmoved; but their batons never left their hands, and their gaze was fixed very steadily on the seething, raging crowd in front. ‘We don’t want to start fighting,’ said the commander of the troop, when a particularly vile invective was flung at them, ‘we are here to protect our port and not to fight.’”

Captain Jonathan Garland wired Cambridge saying, “On behalf of the Cambridge squad please thank Cambridge ladies for their kindness in sending cakes and puddings to the men.

Very much appreciated by all.” Once the strike was broken, the Specials returned home to socials and dances. The Farmers’ Union swelled its membership and soon branches were formed in every district.

The affair ended for Cambridge in April 1914 with the Specials’ Picnic at Ruakura where the Prime Minister, Mr Massey, presented all those who went to Auckland with a Special Constabulary medal.



*Above: The Te Awamutu squad of special constables march through Hamilton to the railway station, en route to Auckland.*

## CARE FOR POLO ANYONE?

The first polo club in the Waikato was at Kihikihi, founded in 1892. Mr J. Hutchison of Orakau donated the first cup which was played for on New Year’s Day, 1893.

Early in the 1900s the game came to Cambridge under the influence of the late Charlie Meredith, a local high school teacher. Games were played at *Bardowie* in Victoria Road [originally on the west side of the road before the cemetery], in the front paddock of *Dingley Dell*, Vosper’s property at Pukekura, at the club’s dedicated field on the town belt in Vogel Street, and later in Lamb Street, Leamington.

Early Cambridge players were Joe and Norman Banks, H. Crowther and Charlie Meredith, who was also the club's secretary for over 20 years.

In 1936, Cambridge 'A', R. Nolan, C.G. Vosper, K. Peake and R. Peake, won the coveted Savile Cup from Matangi, and also the Auckland Provincial Cup from Matamata. The following year they repeated the victory in the Savile Cup against Cambridge 'B' with a team of R. Nolan, L. Kay, K. Peake and R. Peake.

In 1938 the New Zealand team with three Cambridge members, R. Nolan, L.K. Peake and R. Peake, won the Australasian Gold Cup at Sydney, and with it the polo supremacy of the southern hemisphere – by defeating the New South Wales Town and Country Whites 9-4. Ken Peake proved the outstanding player. After the match the crowd invaded the field and carried Ken shoulder high as a tribute to the astounding display by the New Zealand team.

To play good polo, one needed good horses. Cambridge horse sales always attracted buyers from afar. In the 1880s, as many as 1,500 horses would be milling around the sale yards, then at the corner of Duke and Victoria Streets across from the Central (Criterion) Hotel. Cambridge farmers would round up a few brumbies from the Waiouru tussock land, trim them up a bit, ride them and sell them as polo ponies to eager polo buffs, including officers of the Indian Army!

Cambridge polo returned to its heyday in the 1970s. In 1971 Cambridge 'A' team comprising Jim Watson (captain), brother John Watson, Bruce Taylor and Bud Arnold brought home the Savile Cup, the blue-riband trophy of New Zealand polo. Playing at Feilding, they defeated Waimai and Morrinsville, and Taupiri in the final by 5-4. They also won the Cameron Cup for the second consecutive year. This was an open-challenge cup, competed for by clubs of the Northern Provincial District.

Likewise, Cambridge 'B' team comprising Bryce Kelly (captain), Dane Miller, Tim Keyte and John Wiig, won the Junior Handicap, also at Feilding,

beating Waimai 'B' in the final. They also held on to the Somers Cup, a handicap competition competed for by all club teams, for the second consecutive year.

The Kihikihi Polo Club also had its successes. The Kay family has been involved since its inception and the fifth generation of Kay's still play today.

Initially, the club played at Orakau and sometimes at Waikeria. Prior to the Second World War, they played on Allan Kay's property at Parawera, and postwar they moved to their present ground at Kihikihi Domain.

The club first challenged for the Savile cup in 1913 in Palmerston North, going down in the final to Mangahaeia. The team comprised Jim Kay, Willie Kay, Frank Taylor and Allan Taylor. The Club then beat Ōhaupo for the Provincial Cup, and featured strongly in the 1930s winning a series of cups.

But the golden days of the Kihikihi Polo Club were the 10 years from 1952 when they first held the Savile Cup. They won the cup an amazing seven times over the 10 years, playing in nine finals. The 1952 team comprised Len Kay, Edward Kay, Allan Elliott and Tony Kay. It was 30 years before the club again tasted success, when it won at Tangimoana in 1991.

Recently, International Day has become the main feature of the club's calendar. The inaugural tournament was held in 1994 when Kihikihi played an English side, and for a number of years Kihikihi challenged an overseas team, but New Zealand Polo stepped in and put up a national side in 2003. International Day has since become the showcase of polo in New Zealand, with large crowds attending.



*Above: Stallions on parade at a Cambridge horse sale, 1905.*



*Above: Action at the 1931 Auckland Polo Championship Tournament held at Cambridge.*



*Above: The Te Awamutu (Kihikihi) team of E. Potts, O. Kay, F. Taylor and W. Kay (Captain), winners of the Auckland Provincial Polo Easter Tournament held at Epsom, Auckland, April 1912. They beat Remuera 11-2 in the final.*

## RUNNING WITH THE HOUNDS

One of the earliest known hunts around Cambridge was advertised in the *Waikato Times* in 1874, requesting "hunting enthusiasts to help hunt wild boar". It stated that the Tamahere hounds would meet at the Grange Estate, Hamilton Road, at 10am. "A good attendance is expected. Parties having good dogs are requested to bring them to assist the pack."

With the release of hares in the Waikato, the potential for hunting was considered lucrative. However, as there was a shortage of hounds locally, a pack was sent by train from Pakuranga. They gathered outside the National Hotel, Cambridge, at noon on Friday 9 August 1878; the following Monday at Gwynne's Hotel, Hamilton; then two days later on to Te Awamutu.

The *Waikato Times* later recorded the Cambridge hunt: "The Pakuranga

Hounds met yesterday, at the National Hotel, Cambridge, and threw off at Fantham's paddocks. A hare was soon found, and the field which mustered a 100, had a chase of some 35 minutes, when puss was killed before reaching cover. The hounds ran very compactly, and kept excellent scent. The pack then returned to Cambridge, as it is intended that they shall hunt again today. There were fully 100 horsemen on the field, most of whom followed close upon the pack, taking the fences, as they came, gamely. The hounds throw off at Hamilton on Monday, and on Wednesday at Te Awamutu. We are glad to learn that Mr Allwill is favourably progressing from the accident when, by a fall from his horse, which stumbled into a Māori potato hole immediately after taking the first fence, he was thrown and broke his collar bone."

It seems the hunts caused some damage to local properties, as an advertisement was placed in the *Waikato Times* later in the month stating: "All those parties whose fences suffered during the recent hunts, and who claim damages, will be paid by applying to either Thos Wetherell, Te Awamutu, Robt Kirkwood, Cambridge, J.S. Buckland, Hamilton."

It seems the Auckland hounds make the excursion south on numerous occasions over the following years. Before 1900 a local pack was bred, but this was still at times supplemented with Auckland hounds. A Cambridge meet of the Waikato hounds occurred in May 1899 at the Fencourt railway station. Quoting from the *Auckland Star*: "Although the day was a bitterly cold one, there was a good muster, Mr H. Bullock-Webster, the master, being well supported. A thoroughly good day's sport was had, the hounds lately imported from Auckland proving a great addition, for they worked remarkably well. Most of the hunting took place round the homestead of the late master, Mr W.M. Douglas, and he seemed as keen as ever for the sport."

In May 1910, the *Waikato Independent* stated the Waikato hounds met at Bruntwood "in glorious weather. Bruntwood is a popular meet, and in fine weather one can always be sure of a large crowd being present. Considerably

over 100 were out yesterday. Bruntwood is a beautiful piece of country to hunt over, the going being good and the fences are in first-class order. The latter beat the horses on several occasions, and falls were numerous, but fortunately none was of a serious nature. Shortly after noon the hounds moved off, and a try was made in the gully behind the old kennels. A hare was soon on foot, but on reaching the top of the gully she had the bad luck to run right into a hound's mouth, thus spoiling what might have been a good run."

The hounds put up another hare amongst turnips on Mr Thompson's farm. Then another made a strong run over the Bruntwood Estate, "through Beer's skirting the Māori country, on through McMillan's, and back to Bruntwood, where they killed it in the middle of a young grass paddock". This was a run of six or seven miles. After one more chase, the hounds were called off for the day. "At the invitation of Mr Ross, all were hospitably entertained to afternoon tea, which was much appreciated."

On the day, Mr Wynn Brown was the Master on Topthorne, and Mr G. Simpson the Whip on Bobstay. Other names mentioned were: Mrs Crowther, two Pickering sisters, two Gleeson sisters, Miss M. Taylor, Miss Ward, Miss Howie, Miss Flaw, Messrs H. Crowther, J. Graham, A. Ramsey, T. Flatt, E. Walker, R. Dodd, C. Peake, and numerous others. Hunts proved to be quite a social occasion, and an opportunity to meet a future beau. Often the hunt season was crowned by a hunt ball.

Wynn Brown's association with the Waikato Hunt Club hounds started in 1905. Later, his son Ned took over the hounds and continued until 1970 at Flume Road, Fencourt, when he relinquished the pack to Ron Cropp. During their tenures many of the hounds were given out to the farmers of the club who cared for them between hunting seasons.

## A curious episode

H. Bullock-Webster wrote in his book *Memories of Travel and Sport*: "Amongst very keen sportsmen of the very early

days I must mention Ned Hewitt. ... Though unable to ride, he never missed a meet, wet or fine; he was always there in his white topper driving the wonderful bay horse and still more wonderful buggy, that stood up to more hard work than any machine I ever saw. When we found a hare, and hounds streamed away, he would go full gallop up the road or lane, turn through a gateway poached by cattle with the mud up to the axles of the buggy, go careering over an uneven fifty acre paddock at a hard gallop, and even try and drive through a gap in the hedge if there were one. The old horse loved it as much as he did.

"A curious incident happened later. Dear old Hewitt passed away to his happy hunting ground, and was buried in the Cambridge Cemetery [at Hautapu]. A short time later in the season, we met at Hautapu, and had a good hunt over James Taylor's fine property [*Bardowie*, Victoria Road], but scent was bad and I didn't kill. Late in the afternoon the scent improved and we got onto a strong hare, and ran nearly to Fencourt, then a ring back to James Taylor's, with hounds never off the line and the hare viewed ahead making for the cemetery, and in they went. I got off to get them out, and found that they had killed their hare on Ned Hewitt's grave. I got them out at once, and broke up the hare outside, and then went back and placed a pad and scut [foot and tail] at the foot of the grave in all reverence."



Above: Huntsmen, huntswomen and hounds gather at Dr Roberts' Cambridge home prior to a hunt, 1904.



Above: Waikato Hunt Club members crossing a field in picturesque Bruntwood, September 1930.



*Above: Running with the hounds at Greenhill Estate, Te Awamutu, during August 1913.*



*Above: Perhaps not chasing hares on horseback, but still enjoying the hunt in Cambridge. Messrs Kerr, Hunt, Carr and King admire their bag after a day's hunting outside Cambridge, July 1904.*



**HUNT CLUB.**

**A** MEETING of all interested in Waikato Hunt Club's Races will be held at Criterion Hotel on next SATURDAY EVENING, at 8 o'clock.

Business—To fix date of Races and draw Programme.

Kihi-kihi, Whata Whata, and other distant Members are asked to see that they are represented.

**MERVYN WELLS,**  
Hon. Sec.

*Above: Hunt clubs also organised race meets, as shown in this 1905 advertisement.*

# THE HALLY BROTHERS

James and Elizabeth Hally of *Valmai*, Victoria Road, Cambridge made the supreme sacrifice during the First World War on two occasions, and lost a third son some years later from the effects of his wounds received during the war.

Charles, aged 26 years, died of his wounds aboard a hospital ship on 26 July 1915 after being evacuated off Gallipoli. He received his fatal wounds at Courtney's Post a week earlier, when a hand-thrown Turkish bomb exploded near to him. It was the second time he was wounded. On an earlier occasion Charles was wounded in the shoulder on 8 May 1915 during the charge at the Daisy Patch. He was transferred to a hospital ship and later recovered in Egypt, only to be returned to Gallipoli on 14 July.

The second son to die on active service was Colin. Before the war, he trained as a solicitor and practised with his father as Hally & Hally, in both Cambridge and Morrinsville. As a 2nd lieutenant, Colin sailed to Britain in mid 1916, joining the Auckland Infantry on the Somme during October of the same year. While with the Aucklanders he was awarded the Military Cross for his part in a successful trench raid against the German lines at the Pont Ballot salient, east of Houplines, on the night of 3/4 November. The citation reads, "For conspicuous gallantry in action. He organised and led a successful raid on the enemy's trenches, displaying great courage and determination throughout."

Later in November 1916 he was transferred to the Machine Corps. While with this unit he was killed in action on 6 April 1918, aged 25 years. Major Luxford later wrote in *With the Machine Gunners in France and Palestine*, "The whole of the four companies of the Battalion were working in an intensely shelled area. The weather was very bad on the 6th, and the [machine-] gunners

were hampered at their positions by rain and mud. Unfortunately Lieutenant Colin Hally M.C. was killed on this day. Hally's work had been very conspicuous at all times since his transfer to the Corps." Colin is buried in Euston Road Cemetery, Colincamps, Somme, France.

Colin's mother, Elizabeth, received his Military Cross from the Governor General at Government House, Wellington, in September 1918. Sadly, the father sold the family legal firm during the same month.

A third son, John, died in 1929 after suffering from the effects of his wounds received on Gallipoli some 14 years earlier. A fourth son, Edward, didn't serve in the war.

The Cambridge cenotaph bears the names of 93 men who died in the First World War.

Colin Hally's medals are on display today at the Cambridge Museum.

*Below: Colin Hally MC was killed in action while with the machine gunners in France, 1918.*





*Left: "Grid" Caldwell became New Zealand's highest-scoring fighter ace of the First World War.*

## FROM WAIPA TO ABOVE THE TRENCHES

Two young men from Waipā took part in the air war over the Western Front during the First World War.

### Keith Caldwell

Cambridge is connected with perhaps the most famous of all New Zealand pilots from the First World War, Keith Logan Caldwell. Known as "Grid", he became the highest-scoring New Zealand fighter ace of the war. Because of his father's business interests, Keith spent much of his youth between Auckland and his parent's home in Hamilton Road, Cambridge. It was to Cambridge that Keith wrote home to his father, many of his letters being published in the *Waikato Independent*.

Major Keith Caldwell, Military Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar, finished the war credited with 25 victories. The citation for his MC, his first award, reads: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when leading offensive patrols. On one occasion he led a patrol of five machines against twelve hostile aircraft, all of which he drove down out of control. He has personally destroyed five hostile

machines, and has had over fifty contests in the air, in all of which he has displayed splendid skill and fearlessness, and has set an example to his squadron."

On one occasion in September 1918, Keith's quick thinking saved him from certain death. Whilst on patrol, another British aircraft struck his fighter, damaging his wing struts. Instantly his aircraft plummeted 1,000 feet and went into a flat spin. As he wasn't carrying a parachute, Keith knew he was doomed if he didn't attempt something radical. So he stepped onto the port wing, and grabbed hold of the strut with his left hand. Attempting to balance the aircraft by changing the centre of gravity, Keith continued to fly the aircraft with his right hand on the joystick.

Slowly he guided the aircraft away from enemy territory and over the British lines. Just as the plane was about to hit the ground Keith jumped off the wing, landing on soft earth in front of a British infantry dugout. Astonished soldiers watched him get up, dust himself off and walk towards them as if nothing had happened. His escape was nothing short of a miracle.

Keith returned to Cambridge late 1919 and took up a position with his father's business. He then farmed at Glen Murray, specialising in breeding Angus and Jersey cattle. He became a founding member of the Auckland Aero Club, based at Mangere.

During the Second World War Keith joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force, holding different commanding officer positions within New Zealand before being posted to India and England late in the war as an Air Commodore.

After the war Keith returned to his farm and family at Glen Murray, dying in South Auckland in 1980.

### Mac McGregor

Malcolm Charles McGregor, known as "Mac", left the family farm at Ōhaupo to join the Royal Flying Corps in Britain.

Mac developed into a brilliant pilot with a near-total disregard for danger, spending much of his spare time practising aerobatics, which frequently led him into conflict with the authorities, especially for low-level stunting.

Once, while training in England, he "borrowed" the pet plane of his commanding officer whom he thought was in London at the time, and went on a rampage of stunt flying. First he buzzed a football match forcing the players to flee the field. Mac later commented, "The teams scattered like a mob of frightened merino wethers!" Next he swooped low over a double-decker bus frightening the passengers off the open top deck. Finally, he hedge-hopped back to the aerodrome. To Mac's surprise, his commanding officer was waiting for him on landing.

After completing his training, he was posted to France as a fighter pilot early 1917. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar, and was credited with downing at least 10 enemy aircraft and an observation balloon.

The citation for his Distinguished Flying Cross reads: "On August 22nd this officer displayed great gallantry and skill in an engagement between six of our scouts and a similar number of the enemy; all the latter were accounted for, Capt. McGregor driving down one out of control. In all, he has seven enemy aircraft to his credit – four destroyed and three down out of control."

With the war over, Mac returned to New Zealand and, after a stint at farming in the Waikato, became a founding member of the New Zealand Air Force (Territorial). Over the following years Mac became a flying instructor and a commercial pilot for several founding New Zealand air lines, as well as performing aerobatics at numerous air pageants and carrying airmail throughout the country.

In 1934 he competed in the MacRobertson London-Melbourne Centenary Air Race with navigator H.C. Walker. They flew a single-engined Miles Hawk Major, named *Manawatu*, into a creditable fifth place and in the process broke two light-aircraft records.

In early 1936, while approaching Wellington's Rongotai aerodrome in wretched weather, Mac collided with a newly erected mast and crashed. He died of his injuries two hours later, ending the career of an outstanding aviator, famous fighter pilot and pioneer of New Zealand's commercial aviation.



Above: "Mac" McGregor was an outstanding aviator, famous fighter pilot and pioneer of New Zealand's commercial aviation.



Above: Part of the handwritten register of flu epidemic victims admitted to the temporary hospital set up in Te Awamutu. Note the entry for Mrs Cuthbert and her six children. Tragically, Mrs Cuthbert did not survive.

## DEADLY FLU CHOKES DISTRICT

It ran riot for just a month, at least in the Waipā region, but in those few weeks a deadly influenza epidemic killed dozens of people in the district and caused serious illness for scores of others.

In the process it created havoc in the small towns and rural communities that sparsely populated the Waipā at that time, closing schools and businesses, overwhelming hospitals and almost paralysing all social, sporting and commercial events.

The outbreak of the epidemic began to be reported in Te Awamutu's *Waipa Post*

about November 8, 1918, with a brief story pointing out that the disease had struck the town and surrounding area.

"Although many people are suffering no serious cases are reported," says the story. "In both town and country the epidemic is general and in some cases whole families have been stricken. Several of the business places are closed, and the majority are working with reduced staffs. In some cases there is serious staff depletion and great difficulty is being experienced in keeping up with business demands.

"Up to the present there is no need for serious alarm, and the epidemic in the district is by no means as serious as it apparently is elsewhere."

But immediately beneath this story is another saying that the Government was urgently asking women "not necessarily registered but who have some nursing experience" to voluntarily help at Auckland Hospital. Below that request, there is a Government notice proclaiming influenza to be "a dangerous infectious disease" and giving authorities special powers to control its spread.

This is followed by a lengthy letter to the editor, signed by "A.P. Bennett, Health Inspector, Hamilton, Nov. 7, 1918", outlining precautions individuals can take. This focussed largely on going to bed quickly and keeping warm if one felt even slightly ill, having well-aired rooms, and not sneezing or coughing in anyone else's face. The final piece of advice was to "Remember that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

On November 11, Te Awamutu councillors met to decide what steps to take to combat the epidemic, and a brief report on the meeting, written in faded pencil in a large register book now held by the Te Awamutu Museum, noted that in less than a week of the outbreak "whole families were stricken down helpless, and practically unattended. The two doctors were working night and day, but owing to the scattered district were wholly unable to attend all cases."

In fact, these two doctors, Dr Albert Henderson and Dr Hall, along with a team of nurses and volunteers at a temporary hospital set up in the Te Awamutu Town Hall, undoubtedly

saved the lives of many gravely ill patients. The school adjacent to the Town Hall was converted into a series of recovery wards for affected men, women and children.

On November 22 there was an urgent appeal "for more women workers" to assist nursing staff at the temporary hospital. "At such a time no sacrifice can be too great, and it is a paramount duty for all to help their less fortunate folk," said the appeal. "...it is up to the women and girls of Te Awamutu who have time and good health to do their part". An inhalation chamber was also installed adjacent to the hospital, and the public was urged to use it. There were also appeals for all sorts of food to help stock the hospital kitchen.

Right alongside the substantial column of flu news was a full column of obituaries, where deaths were attributed directly to the influenza epidemic.

The hospital register covers just two openings of large pages, but it makes grim reading. A total of 52 people were admitted in 14 days beginning November 12 – 38 males and 14 females, the oldest recorded age being a 50-year-old man, and the youngest a 14-month-old boy. Of the 52 admitted, 24 died, 20 of them males, and almost all of them adults. The four females who died included two children, aged two and 12, a 43-year-old mother, and a widow whose age is not recorded. The mother, a Mrs Cuthbert, was admitted to the hospital with five of her children, aged from four to 14. All the children survived, being discharged from the hospital in early December, but Mrs Cuthbert died on the evening of November 16.

Cambridge fared somewhat better than Te Awamutu, although the *Waikato Independent* newspaper, published three times a week in the town, reported widely on flu-related events. The opening of the town's swimming baths was postponed early in November, and on November 9 there were pleas for volunteer helpers to assist in caring for the ill. Also by that date the newspaper was referring to the outbreak as a "pandemic".

Only one young woman had volunteered to help the households of sick families, the paper noted on November 12, while

also reporting that the *Freetrader*, which plied the Waikato River, had been held up in Hamilton because the captain and crew were all ill. As well, the big annual Horticultural Show in Hamilton was postponed indefinitely.

By this time growing numbers of people were being affected, and there was talk of closing places of public gathering. This included several peace celebrations, which were postponed.

By November 19, various school and university examinations had been postponed, and there was a general public order that all hotels, club-rooms and bars be closed until further notice. There were to be no public meetings or gatherings of clubs or friendly societies. Banks were shut for a week.

A hospital was set up in the Cambridge Town Hall, and calls were made for assistance in nursing and cooking. As well, "Gifts of eggs, fowls or other food suitable for invalids' diet are earnestly solicited." An inhalation chamber was set up in a local mill, with about 500 people going through it on the first day, and medical advisers saying that "The public should visit this chamber about every three days."

Businesses were encouraged to disinfect their premises, and the newspaper noted that "Many business people continue to disinfect the footpath, which practice should continue until the scourge has been passed."

On Thursday, November 21, the flu appeared to be at its height in Cambridge, with 31 patients in the hospital, and the paper reporting the names of 70 soldiers throughout the country who had died of flu in the past week. The report continued: "Māoris are suffering badly, and all tangis have been forbidden and the railways will not carry passengers to tangis."

In the surrounding countryside, groups of farmers banded together to milk cows and care for stock where the owners were struck down, but there were still reports of people living alone or whole farming families being too ill to help themselves and there being little or no help available.

"Both Dr Stapley and Dr Edmond are

working at high pressure ... Cambridge is fortunate in its medical men who have no idea of sparing themselves," said a news report.

The newspaper also noted that several hoteliers had turned their premises into temporary hospitals, and were taking in those unable to care for themselves. On November 28 there were reports of "many cases of distressing relapses ... patients fancying they were well enough to get up".

During the height of the epidemic in Cambridge, there were urgent appeals to both motorists and motorcyclists to drive as quietly as possible. "Remember that the noise of your motor inflicts pain and distress on influenza patients," said a public notice in the newspaper on November 19.

By the end of November, as in Te Awamutu, the epidemic in Cambridge appeared to be rapidly abating. The *Waikato Independent* reported on November 26 that 50 patients had been admitted to the temporary hospital in the Town Hall. Only three had died, 13 had been discharged, and a further 34 were still being treated.

But a week later there was disturbing news – the wife of Dr Stapley was ill with the flu, as was Miss Linda Veale. Both women had been heavily involved in care of the ill at the hospital and also in private homes. Another nurse, Miss Margaret Watt, who had worked long hours among the sick, also caught the flu, and both she and Miss Veale subsequently died from the disease. Mrs Stapley is understood to have recovered.

In April 1920, 18 months after the epidemic had run its course, the people of Cambridge unveiled a pair of brass plaques at the town hall in memory of Miss Veale and Miss Watt.

In Te Awamutu, a November 29 *Waipa Post* report noted that the worst appeared to be over, with "the position improving every day". Nor, for the first time in several weeks, was there a lengthy bereavement column of those who had died of the flu.

"But," said the newspaper in a note of warning, "if the crisis of the battle with

its uncanny foe be past, it would be most unwise to weaken the fighting forces."

The newspaper noted too "the immense amount of good work which has been done by all engaged at the Town Hall hospital" and that there is "a debt of gratitude to the noble band of workers... Right through the piece everyone has been splendid."

The borough council too was praised for the "prompt and business-like manner in which it grappled with the situation". As well, while the temporary hospital was emptying itself of seriously-ill patients, the convalescent wards set up in the adjacent school were "fast filling and the patients evincing all signs of returning vigour".

By December 6 – just four weeks after the initial report – the epidemic had ended, and the *Waipa Post* ran a two-paragraph story which said as succinctly as reporting allowed in those days that: "Matters in connection with the influenza epidemic had made such satisfactory progress it was found possible yesterday to close the temporary hospital at the Town Hall. All the patients have been removed and the Town Hall and school buildings cleaned and disinfected.

"Business is rapidly being restored and the staffs are now returning in full force to the shops. The hotels reopened on Wednesday and the picture entertainments will resume on Saturday evening."

*Below: Desperate measures were taken throughout the country to curb the spread of flu, including the use of Government-funded throat sprays for members of the public.*

