



Above: An official health poster of 1919 argues that alcoholic stimulants are the most useful remedy in the primary stages of the influenza outbreak, and warns the public about the efforts of prohibitionists to ban alcohol.

MP ANGUISHED BY EPIDEMIC

No doubt there were many letters, telegrams and notes passed up and down the nation as the flu epidemic ravaged cities and rural areas alike across New Zealand, leaving in its short-lived wake a trail of death, tragedy, the destruction of homes and businesses, and a national anguish that would take years to overcome.

Among the many archived documents in the Te Awamutu Museum, there is a poignant letter from the Member of Parliament for Waikato, Mr J.A. Young, to a prominent businessman and newspaper owner in Te Awamutu, Mr Warburton. The letter is hand-written on N.Z. House of Representatives letterhead paper in fountain-pen ink, and came as the epidemic was on the wane.

Wellington

3.12.18

Dear Mr Warburton,

It is just close on midnight and we are in committee on the Licensing Amendment Bill and I expect we will be lucky to get home by daylight. This note, however, is to express the hope that you have escaped all serious consequences of the influenza epidemic. For my

part I was down and in bed for 9 days. I was in hopes of escaping but was attending to duties in the House during the day and nursing influenza patients at night.

I had been up for three nights in succession and then went down. My temperature did not go beyond 103, and I came through without any complications, save for feeling very weak. However, I am glad to say that I am now back to normal. I had a chat to Hickey and I suggested to him that he send you along a few pars just to indicate to you the quality of his work in the meantime, until such time as you were ready to engage him definitely.

I was sorry to see by the press and from information which has reached me from Te Awamutu that you have had a most unfortunate and sad experience at Te Awamutu. It has been pretty well the same everywhere. Splendid fellows went down right and left. People simply died wholesale here in Wellington. It was not an unusual sight to see two and three coffins in a hearse on their way to the cemetery. When I read the lists of names in the Waipa Post and Waikato Times of so many who I knew so well as having gone down before the epidemic, I had to wipe a tear from my eyes. However, I am glad to say things are back to normal here, and I hope by now you have pretty well cleared out the dread thing in your districts.

I enclose you some stuff which may be useful.

Trusting you are keeping well, and with kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

J.A. Young.

P.S. 5.12.18. We finished up at 3.30 o'clock this morning. I expect the session will end about Saturday. J.A.Y.



Above: J.A. Young, Member of Parliament for Waikato.

CRIME, ALIVE AND WELL

Crime, it seems, was as problem in the Waipā region even a century ago – but perhaps the level of criminal activity and the crimes themselves were not quite up to today's standards.

In the *Waipa Post* of January 4, 1918, a small report records the numbers of criminal offences for the previous year, and compares them to crime levels of just before the outbreak of World War One in 1914. With substantial use of major and minor headings, all in capital letters which was typical of the day, the newspaper reports:

MAGISTRATE'S COURT. ANNUAL SUMMARY AT TE AWAMUTU. CRIMINAL OFFENCES INCREASE. DECREASE IN CIVIL CLAIMS.

It then says that the “annual return of cases” brought before the Te Awamutu Magistrate’s Court for 1917 “shows a very substantial increase in the criminal prosecutions” in comparison to 1913. In fact, there were 100 criminal cases – but that was an increase of 17 compared with 1916, and 40 more than the year before the war began.

Of those 100 cases, six men were committed for trial, 90 were summarily convicted, and three were dismissed. A lone woman was summarily convicted.

“Drunkenness accounted for 30 of the prosecutions last year,” notes the report. There had been 29 similar offences in 1916, and 26 in 1914. And, the report continues, “last year 13 Europeans were charged with supplying liquor to natives; there were no prosecutions under this heading in 1916, or in 1914. There was a very fair proportion of offences of a more serious nature, one or two being of a revolting character.”

However, civil claims had slumped in 1917 to only 150, compared with 223 in 1916, and 222 in 1914.

TE AWAMUTU BY RAIL

The concept of a main trunk railway between Auckland and Wellington had been talked about for some years before construction began in the late 1870s. But progress came to a standstill at Te Awamutu after the local station opened on 1 July 1880, as Te Rohe Potae (the King Country) was then off-limits to Europeans. For some years the completed line was called the Auckland and Te Awamutu Railway. The new Te Awamutu station contained a public vestibule, waiting rooms, and an office. It also had a long passenger platform and goods shed. The stationmaster was assisted by a junior porter and a guard, and two “gangers” resided in Te Awamutu.

After seriously considering alternative routes to Wellington, the Government finally reached a vital agreement with

Ngāti Maniapoto leaders to open up the King Country to railway development.

On 15 April 1885, Premier Robert Stout and Ngāti Maniapoto chiefs Wahanui Huatare, Taonui Hikākā and Rewi Maniapoto ceremonially turned the first sod of the central section on the south side of the Puniu bridge, just south of Te Awamutu.

But the sod nearly wasn’t turned on the day. The three Ngāti Maniapoto chiefs all agreed to the turning, but the Waikatos sent two chiefs to protest against the work in the name of the Māori King, whose headquarters were then at Whatiwhatihoe on the Waipā. Long speeches followed, each translated into English. The only one who remained silent was Wahanui who was trying to suppress his anger. At last one of the Waikato chiefs, regardless of the fact that his people were only in the King Country by sufferance of Ngāti Maniapoto, declared that the sod would not be turned because it was Waikato’s land! “Oh, well,” said the Premier, “if it is Waikato’s land, we have come to the wrong place.” Then Taonui arose and said with angry determination, “It is our land; the sod shall be turned, and turned today!” And it was done.

The railway continued south from the Puniu River, with the line to Otorohanga opening in March 1887, and to Te Kuiti in September of the same year. Since crossing the Puniu, the 680-kilometre Main Trunk Line took a further 23 years to be completed. The first Wellington-Auckland train, a “Parliament Special” ferrying politicians north to meet the United States Navy’s visiting Great White Fleet, passed through Te Awamutu on 7 August 1908, taking over 20 hours to complete the journey. The line would not be officially opened until 6 November of the same year.

The 411-kilometre section of the Main Trunk Line between Palmerston North and Hamilton, including the section through the Waipā, was electrified and opened for use in June 1988. It was one of Muldoon’s National Government’s Think Big energy development projects. An overall cost in excess of \$100 million had been projected, with some 40% being for new locomotives, but the final cost was

about \$250 million. The overall effect of the project was greatly undermined by the fall of the price of oil in the 1980s and the deregulation of land transport, which removed the long-distance monopoly New Zealand Rail held when the cost benefits report was written.



Above: The passengers who travelled on the first Main Trunk train in 1908. Sir Joseph Ward is centre left.

Pirongia-Te Awamutu line

After the First World War, returned servicemen in Pirongia came up with an ambitious plan to build a narrow-gauged railway between Pirongia and Te Awamutu. They had observed narrow-gauged railways in operation in Europe and wished to try the concept in the Waipā, linking river transport at Pirongia with rail transport on the Main Trunk Line.

The proposed network would eventually link Kāwhia, Raglan and Frankton. Such a transport system was predicted to be cheaper and quicker than horse-drawn wagons over the roads of the day.

On 29 April 1920, Pirongia gathered to celebrate the launch of the project. With flags and bunting decorating the centre of town, the crowd listened to speeches by Bert Fear, Chairman of the Railway League, and J.A. Young, Member of Parliament, who congratulated the people for their enthusiasm and offered support. The plan included the building of a station on public land in Franklin Street, about where the Historic Visitor Centre is today.

However, the scheme did not prosper. There was local disagreement about the exact route the line would take, and support waned as the country’s economic woes worsened, as well as road transport becoming more mechanised.

Below: *The Auckland and Te Awamutu Railway timetable, dated 1 July 1880.*



AUCKLAND AND TE AWAMUTU RAILWAY.
New Time-Table.
JULY 1. 1880.

A NEW Time-table will come into force on July 1, 1880.
Special Train.
 Auckland to Te Awamutu and back.—
 Fares: All stations to Te Awamutu return journey at single rates available for return next day.

SOUTH.	
Auckland (departure)	7.15 a.m.
Newmarket	7.25 a.m.
Remuera... ..	7.30 a.m.
Drury	8.45 a.m.
Mercer	10.10 a.m.
Ngaruawahia	12.0 a.m.
Hamilton Junction	12.30 p.m.
Ohaupo	1.0 p.m.
Te Awamutu (arrival)	1.15 p.m.

This train stops only to pick up passengers at all stations for Te Awamutu. Those wishing to alight at other stations must avail themselves of ordinary train leaving Auckland at 8.15 a.m.

NORTH.
 Te Awamutu (departure) 5.0 p.m. stops only at any station to let down passengers arriving at Auckland at 10 p.m.

A. V. MACDONALD,
 General Manager.

Below: *A welcoming party at Te Awamutu railway station, 1909.*



BREEDING CHAMPIONS

Victoria

Perhaps Cambridge's first champion racehorse was Victoria, owned by Jared Allwill, a pioneering farmer at Hautapu. Victoria won the first racing cup presented at the Auckland Racing Club at its first meeting in 1874, after the amalgamation of the Auckland Jockey Club and the Auckland Turf Club, receiving £125 in prize money. Not much more is known about the horse.

The great Carbine, the first New Zealand horse to win the Melbourne Cup, once trained and pastured around Cambridge, and was shod by the MacMillan Brothers.

Race days

Horse racing has always proved a popular pastime in Cambridge. In 1875 the National Hotel held a sweepstake on the Melbourne Cup. It invited 200 punters at 10 shillings per head for the draw. The £100 prize money was divvied up: first horse £50, second £25, third £10, and the other starters received £15 between them. The draw was taken on Monday evening, 8 November, the day before the great race. One of the conditions of the sweep was that punters had to wait for a newspaper to arrive via ship from Australia to obtain the official results!

Horse race meets occurred at Alexandra (now Pirongia) on Boxing Day, a tradition still practised today, and at Cambridge on New Year's Day.

Cambridge celebrated New Year's Day in 1876 at *Bardowie*, Victoria Road, owned by James and Miranda Taylor. There were six races on the card: Handicap Hurdle Race over 2 miles, over 8 flights of hurdles for 7 "sovs" (sovereigns); Maiden Race over 1¼ miles for 4 sovs – open to all horses that had never won public money; Trotting Race over 2 miles for 4 sovs; Cambridge Cup Handicap over 1½ miles for 10 sovs – open to all comers; Pony Race over 1 mile for 5 sovs; "Hurry Scurry" over 1 mile for 2 sovs – also open to all horses that had never won public money.

Entry fees were 5 shillings except the final race, which was half that amount. Mr R. Parker was the handicapper along with Mr Charles Chitty, who was also the judge.

Some of the results were:

Handicap Hurdles: "The race lay between Middy and Comet. The Stranger, having baulked at the second hurdle, was left out of the race. Both horses jumped very well and kept well together. Towards the close of the second round Comet put on spurt and passed Middy by several lengths, but at the first hurdle in the third round,

Middy pulled him up and kept the lead to the end, winning by several lengths."

Cambridge Cup: "This was the race of the day. Some splendid running was made, Clipper and the Don keeping close company the whole distance. The last named horse won by about a neck. The Count was scratched."

Pony Race: "A protest was lodged by the owner of the third horse against the first and second, on the grounds of over height. Up to a late hour in the evening no decision had been arrived at by the stewards."

Hurry Scurry: "For this there was a large number of horses entered, several being owned and ridden by Māoris. Won by Stranger."

In conjunction with the horse races, the public took part in foot races and field events such as: pole vaulting, putting stone (28 pounds, shot putting), hop, step and jump, long jump, standing jump, and standing high jump. Running races were from 100 to 440 yards. Like the horse races, there were entry fees and generous prizes.

Foxbridge

Foxbridge, foaled in 1930, was purchased in England in 1935 for £2,625 and imported by Seton Otway of Trelawney Stud, situated on the banks of the Waikato River at Pukekura. This remarkably consistent horse was New Zealand's most successful sire and broodmare sire for 11 consecutive seasons. Twice he was the British Empire's champion sire.

His female offspring were to produce five Melbourne Cup winners: Hiraji, Foxzami, Macdougall, Hi Jinx and Silver Knight. Foxbridge's potency was illustrated at Ellerslie Racecourse on Boxing Day 1944, when his progeny won six races on an eight-race card.

Otway was reputed to have the measure of a fine horse. In his own judgement the perfect filly had to have the "head and neck of a fairy, the chest and shoulders of a duchess, the back of an alderman and the arse of a cook!"

Other champions owned by Otway were Marco Polo II, Khorassan, Alcimedes and Nizami. He bred horses that won races in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Japan, South Africa, England and Malaysia. At the time, progeny from Trelawney Stud made New Zealand's National Yearling Sales a popular destination for international buyers.

Suffering from rheumatism, Foxbridge was put down in 1957 and was buried in a flower-ringed grave between Trelawney Stud's homestead and stables. Otway retained an interest in the stud until his death in 1989, at the age of 94 years.

Foxbridge was inducted into the New Zealand Racing Hall of Fame in 2008.

Sir Tristram

Born 1971, Sir Tristram was an Irish-bred thoroughbred racehorse who stood at Sir Patrick Hogan's Cambridge Stud, where he sired an incredible 45 group one winners, including three Melbourne Cup winners. His progeny earned him 17 official leading Australasian sire premierships, plus nine broodmare sire titles.

Following his racing career, Sir Tristram was purchased by Hogan and commenced stud duties in 1976 at the modest stud fee of \$1,200. By the time of his death his fee had risen to \$200,000. "Paddy", as he was affectionately known, had a reputation as a difficult horse to handle. In fact, he was so difficult that his handler was forced to wear protective gear, which remains on display at Cambridge Stud.

Sir Tristram is the sire of over 140 stakes winners, including the Melbourne Cup winners Gurner's Lane, Empire Rose and Brew. He is also the broodmare sire of over 200 stakes winners, including the Melbourne Cup winners Saintry and Ethereal, and has earned himself a reputation as a sire of sires.

Sadly, the great Sir Tristram dynasty came to an end in August 1997, when he was put down after breaking a shoulder in his paddock. As with many legendary horses in the past, he was buried standing up. He was inducted into the New Zealand Racing Hall of Fame in 2008.

Walk of fame

The thoroughbred studs around Cambridge have produced many champion horses, which are celebrated in the town's Equine Stars Walk of Fame. Mosaics in the pavements of the central streets include brood mare Eight Carat, racehorse Mainbrace, trotter Jenner, double Olympic equestrian champion Charisma, steeplechaser Hunterville and sire Sir Tristram. Others include Zabeel, Young Quinn, Vice Regal and Balmarino. Each of the mosaics has a small plaque giving name and career details. For horse lovers there is also the magnificent bronze statue of a mare and foal placed alongside the Cambridge Town Hall.

Women take the lead

Canadian jockey Joanne Phipps was the first woman to ride against men in New Zealand, winning on Daphalee at the Waipa Racing Club at Te Awamutu on 1 November 1977. Linda Jones of Cambridge made her racing debut in 1978, after the birth of her daughter Clare, and it was not long before she rode her first winner, Big Bikkies. Most New Zealanders will remember the battle Linda had to be on an equal footing with male jockeys. The New Zealand Racing Conference came up with a tirade of feeble excuses why she couldn't compete – too old, married, not strong enough were just some. However, Linda persisted and finally won the right to compete in 1977, becoming New Zealand's first professional female jockey.

By the end of her first racing season, Linda had ridden 49 winners, far exceeding her expectations. Amongst her wins were the Wellington Derby on Holy Toledo, and the West End Stakes at Mophetville, Adelaide, on Northfleet, representing the first win by a female jockey in Australia. Although her career was cut short by injury, Linda will always be remembered for her tenacity and for paving the way for women to compete in a male-dominated industry. She was awarded the MBE for her achievements and her contribution to the New Zealand horse racing industry.



Above: Sir Tristram gained a reputation as a sire of sires.



Above: Linda Jones, New Zealand's trailblazing female jockey who rode with outstanding skill.

OUR FINEST AGRICULTURE ON SHOW

When the first farms were established in the Waipa district, the land was mainly suited to raising cattle, with most homesteads possessing small numbers of dairy cows and sheep for household supply.

The first recorded Waikato show was held at Ōhaupo in 1876. The Waikato Farmers' Club held Waikato's first annual show the following year. The club was formed in Cambridge in 1875 to advance the development of local agriculture. It was a common meeting ground for new ideas, with discussion on such subjects as wheat growing, new machinery, sheep diseases, wire fencing, milking hygiene, swamp drainage, tree planting, manures and markets. The members also inspected farms and held regular ploughing competitions.

Their club house was built on the corner of Alpha and Empire Streets (later the Cambridge RSA clubrooms), consisting of a library, lecture room, smoking room and two committee rooms. Their first show was held in an adjacent paddock, roughly where the Countdown Supermarket is today, drawing a crowd in excess of 1,000 people. Many of the visitors came up the river by steamer.

The *Waikato Times* reported: “There were numerous exhibits of stock, dairy produce and implements. Among the sheep were some fine Lincolns exhibited by Mr McNicol and Maclean and Co. Fine Shorthorns were shown by H. and R. Reynolds and E.B. Walker. There were good entries of draughts and other horses, the best exhibit being Mr Martyn’s team of three draughts. Exhibits of pigs were numerous. There was good display of dairy produce, with butter moulded into fancy shapes, cheese and hams.”

At the time, leading Cambridge farmers included: Every Maclean of the Auckland Agricultural Company, which owned nearly 30,000 acres of “Fen Court” (“fen” meaning wetland in Scottish Gaelic), Horahora and Karāpiro; James Runciman of Newstead; Francis Hicks of Pukekura; A.A. Fantham of “Gwynnelands” (about where St Peter’s School is today); G.E. Clark of Pukeroro; John and Robert Fisher of Pukerimu; W.L. Martyn of Tamahere; R.H.D. Fergusson of “Gorton”, Karāpiro; E.B. Walker and Richard Parker of Monavale; Richard and Henry Reynolds of Pukekura; Henry Buttle of Ōhaupo.

By 1881 the club was in financial difficulties and lacked enthusiasm. The secretary-treasurer moved, “That the Waikato Farmers’ Club cease to exist, and the clubrooms plus the three acres adjoining be disposed off.” It was sold to Tom Wells. But it seems the club was rejuvenated on 23 June 1889, with a Cambridge branch being established in 1891, eventually operating from the property on the corner of Duke and Commerce Streets. In 1913 the club became a branch of the New Zealand Farmers’ Union, which joined a new organisation, Federated Farmers, in 1945.



Above: Cambridge’s finest agriculture on show in 1906.

For some years an annual show rotated between Cambridge, Hamilton and Te Awamutu, until Cambridge broke away in 1903 and formed the Waikato Central Agricultural Association, maintaining a wider provincial name. Over the following years the Cambridge-own A&P (agricultural and pastoral) show quickly grew in popularity. There were large entries of harness horses, roadsters, hacks and hunters, pedigree cattle and sheep. In those days the show was held over two days.

Because of a polio epidemic, there was no show in 1905, and during the First World War the show nearly went out of existence. Also in 1905, the association entered an arrangement with the local trotting club which took over the lease of the showgrounds in Taylor Street, providing the association with the use of the grounds for the duration of its annual show, and storage facilities.

Even with the difficult farming conditions experienced during the Great Depression, the show still proved popular during the 1930s. One typical show in this period was held on 31 March 1934. The *Cambridge Independent* commented: “The Waikato Central Agricultural Association’s 31st annual show which opened in the showgrounds yesterday and is being continued today (People’s Day), may be rightly claimed to be a challenge to the times, with its numerous and representative entries and the outstanding quality of the stock that is being exhibited.”

The wide range of classes at the show included: cattle, horses and ponies (including numerous equestrian events), sheep and lambs, pigs, dog trials, calf club, wool, field and garden produce, fruit, flowers, and home industries (bread, cakes, scones, jams, preserves, jellies, sweets). There were even some classes of school work judged, such as letter writing, mapping, drawing and painting.

For the duration of the Second World War the show went into recess, returning in 1945 as a one-day fixture. Since then the show has been held annually and has always been popular with the Cambridge public.



Above: “The grand parade. Just what the Central Waikato [Agricultural Association] is capable of producing in the shape of cattle and horses was strikingly conveyed to the public in the grand parade. It was a fine aggregation of the cream of quality stock in this and neighbouring districts, and as the respective judges remarked, there was stock present fit to grace any show ring in the Dominion.” (Waikato Independent.)



Above: Judges at work at the Cambridge A&P show, 1928.

'TALKIES' COME TO TOWN

A Double Programme

'Dinner at Eight' coming

Reported in the *Waikato Independent* in March 1934: "Two of the screen's most popular blonde actresses have the leading roles in 'Goodbye Again,' the First Picturisation of the Broadway stage comedy which comes to the screen of the [Cambridge] Town Hall Theatre tonight and tomorrow night. The two blondes, each of whom vie for Warren William's affections in this hilarious comedy, are Joan Blondell and Genevieve Tobin. In addition, the cast features Hugh Herbert, Helen Chandler, Wallace Ford and Ruth Donnelly.

"The second attraction is 'Early to Bed,' a Fox-Gaumont-Gainsborough production, featuring Heather Angel, Fernand Gravey and Edmund Gwenn. This is a gay comedy of two young lovers sharing one room and never meeting.

"Patrons are advised that 'Dinner at Eight,' in which the stars are Marie Dressler, Jean Harlow and Wallace Beery, will be screened on Saturday and Monday evening and that the bookings are heavy."

Of interest, the above free advertisement appeared in the editorial section of the paper, a far cry from present-day movie advertisements.



Above: Movie poster for Dinner at Eight.

IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN

St Peter's School

Arthur Broadhurst, a Scotsman, wanted to build a modern preparatory school in New Zealand and selected Cambridge for the site, as the town's setting reminded him of England. He chose the 90-acre (40-hectare) Gwynnelands estate just out of town and employed an American architect, Roy Lippincott, to design the main building to resemble a large English country home.

Designs for the gatehouse, dining hall and chapel soon followed. The chapel features one of the finest organs in the province outside Auckland itself, a piece of stone from Westminster Abbey in the entrance, a window made by British soldiers for the first church at Te Awamutu with leads beaten from rumbarrel hoops, and magnificent stained-glass windows. Broadhurst spoke of the chapel, "In a very real sense the Chapel is, and must be, the centre of our life here. Our Christian religion must, and does, supply the motive for all our work and activities."

Broadhurst engaged Ivan McKinnon, a nurseryman, to lay out the playing fields, orchids and gardens. McKinnon retired after 25 years' service as orchardist and head gardener.

St Peter's School was opened in 1936 by the Hon. Peter Fraser, Minister of Education. Over 800 guests were present. Initially there were seven full-time staff and a roll of just 35 boy boarders. Three years later Broadhurst gifted the school, built entirely with his own money, to the St Peter's School Trust Board, but remained at the school as headmaster until his retirement in 1960. Over his 25 years of service, Broadhurst never took a salary.

It was said that Broadhurst periodically led a cyclecade of grey-and-blue uniformed boys through Cambridge on excursions. Each boy, down to the smallest at the rear, would punctiliously hold out his arm in precise traffic signals, mimicking the example of his headmaster up front.

The School crest incorporates Athene's Owl of Wisdom holding St Peter's keys: the key of life and the key of knowledge, above the motto "Structa Saxo" (built on a rock). The development of the whole person, the body, mind and spirit, was Broadhurst's philosophy. His innovative teaching practices were later to earn him an OBE for services to New Zealand education.

Over the decades the school prospered and new buildings within the campus followed in the Lippincott style, including dormitories, classroom blocks, faculties, auditorium, large sports centre and swimming pool. As well as the 40-hectare campus, the school is now surrounded by a 180-hectare dairy farm.

St Peter's included secondary students in 1971, and in 1987 had an induction of 25 girls, which brought a major change to the then all-boys school. It is today a fully co-educational day and boarding school for Years 7 to 13 with a roll of up to 1,100 students. Today's prep school students continue to wear the original uniform colours of light blue and grey, while secondary pupils wear dark blue.

The school has a reputation for its park-like, spacious environment, up-to-date purpose-built facilities, and high academic standards, and has established sporting academies for golf, swimming, tennis, equestrian and rowing. More recently, St Peter's has made land available beside State Highway 1 for the construction of a world-class "Home of Cycling" velodrome.



Above: St Peter's School under construction in the 1930s.



Above: An aerial view of St Peter's taken during 1939.

DISEASE DISRUPTS SCHOOL

By late May 1937, an epidemic of infantile paralysis which had badly disrupted schooling for children throughout the Waipā region and elsewhere in New Zealand appeared to be abating, according to the region's Medical Officer of Health, Dr H.B. Turbott. On May 19 he reported that only three children had been admitted to Waikato Hospital during the previous five days, compared to 14 in the nine days prior to that. The epidemic had closed schools and kept children away from many social gatherings over the preceding weeks.

FIVE GENERATIONS OF LAW

Few if any professional businesses in the Waipa District can boast five generations of ownership by members of the same family.

But long-time Te Awamutu law firm Swarbricks can – and rightly does.

The business, which specialised in local body law for almost exactly a century through the first three generations of the Swarbrick family, has been quietly providing legal guidance for local bodies as well as a range of private clients in and around the Waipā region since it was first established in Te Awamutu in 1897. Six years previous – in 1893 – the business had been originally founded in Hamilton by Arthur Swarbrick.

His great-grandson, and fourth generation Swarbrick to be admitted to the bar in New Zealand, is Richard Swarbrick, who in 2009 sold the business to Hamilton law firm Beattie Rickman Legal. In July 2013, Mr Swarbrick was joined by his son, James, to make the fifth straight father-son generational member of the law firm. The father and son team have now stepped outside the Beattie Rickman Law practice, and have recreated the Te Awamutu law firm of Swarbricks.

Richard Swarbrick says his great-grandfather Arthur migrated with a brother, Harry, from England to New Zealand in 1877. They were the sons of a wealthy accountant who became general manager of Britain's Great Eastern Railway, and Arthur at least gained considerable knowledge of and status in the then booming British railway industry, being appointed the Continental manager of the Great Eastern Railway while in his early 20s. He met and became engaged to Adriana, the daughter of the monied principal of a European shipping line, with ties to the railway.

For some inexplicable reason, says Richard Swarbrick, his great-grandfather

left it all and came to New Zealand along with his brother, where they bought land in an area around what is now known as Chartwell in Hamilton's north-east suburbs. There, despite a complete lack of knowledge of the industry, they began farming, firmly believing, says Mr Swarbrick, that the proposed eastern Waikato railway line would pass through or near their land and they would prosper from it. Instead, the line headed out through Claudelands, well south of their land, directly towards Morrinsville.

The Swarbricks' farm did not do well, and after Arthur had gone home to England, married Adriana and returned to New Zealand, he sold the property, Harry having already moved to Sydney.

Arthur subsequently became articled to one of Hamilton's first three solicitors, William McGregor Hay, a somewhat colourful character believed to have been a Forest Ranger with Von Tempsky during the land wars in the 1860s in the Waipa district. McGregor Hay had established himself as a solicitor in Auckland in 1868, and about 1874 moved to Hamilton to set up in business there. His legal expertise was utilised by Arthur Swarbrick, and in 1887, at the age of 36, Swarbrick decided to become articled to McGregor Hay to learn law. He was admitted as a solicitor at the Supreme Court in Auckland in 1891, and as a barrister in 1896. On September 29, 1893 McGregor Hay died after continuing ill-health, so on September 30, 1893, Arthur, who had been running his employer's law firm in Hamilton, began practising on his own account.

He travelled extensively throughout the greater Waikato region, Hamilton being the only centre with available lawyers, and he became deeply involved in Māori Land Court work.

"The family has always been local body law specialists," says Richard Swarbrick. "We have evidence that my great-grandfather would travel from Hamilton to Pirongia, get a coach over the hills to Oparau, travel by canoe to Kāwhia, and appear in the Māori Land Court there."

A branch office of the firm was opened in Te Awamutu in 1897.

“My grandfather, Henry Augustus Swarbrick, began here with the practice in Te Awamutu after he came back from World War One, having been wounded at Le Quesnoy,” says Richard Swarbrick. “Arthur was always based in Hamilton, but when Augustus came back from the war they made two separate firms of the business.



Above: Fine record: James Swarbrick (right) is the fifth generation of Swarbrick men to become a member of the Swarbricks law firm in Te Awamutu. He joined his father, Richard Swarbrick (left) on 1 July 2013, and the firm went out on its own after having been part of Beattie Rickman Law for some years.

“Augustus was very much a local body law specialist, and did a great deal of work for the Te Awamutu Borough Council, the Waipa County Council, local rabbit boards, drainage boards and similar organisations, around Te Awamutu, Pirongia and Cambridge. He continued in practice until 1965, when he retired.

“His son – my father, Roger Louis – joined the firm of Swarbrick and Swarbrick about 1951 after completing his legal training at Auckland University. He was the oldest of three children, and, like his father, specialised in local body law. He continued in the business until about 1997.”

Richard Swarbrick, admitted to the bar in 1975 after completing his law degree at Auckland University, spent 10 years working and studying law in London and Brighton before returning to New Zealand in 1985 and joining his father in the Te Awamutu law firm of Swarbrick and Swarbrick. He says that about a year after his return the firm was given its second name change in almost a century, to become “Swarbricks”.

From 1967 the business has operated from premises at 72 Teasdale Street in Te Awamutu, but Mr Swarbrick says he recalls that as a small child he often visited the earlier offices of the business in Te Awamutu.

“Access to them was up a dingy, narrow staircase to the first floor of the former Bank of New South Wales building in Arawata Street. The offices were very antiquated,” he says. “Charles Dickens would have been right at home there.

“They were all wood-panelled, and I can distinctly remember the dust – everywhere. The files were all kept in old brown envelopes, there were lots of maps and plans, and a great deal of red tape. There were rows of bottles of Stevens Indian ink, and lots of chinagraph pencils for marking the maps and plans. There were two women who did the typing, but otherwise the place was very much a male preserve.”

Mr Swarbrick says the façade on the outside of the old building was entirely wooden, and the very modest shingle announcing the law firm was on the inside of the door at the foot of the stairs.

As well, he has about 20 ancient letter-books recording letters written by the firm from 1897 to the early 1920s. The typed letters have been impressed on onion-skin pages, and are a detailed and fascinating record of Swarbrick and Swarbrick business during those years. The letters, concise to the point of being almost abrupt, are always signed ‘Swarbrick and Swarbrick’, never with a personal signature.

“They were written on behalf of the firm, not an individual,” Mr Swarbrick explains.

His own legal speciality has veered away from local body law, focussing instead on family law, with some small involvement in criminal law.

“I can’t recall any other firm or business in the Waipā, or the Waikato region that has had five generations of the same family running it,” he says. “It’s an unbroken descent that very few families have in business.

“And,” he notes with considerable pride,

“now my son James has been admitted to the bar he has become the second great-great-grandchild of Arthur Swarbrick to become a lawyer in this country.”

James gained his Bachelor of Law degree at Waikato University, and has also obtained a Bachelor of Media Arts and Communication from Wintec.

CALVERTS OF CAMBRIDGE

The Victoria Street site which later became Geo. Calvert & Co. was first occupied by Samuel Howard who operated a retail business named Cambridge House in the 1890s.

Howard advertised in the *Waikato Times*: “Men’s Colonial Tweed Suits, £1 10s. Beaver Mole Trousers, 8s 9d. Fern Boots made specially for the Waikato. Knitted socks from 11d. Ladies Corsets from 1s 9d. Single mattresses, 10s 6d. Lace curtains 3 yards long, 3s 11d. Calicoes 2s 6d. Inspection respectfully invited.”

Robert Tudehope purchased the business off Howard in 1901 and replaced the original wooden building with new brick premises. He started trading with one assistant and by 1905 had eight staff. His store became a leading outlet in the Waikato, stocking mostly quality and imported goods.

Tudehope experimented with innovative ideas for advertising, including a limerick competition (which turned out to be illegal), in-store piano recitals, and fashion parades which proved popular with women. Tudehope was a pillar of society, serving as a local councillor, vice-chairman of the local chamber of commerce, and on the school and library committees.

George Calvert took over the premises on 1 January 1913, starting his iconic store, selling drapery, apparel and

haberdashery. He had previously worked for Smith & Caughey in Auckland before arriving in Cambridge with his wife, Maude, and family.

After about 10 years of trading on the site, George Calvert engaged Hamilton architects Warren & Blechynden to design new premises, and in 1925 Calvert's Chambers were built by local builders Speight Pearce Nicoll & Davys. The spacious two-storeyed brick building included two large shops on the ground floor, with a number of offices upstairs. Three years later the window frontage and verandahs were modernised at a cost of £1,200.

George Calvert's son Maurice started with the business in 1933 and took over from his father in 1965.

What most locals today remember about Geo. Calvert & Co. is the Lamson Cash Railway System which, at the time, became a tourist attraction in the town! Their fond memories are of the "whizz bang" as small canisters flew by overhead rail between the shop's counters and the central cashier's office, carrying cash, cheques, dockets and receipts. Children stood in awe and wonder as the canisters flew about the ceiling.

After 72 years of family trading, Maurice Calvert finally shut the doors in 1985, selling the building and fittings to the Post Office which intended to open a PostBank branch on the site. The Post Office gave many display items to the Cambridge Museum, as their plan was to demolish the building and rebuild. Fortunately, the Post Office cancelled its plans for the site, with Vaughan Clements leasing the building and running the Cambridge Community Market. He later bought the building and redeveloped the site, with smaller shops on both Victoria and Empire Streets. Today, one of the original long counters is still in use in Fran's Cafe.

George Calvert also took part in public affairs, serving as a local councillor for 12 years, on the primary school committee and as a vestryman for the Anglican church.

Two units of Calvert's "whizz bang" cash railway system have been installed in the

Cambridge Museum, where one can still see them in operation.



Above: George Calvert's iconic store, selling drapery, apparel and haberdashery.

"HAWKEYE" WELLS, ACE FIGHTER PILOT

"Hawkeye" Wells was one of RAF Fighter Command's most outstanding pilots; he was credited with shooting down at least 13 enemy aircraft and probably destroying and damaging many others.

Edward Preston "Bill" Wells was born on 26 July 1917 at Cambridge, and grew up in the family home, what later became Cambridge RSA's clubrooms on the corner of Empire and Alpha Streets. He was a champion shot during his school days, earning him the nickname "Hawkeye". He attended Cambridge District High School, then took up farming before joining the Royal New Zealand Air Force in April 1939, training to be a pilot. He sailed for England aboard the passenger ship *Rangitata* in June 1940.

Bill began his brilliant fighting career during the Battle of Britain flying Spitfires with 266 Squadron, before transferring in September 1940 to 41 Squadron based at Hornchurch. He scored his first victory on 17 October when he shot down a Messerschmitt 109 fighter off the French coast. Twelve days later he probably destroyed a second

and on 2 November he accounted for another Me 109.

A friend writing to Mrs Wells stated, "As you probably know by now, Bill has shot down two Messerschmitt 109s and severely damaged several other types. There is no need for me to tell you that he is doing very well and knows more about looking after himself in these matters than most. His judgement as a marksman, which he has trained for so many years, is now most useful."

In March 1941 he joined 485 Squadron, the first all-New Zealand fighter squadron, scoring its first success on 5 July when he shot down a Me 109 whilst escorting Stirling bombers over France. Soon after he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, with a total of eight victories.

His exploits continued, and in October 1941 he engaged, single-handed, four Messerschmitts over the English Channel. He had already shot down one Me 109 and was returning to England when he was set upon by another four Me 109s. They dived at him in pairs but he turned and faced them every time. When one Me 109 overshot after its attack, "Hawkeye" was able to fire his cannons, shooting the enemy down. The remaining three decided it was time to head home and Bill landed with only 10 shells remaining and empty fuel tanks!

He was soon awarded a Bar to his DFC and kept in training by shooting hares, rabbits and partridges in the neighbourhood of his base. By November 1941 Bill was promoted to Squadron Leader and everyone in hometown Cambridge took pride in his exploits.

A Royal Air Force officer stated, "The New Zealand Squadron is now recognised among the best five squadrons at the Fighter Command, and Squadron Leader E.P. Wells DFC and Bar, who is the squadron's commanding officer, is regarded as one of the best fighter pilots New Zealand has produced."

In April 1942, as the New Zealand fighter squadron was acting as top cover for Boston bombers, 52 Focke-Wulf 190s pounced – 12 attacking from above and 20 from each side. Miraculously, Bill

escaped without a scratch. By now he had carried out 100 fighter sweeps and destroyed at least 13 enemy aircraft.

In August 1942, after two years' continual fighting, he was rested. He returned to Cambridge, but couldn't wait to return to Europe. He travelled back in March 1943 via the United States, where he visited aircraft factories and addressed workers.

After a stint on ground duties, Bill returned to operations in March 1944 as leader of the Tangmere Wing, equipped with the latest model of Spitfire. He destroyed a Messerschmitt night fighter on the ground and led his wing on sweeps over northern France during the build-up to D-Day. He was promoted squadron leader in July 1945, and finished the war with an official tally of 13 destroyed, three probables and 15 damaged, plus one E-boat sunk in the English Channel.

In November 1945, Wing Commander Wells, DSO, DFC and Bar, was granted a permanent commission in the Royal Air Force where he stayed for 15 years. He then pursued farming in England and Spain before dying in England in 2005 aged 88 years.

From his boyhood in New Zealand, Bill had been deeply attached to the countryside. As well as being a fine shot, he was an expert fly-fisherman and could recognise any bird by sight or by its call. He was a modest and charming host with a great sense of humour.



Above: Squadron Leader "Hawkeye" Wells was regarded as one of New Zealand's best fighter pilots of the Second World War.



Above: Squadron Leader Roy Calvert completed 59 operational bombing raids during the Second World War.

ROY CALVERT, BOMBER PILOT

Roy Calvert, Royal New Zealand Air Force bomber pilot, became one of Cambridge's most distinguished airmen, flying 59 operational bombing raids.

Born 31 October 1913 in Cambridge, Roy Calvert grew up in Victoria Road. He attended Cambridge Primary School, Southwell in Hamilton, and King's College in Auckland. After working as a wool grader and farm worker, and attaining a private pilot's licence at the Waikato Aero Club, he joined the air force in December 1940.

While training at Ohakea Roy often attended dances in local halls with his fiancée, May. He and May were married shortly before he boarded a ship for England in June 1941. May later posted to Roy the scarf she was waving at their farewell, which he wore for luck on every operation he flew.

After further training in Britain, Roy

was posted to 50 Squadron based at RAF Skellingthorpe. Just two days later on 16 April 1942, he flew his first operation, a night raid on Lille. Roy initially flew the dreaded Manchester bomber, which he hated. But fortunately for Roy, he soon switched to Lancasters which he flew for the remainder of the war. Roy was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross which he received personally from King George VI at an investiture at Buckingham Palace.

A few days later he was wounded on a mission for which he received an immediate award of a Bar to his DFC. The citation included: "During a recent sortie, Flying Officer Calvert's aircraft was subjected to heavy anti-aircraft fire, sustaining much damage. The wireless operator was killed, and both the pilot and navigator were wounded. The aircraft became difficult to control, but Flying Officer Calvert, although he had a piece of shell splinter in his left arm, set course for home ... to reach an airfield in this country where he made a skilful crash landing in bad visibility ... displayed great courage and tenacity in the face of harassing circumstances."

By late 1944, while flying his second tour with 630 Squadron as acting squadron leader, he was awarded a Second Bar to his DFC. His citation included: "... Calvert has taken part in attacks against many strongly defended targets in Germany, including Berlin and Leipzig. He has constantly shown skill, determination and reliability, and as captain of his aircraft he has set a high standard to the other members of his Squadron. His operational experience and enthusiasm have been invaluable in the training of new crews."

After completing his second tour, Roy accepted the opportunity to join a group of New Zealanders about to return home through North America. He was home for Christmas 1944 and received the Second Bar while in New Zealand from the Governor General.

Roy was one of only four New Zealanders to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross and two Bars (which equates to three DFCs). He was also Mentioned in Dispatches for distinguished service.

In February 1944, Lancaster R5702 in which Roy completed 22 operations, was shot down over Denmark with a different crew aboard. It lay forgotten until Leif Thomsen found a wing tip in a barn and started researching its history. In 1996 Roy was sent a piece of the wing from the old bomber.

After the war Roy returned to May and together they farmed at Whitehall. Roy died in 2002, aged 88 years, and is buried in the RSA Cemetery at Hautapu.

MERYLL NEELY GOES TO WAR

Born in Ireland, Meryll immigrated to New Zealand, and Cambridge, in the 1920s with her parents who took up farming at "Brackenfield," at Pukekura. For many years Meryll worked in the Native Lands Court and as a private secretary before she volunteered for service in 1941 during the Second World War.

As a 2nd lieutenant, Meryll left New Zealand in command of a carefully selected party of 30 members of the Women's War Service Auxiliary, or "Tuis", the first such group to leave New Zealand. They served in the New Zealand Forces Club in Cairo and later in Bari, Italy, doing canteen, clerical and welfare work, and hospital visiting.

With help from New Zealand patriotic funds, every possible amenity and the best of equipment was provided for these clubs which were also established in Rome, Florence and Venice, and the Fernleaf and Milestone Clubs in London. The New Zealand servicemen had good reason to be grateful for the Tuis' work, who were later absorbed into the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC).

As well as organising the canteens, Meryll was responsible for the personal welfare of the soldiers and was referred to as "Director of Welfare" by General Freyberg. It is believed that at the time, Meryll was New Zealand's first female officer. Evidently, she did sterling service in the Mediterranean theatre, as she was mentioned in dispatches, promoted to senior commander (equivalent to major), and ultimately was awarded the MBE for her efficient administration and service.

At the conclusion of the war, Meryll was released by the Government to undertake work as an administration and personnel officer for the United Nations Rehabilitation Agency's headquarters at Tirana, Albania.

Following her return to New Zealand two years later, she took up a clerical position at FAC Limited, Hamilton. But with a love for foreign places, she then worked for over three years in the New Zealand Embassy in Washington DC after being personally requested by the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser. There she worked as an administrative assistant and social secretary under Sir Carl Berendsen and Sir Leslie Munro from 1949 to 1952.

On returning home, she took up a position as secretary to the general manager of Tasman Pulp and Paper Company Limited in Kawerau. Simultaneously, she was secretary of the Kawerau branch of the RSA, and a borough councillor.

After her retirement from Kawerau, Meryll returned to Cambridge and for some years assisted in the administration at the Waikato headquarters of the National Party in Hamilton. Still maintaining her interests in administration, she then served as secretary of St Andrew's Anglican Parish, Cambridge, and continued to work in the parish office until she became ill, dying two weeks later in 1975. She is buried at Hautapu Cemetery.

Right to the end Meryll maintained close contact with her "girls", who were by then mostly married or lived abroad. Meryll played golf and contract bridge, and loved to potter in the garden. She also travelled widely, visiting Australia,

Great Britain, Scandinavia, and the United States again. She never married.

"She had always been fit and active and there were still things she had planned to do," said her sister, Mrs W.N. Robinson of Roto-o-rangi, after Meryll's death.

Below: Meryll Neely at work in the New Zealand Forces Club in Cairo, February 1942.



GEORGE MANDENO, PRISONER OF WAR

George Crawford Mandeno, of Te Awamutu, born 1916, travelled around the South Island with mates as a teenager, returning to the family farm at Te Awamutu. He joined the Waikato Mounted Rifles as a trooper in early 1938, training on horseback.

When the Second World War broke out, Mandeno was sent to Knox Street, Hamilton, to be fitted out, paraded up Victoria Street and entrained to Hopuhopu camp, between Ngāruawahia and Taupiri. Mandeno recalled, "We had four months training before departing [with the Divisional Cavalry, or Div Cav] in January 1940. The training was at Hopuhopu and Waiouru, my officer being Lieutenant Bob Wynyard [son of Colonel Bob Wynyard of Kihikihi], a Waikato Mounted Rifleman. We

received infantry training, you know – bayonet practice and lots of square bashing. The first armoured cars arrived around that time, then Bren gun carriers and Chev trucks. Having been a mounted rifleman I was earmarked for the Divisional Cavalry.”

The Div Cav departed from Hopuhopu in January 1940 and travelled by train to Wellington, leaving aboard the *Rangitata* with the First Echelon two days later. After disembarking at the Suez Canal, they entrained to Cairo. George recalls the Div Cav at both Maadi and Helwan camps. “I helped build both camps. I trained in the desert as a radio man in a Bren gun carrier, and then we moved to Greece.”

The Div Cav, as part of the New Zealand Division, had their first contact with German armour in Greece. Mandeno remembered, “We were in South African armoured cars, Marmon-Herringtons I recall. They were good as scout cars and all right against Jerry armoured cars, but up against tanks, they were no bloody good. We had no cover, and the Jerries had air superiority as well.”

Mandeno was later evacuated to Crete where he fought in the rearguard unit across the island. He contracted malaria, ending up in the “sick caves” near Sphakia, alongside his twin brother, Captain Alex Mandeno of the New Zealand Artillery.

They were both captured by the Germans, but George Mandeno managed to escape while in captivity on Crete, and held out for three months before recapture. From Crete he was sent to Athens and a temporary camp at Salonika before travelling by train to Lamsdorf, Poland, and Stalag 8B. At Lamsdorf he managed to avoid a work camp and for four years worked with a privileged group of prisoners responsible for distributing Red Cross parcels to prisoners.

As the Russians quickly approached Poland in 1945, Mandeno was again in luck, managing to avoid joining the infamous Lamsdorf march of prisoners back to Germany. Through a dangerous stunt by a fellow prisoner, he managed to bluff the Germans into being allowed

to fly back to Germany. During a parade to determine the marchers, his colleague stepped forward twice – once under his own name and once under Mandeno’s name – to show his damaged leg was incapable of marching. Fortunately the ruse wasn’t discovered. Mandeno recalled, “In my physical state I would never have survived the march.”

After spending much of his life in Te Awamutu, Mandeno died in Ōhaupo in June 2009.

Mrs Mary Eaton, formerly Mary Mandeno of Te Awamutu, and sister of George and Alex Mandeno, was one of the few New Zealand women who served with the American forces during the Second World War. She left her position as dietitian and lecturer at an institute in Baltimore when America entered the war, and joined the American army as a dietitian to the 56th General Hospital.

While with the unit she visited Britain in 1943 and managed to meet up with her cousin, Squadron Leader Graham Mandeno, who was serving with the Royal Air Force at the time. He finished the war awarded with the Distinguished Service Order, and Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar.



Above: George Mandeno, wireless operator (top), tired and dirty after three days of manoeuvres, returns to Maadi Camp near Cairo, 1940.

BRAVERY AT CASSINO

William Robert O’Brien (Bob) was born in 1922 in Auckland. As a young man he joined the Territorials, and gained an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic in Hamilton. When war broke out in Europe, O’Brien joined the army in 1940, training with a special forces unit in Australia. He then returned to New Zealand and was involved in training at the racecourse at Cambridge. He finally embarked to the Middle East in July 1943, joining an anti-tank platoon of the 24th Infantry Battalion, with the rank of Lieutenant.

When the war progressed to Italy, O’Brien was detailed for liaison duties with forward elements of the Battalion during the battle of Cassino during March 1944. One night he commanded a carrier party which scaled the heights of Point 193 on Monte Cassino, and successfully delivered supplies to an isolated company on Point 202. On another night he went forward into the town of Cassino to contact forward companies, and to reach a company now completely isolated on Point 202. As the latter task proved impossible, he returned to Cassino on subsequent nights in an effort to get through.

For bravery shown on many occasions at Cassino, O’Brien was awarded the Military Cross.

He was wounded on 29 July 1944 when the Jeep he was in detonated a mine near Castellare, Italy. At the time there was a driver, O’Brien, five prisoners and two wounded men crammed in the Jeep. They had just travelled 30 yards down the road when the Jeep struck the mine. Everyone in the vehicle was killed except O’Brien. After recovering in hospital, he returned home in August 1945.

After the war O’Brien continued his career as a motor mechanic and mushroom grower in Te Awamutu. He was always an active member of the local RSA. He died 2011 on the anniversary of his military accident, aged 89 years.

O'Brien was considered a humble and generous man. His death notice stated, "Never concerned for himself, always thinking of others."



Above: Bob O'Brien was awarded the Military Cross for bravery at Monte Cassino.



Above: All that was left of O'Brien's Jeep after it ran over a German mine.

HELPED SINK THE ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE

Few Cambridge people realise today that six young Cambridge men served aboard HMS *Achilles* when she played a major role in sinking the German pocket battleship, *Admiral Graf Spee* during the Second World War. The action, known as the Battle of the River Plate, took place off Montevideo, Argentina, on 13 December 1939, resulting in the crippled German battleship being scuttled five days later. The prize was

shared amongst HMS *Exeter*, *Ajax* and *Achilles*. In 1941 the *Achilles* was transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy and served throughout the war.

The six Cambridge men were: Charles Wallace Care (gunner), Stanley Lorimer (stoker), Stanley Keeley (signalman), Maxwell Wallace (stoker), Arthur Speight (telephonist) and Archibald Cooper Hirst Shaw. All were Able Seamen.

Shaw was killed in action during the battle. Just prior to joining the *Achilles*, he had completed an advanced gunnery course in Australia. The ship took no direct hits owing to the skilled manoeuvring of Captain Parry, but altogether there were 400 holes in the *Achilles* from pieces of shrapnel. The nearest shell exploded 25 yards to port, with a piece of shrapnel killing Shaw and wounding another sailor while the pair were at their battle station in the conning tower. Shaw had the distinction of being the first Cambridge casualty of the war.

The *Achilles* arrived back in Auckland to refit in February 1940 to a civic welcome and military parade watched by 100,000 people. In turn, the five Cambridge men were invited at a civic welcome in the Cambridge Town Hall on Thursday afternoon, 29 February, put on by the Cambridge Patriotic Committee.

Practically all of Cambridge turned out when 3,000 people gathered in front of the town hall, including children from every school in the district. "Welcome to our boys" read a large banner suspended between the bunting-bedecked pillars. The Municipal Band played while returned soldiers marched.

When the five sailors arrived there was a "Three cheers for the Navy", followed by the National Anthem and a speech by the mayor, Edgar James. A tribute was paid to Shaw in front of the cenotaph. That evening, a dance was held in the town hall.

Excitement was so rife in Cambridge, that the Borough Council decided unanimously to change Victoria Square to Achilles Square, but it is assumed the move was later rescinded.

Today, Achilles Avenue in Cambridge celebrates the ship and the six Cambridge men who served on her.



Above: Cambridge extended a warm welcome to the six local men who served on HMS *Achilles* during the Battle of the River Plate.

JAPANESE SUB HUNTER

Gordon Bridson of Cambridge was a New Zealand competitive swimmer and a distinguished sailor in the Second World War.

As a young man he represented New Zealand at the Empire Games in Hamilton, Ontario, in 1934, winning a silver medal. He was a member of the Naval Volunteer Reserve at the outbreak of the Second World War, joining the Royal New Zealand Navy. He served with distinction, becoming a Lieutenant Commander in command of the corvette HMNZS *Kiwi*.

On the night of 29 January 1943, the *Kiwi*, along with the *Moa*, was patrolling off the northwestern coast of Guadalcanal in the Pacific when *Kiwi* detected a submarine. It made a depth charge attack, but then lost contact. *Kiwi* continued to attack and on its third run, the damaged submarine surfaced and attempted to fight it out with its 140mm gun and machine guns.

Bridson thought it best to get in close to negate some of the submarine's advantages. Then he decided to ram the submarine. With a graunching sound, the *Kiwi* rammed it right behind the conning tower.

Locked together, the vessels continued to blaze away at each other with light

weapons. Twice more Bridson pulled his ship away from the huge 2,135-ton submarine only to ram it again, badly damaging his opponent and crumpling his own bow. When *Kiwi's* main gun overheated, *Moa* took over, chasing the submarine until it ran aground on a reef.

For the action Bridson was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. He also received the Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross (US) and the Volunteer Reserve Decoration.

David Graham, crew member of the *Kiwi*, later remembered Bridson giving orders on the bridge: “[Bridson] gave the order to ram. At the same time he thought he’d better let the engine room know what was going on. So he shouted down the voice pipe, ‘Stand by to ram.’ When the voice came back from the engine room, ‘What the hell do you do mean by ram?’ He replied, ‘I don’t know. I’ve never done it before!’”

After the war Bridson was in charge of Lyttelton Naval Base, then operated a small business in Te Aroha before farming at Plantation Road, Horahora, where he remained until his death on 6 December 1972, aged 63 years. He is buried in the Hautapu Cemetery and is survived by a daughter, Gillian, and two sons, Nils and Peter.



Above: Lieutenant-Commander Gordon Bridson, submarine hunter.

PETROL SHORTAGES

In 1942, World War Two was creating havoc in many ways, with crippling shortages of a wide range of items. Petrol was especially difficult to obtain, and could be used only in strictly rationed quantities. On Monday, February 2 1942, the *Te Awamutu Courier* noted that “Since the heavy cuts in oil fuel allowances and the total prohibition of supplies for private cars, motorists are using a wide variety of substitute fuels. Some have obtained fairly satisfactory results with mixtures of kerosene, mineral turpentine, lighting kerosene, dieseline, and even paint-thinners, and the demand for these fuels has grown considerably.” However, motorists using such alternatives were required to pay road tax on such fuels, and had to make an official declaration of mileage using such fuel each month.

REMEMBERING OUR DEAD

A very attractive memorial was erected in Jubilee Gardens, central Cambridge, in 1923 to commemorate 74 local men killed in the First World War. The architect was Nigel Walnutt, and the all-up cost was £2,000. The Italian-marble statue depicts a Cambridge soldier, plinth and lion in the middle of a cross. The sculptor was Richard Gross whose great desire was to give something worthy without consideration of cost to himself in labour or expenditure, making it one of the most poignant memorials in New Zealand. Subsequently, the names of 77 Cambridge men who died in the Second World War have been added, as well as plaques for the South Africa, Korea, Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam Wars.

The memorial was unveiled on 11 December 1923 by Governor-General Viscount Jellicoe. On the same day, three memorial windows commemorating the First World War were unveiled in St

Andrew’s Anglican church. Lord Jellicoe addressed the gathering, and the Bishop of Auckland, Bishop Averill, dedicated the windows. They comprise three figures depicting Truth, Freedom and Justice, and three scenes depicting the war: the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 – New Zealand’s baptism of fire; a wayside crucifix outside the ruined city of Ypres, Belgium, during 1917 with a New Zealand soldier kneeling at the foot of the cross; the capture of Le Quesnoy, France, on 4 November 1918 – New Zealand’s final act of the war. Below the three windows is the inscription, “Their name liveth for evermore.”



Above: A Cambridge soldier is depicted in marble on the Cambridge Cenotaph.

Also in 1923, a New Zealand memorial was unveiled in the ancient walled town of Le Quesnoy, depicting New Zealanders scaling the wall to liberate the town. Cambridge and Le Quesnoy became sister-towns in 1998, and the friendship is celebrated each year during November in conjunction with Armistice in Cambridge.

After the Second World War a Returned Services Association section was established at Hautapu cemetery between two rows of cypress trees. A Wall of Memories was built and a Roll of Honour with 164 names inscribed on the archway for those who lost their lives overseas in the South Africa War and the First and Second World Wars.



Above: The Governor-General, Lord Jellicoe, unveiling the Te Awamutu War Memorial on Anzac Green, 30 May 1923.

James McPherson Stuart in March 1947 became the first returned soldier to be interred in the section.

A Second World War roll of honour also appears on the main gate of Memorial Park in Taylor Street. Most of the schools and district halls display a local district roll of honour.

Details and stories of the Cambridge men killed in the First World War are recorded in Eris Parker's excellent book *Cambridge World War One, Something to Remember*, published in 2000.



WINGS OVER RUKUHIA

Aviation in the Waikato started in 1894 when American balloonist Leila Adair ascended in a hot-air balloon from Sydney Square (Steele Park), Hamilton East. She had a lucky escape when her balloon began to tear and spew smoke.

Powered flight came to Waipā in the 1920s when aircraft began landing at Jack Steele's farm at Rukuhia for pageants and gymkhanas. At about the same time the Auckland Aero Club established a branch on land belonging to D.V. Bryant, near the Waikato River at Te Rapa, about where Saint Andrew's Golf Course is today. A hay barn served as a hangar. This was to become the foundation of the Waikato Aero Club.

Over the years the airfield was visited by many flyers including Jean Batten and Charles Kingsford Smith. During the 1930s the Waikato Aero Club had outgrown its airfield at Te Rapa, so Charley Bishop Smith searched for a suitable location within 10 miles of Hamilton to establish a new airport. He checked out numerous farms near to Hamilton before he investigated a large paddock on Steele's farm at Rukuhia, which was regularly used by flyers. Charles Kingsford Smith in *Southern Cross* landed in the paddock in 1933, offering rides to the public.

Charley Smith thought the property suited his purpose, so he approached Steele to purchase the land. Steele, who was an aviation enthusiast, agreed to sell 134 acres. Charley Smith then sought the approval of the Hamilton Borough Council, Esmond Gibson (Government aerodrome expert), and Squadron Leader Leonard Isitt, before the purchase was made.

After four months of development, the paddock was transformed into a modern airport, with a 3,450-foot runway and facilities. A hangar was also built, large enough to house the aero club's aircraft.

The cost was £9,000 for the land, and a further £2,000 for the runway and buildings.

The airport was opened on 12 October 1935. At the time the country was gripped by the thrills and exhilaration of powered flight, and commercial aviation was just in its infancy.

With the expectancy of war in Europe in the late 1930s, the Waikato Aero Club was swamped with applicants wanting to become airmen. Once the Second World War had become a reality, the airport was vested to the Waikato Airport Board on 11 February 1941. With the airport needing to expand, Jack Steele made available another 214 acres to the airport board.

By 1941, all privately-owned aircraft were impressed into service, and with it all flying practically ceased over night. The airport was taken over by the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) on 12 August 1942, becoming RNZAF Station Rukuhia. A further 157 acres of farmland owned by Thomas Henderson, and 266 acres owned by another farmer, were acquired under the Public Works Act in 1943, which allowed for the final construction of four crisscrossed runways, each about 4,000 feet in length. Three large wooden hangars were constructed on the side of the airfield nearest the Waikato River, and No. 1 Aircraft Storage Unit was established, responsible for the major inspections, overhauls and testing of operational aircraft used in the Pacific theatre of war. The engines and instruments were overhauled at RNZAF Station Hamilton, situated in the centre of the city. Two of the wooden hangars are still in existence today, being used by Pacific Aerospace.

Aircraft were ferried from the Pacific to Rukuhia in various stages of disrepair – many of them were damaged by anti-aircraft fire, while others had suffered from the trying climatic conditions in the Pacific. Once the aircraft were completely overhauled, they were flown back to the islands.

At the height of its wartime operation, Station Rukuhia employed 1,800 personnel. Many of them were billeted at the Narrows Camp beside the Waikato River. Once the war in the Pacific ended, the RNZAF had no further need for Station Rukuhia, closing it on 30 June 1946.

As a consequence of the closure, about 500 redundant aircraft were put into outside storage around the perimeter of the airfield. Numbers and types have been estimated at: 118 Warhawks and Kittyhawks, 81 Venturas, 1 Harvard, 9 Avengers and 248 Corsairs. The disassembly and reclaiming of in-demand metals was mostly done by Asplin Motors of Rukuhia. For years the graveyard of Second World War aircraft could be seen from the Hamilton-Te Awamutu road, with only a handful of aircraft escaping the melting pot.

In post-war years the Waikato Aero Club prospered in the abundant amenities and infrastructure left behind by the air force. The New Zealand National Airways Corporation (NAC) was formed in April 1947, and the public turned out to celebrate the arrival of Lockheed 10A Electra ZK-AFD *Kuaka* on 27 September 1947, which started the NAC service between Hamilton and Wellington.

By the end of the 1950s Hamilton Airport needed to be upgraded to cater for larger aircraft. A longer runway was constructed and a new terminal building was officially opened on 26 March 1966.

Hamilton Airport became an international airport in 1995 when Kiwi Air commenced overseas flights. The following year the Government sold its remaining share in the airport to the five local councils. At the same time, work started on a new terminal to handle the increased volume of passengers, both domestic and international. The new terminal was opened in September 1996.

Freedom Air started flying across the Tasman in December 1995. Neither international service could fly direct from Hamilton to Australia when the aircraft were fully laden, as the Hamilton runway was too short. A stop in Auckland to top up fuel was required for full aircraft. The necessary runway extension was completed in 1998.

At this time the airport officially became the Hamilton International Airport under the control of Waikato Regional Airport Limited. A further runway extension was completed in 2005 and a terminal redevelopment was carried out in 2007.

With the airport terminal positioned on the eastern side of the runway, the western side is the home of general aviation users including the Waikato Aero Club, Eagle Air, Aeromotive, Hamilton Aero Maintenance, Rotocraft, Super Air, and CTC Wings, one of the world's leading airline-pilot training providers. Also near the airport is Pacific Aerospace, manufacturer of military, agricultural and commercial aircraft.



Above: Charles Kingsford Smith in Southern Cross landed in a paddock at Rukuhia in 1933, offering rides to the public.



Above: Sir Alexander Young, Minister of Internal Affairs, opened the Hamilton Airport in front of a large crowd on Saturday, 12 October 1935.



OSSIE JAMES, AERIAL TOPDRESSING PIONEER

As a boy, Oswald “Ossie” James was determined to fly. Born in 1919, he was educated in Tolaga Bay before serving an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic. Denied the chance to train as a pilot with the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) during the Second World War, he instead worked as a flight mechanic on RNZAF aircraft in New Zealand and in the Pacific.

After the war Ossie returned to the East Coast and opened a garage with brothers Colin and Ian. He soon gained his pilot's licence and purchased a Tiger Moth biplane from the RNZAF in 1947. Ossie then began researching into the possibilities of aerial topdressing in Poverty Bay. He was convinced that eroding farmland on the East Coast – too steep for easy access from the ground – could be improved quickly and simply by spreading fertiliser on it from the air.

Ossie formed James Aviation in 1949 and travelled to the United States to learn what was happening in agricultural aviation. Soon after his return he purchased a second Tiger Moth. By the end of the year he had it fitted out and pilot Neil Johnstone started topdressing on 28 December 1949 at Te Uku, north of Raglan. The farmer, J.W. Lusty, was so impressed with the Ossie's innovation, he promptly spread the word about James Aviation. Soon after, a third Tiger Moth was purchased.

Ossie once stated, “Our official load of fertiliser [for a Tiger Moth] was 360 lb, but we operated with 560 lb. The Tiger flew like a powered glider with that weight, so we had to go downhill to get anywhere. That's why ag strips are always on top of hills!”

Left: For years the graveyard of Second World War aircraft could be seen from the Hamilton-Te Awamutu road.

A year later, Ossie had six Tiger Moths operating, had taken over a RNZAF hangar at Rukuhia airport, and extended his services to Rotorua. In December 1950, Ossie himself started topdressing, which he continued for around nine months. But as the company expanded, Ossie needed to concentrate more on the company's management.

In 1952, Ossie bought out Hunter Air Tourist Company and Blackmore Air Services which added a Fairchild Argus, a Proctor and a Waco aircraft to his fleet. He also bought an Auster from the Rotorua Aero Club. These four aircraft were used to form the tourism and charter division of James Aviation.

Next, James Aviation gained a long-term Government contract for forest fire patrol work. Three additional Austers were purchased for the task, each fitted with long-range fuel tanks and radio equipment.

In 1954, Ossie visited the United States on behalf of Cable Price Corporation and negotiated the purchase and assembly in New Zealand of FU24 Fletcher aircraft. Assembly began at Rukuhia the following year at the rate of 25 per year.

Also in 1954, modifications were completed on a DC3 aircraft for aerial topdressing work. The DC3 was capable of carrying five tons of fertiliser per flight. The first commercial applications took place in December 1955, spreading approximately 100 tons per day. By the end of 1956 James Aviation had a staff of 96 and a total of 21 aircraft and workshops in Rotorua and Hamilton.

James Aviation brought the first helicopter to New Zealand, an American-built Hiller, forming Helicopter Services Ltd. By 1964 the company's fleet of 38 Fletchers and several DC3s was spreading about 200,000 tons of superphosphate and 225 tons of grass seed each year. James Aviation also operated a school for commercial pilots using two-seated Fletchers.

When New Zealand Aerospace Industries was formed in 1972 it took over the manufacture of Fletcher aircraft at Rukuhia, while James Aviation became a major shareholder. New Zealand Aerospace Industries became Pacific

Aerospace Corporation in 1982, which is today known as Pacific Aerospace.

In total, James Aviation built 286 Fletcher aircraft, exporting many to countries as diverse as Venezuela and Iraq. James Aviation became a public company in the early 1980s. When Ossie retired in 1984, James Aviation had a staff of 625, a fleet of 120 aircraft and several subsidiary aviation companies. By the same year owner-operators had taken over the aircraft and the James Aviation brand disappeared from topdressing aircraft.

When describing his tireless work with the company, Ossie once stated, "Your vision is only as big as your hangar door. And one of the reasons James Aviation was able to grow was that we had a very large hangar door!"

Ossie became a co-founder of New Zealand Agricultural Fieldays. In 1974 he gifted James Aviation's DC3 ZK-AZL to the Fieldays, where it became an open-air exhibit at Mystery Creek, and is today undergoing conservation work.

Ossie's work in topdressing changed the way New Zealand farmed its land. With the extensive use of aerial topdressing, much of the country's hill country became economically viable.

Inside two decades Ossie became one of the fathers of aerial topdressing, but for many the Fletcher aircraft remains his most enduring legacy. He shared the development of the Fletcher as a topdressing aircraft in New Zealand with the legendary Guy Robertson, founder of Robertson Air Services, who brought the first Fletcher into the country in 1953.

Ossie was the recipient of many honours, including being made an Officer of the British Empire in 1968, and being named a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2004 for his services to aviation and the community.

Ossie died on 31 May 2007, aged 87 years. At his funeral he was honoured by a flypast of Fletchers. He was survived by his wife Elaine, two daughters and a son.

The original Tiger Moth (ZK-AJO) used by Ossie is today on display in Te Papa, Wellington. It was in service with

James Aviation from late 1949 until 1956, mostly operating in the Waikato, Northland, Rotorua and Taupo areas. During its active life, ZK-AJO flew about 6,000 hours on agricultural operations.



Above: Ossie James.



Above: The DC3 was introduced to James Aviation's topdressing fleet in 1955, spreading approximately 100 tons of superphosphate a day.

BURGLARS CAPTURED IN BELL'S STORE

During October 1948, Pirongia (its name changed from Alexandra in 1896) made the national news when two burglars were captured in Bell's store, on the corner of Franklin and Crozier Streets. The sound of breaking glass during the evening alerted the Bromell family that something was amiss at the nearby store. Bernard Bromell quickly biked to the home of Clarrie Schwartzfeger, who worked at the store.

Schwartfeger grabbed his shotgun, and the two hurried to the store. On entering they bailed up two men with the shotgun. Leaving Schwartfeger to guard the two burglars, Bromell ran down the street to a telephone and called the Te Awamutu police. A newspaper account tells that when the police arrived 40 minutes later, the two prisoners were being closely guarded in the store by their captors, backed up outside by "several residents who had arrived with picks, axes and other weapons of a similar nature".

It turned out that the two burglars had escaped from Mt Eden Prison several days earlier. Apparently they drove out of the prison quarry in a truck under the noses of armed guards. Initially they had travelled north to the Kaukapakapa area where they eluded capture by stealing a car, which they eventually drove to Pirongia.

Recently, Heather Morris, Schwartfeger's granddaughter, visited Pirongia from Australia and gifted the Heritage and Information Centre congratulatory telegrams received by Clarrie Schwartfeger after the episode. One telegram from a former Pirongia resident reads, "Congratulations on the bag. The shooting must be good!"

CAMBRIDGE'S VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE

In March 1903 a committee, formed to consider the question of forming a local fire brigade, recommended to the Cambridge Borough Council that steps be taken to organise a volunteer brigade, erect a fire station to accommodate two firemen and plant, and to procure a reel and 800 feet of hose with hydrants. The estimated cost was £300, to be covered by an increase in the council's general rate.

At a special meeting in May it was decided to go ahead with the formation of a brigade. A canvass was made for

funds, the general public giving £60 and the Council granting £120.

Soon after, a fire station was erected by voluntary labour and some plant procured, including hose and uniforms. A wheeled hose reel was made by John Ferguson, the local blacksmith. The new brigade was officially opened by the Mayor, Thomas Wells, on 14 August 1904. Two firemen slept in the station to look after the plant and, in case of alarm, to open the door and start with the reel for the scene of the fire.

The original brigade included: Captain T. Jones, E.J. Wilkinson (Secretary), Lieutenant M. Roberts, Sergeant Higgins, Firemen A.E. Harris, F. Higgins, G. Hastie, K. Armer, K. Court, A. Popple, F. Plescher, C. Ruge, J. Webber and H. Bell, Branchmen Kite and J.V. Richards, and Hydrantmen Fairweather and L. Armer.

Their first call-out came on 18 August 1904, when 11 members attended to a chimney fire at the Masonic Hotel. Six members turned out in January 1905 to a house fire in Leamington, but since there was no nearby "plug" (hydrant), they could do little to save the house. In response to this and other similar instances, the brigade asked the Council for more plugs to be placed around town, as well as a request for buckets! Apparently, at a recent fire in Princes Street, the firemen had resorted to using tins to fight a shed fire. By mid year, a main with plugs was laid down Victoria Street, and more hose was purchased.

In the brigade's third year of operation it: attended eight alarms with an average of seven to eight firemen attending each; raised £12 to help send a competition team to Christchurch; installed a fire bell near Victoria Square; established a telephone link between the station and the town's waterworks; and had extra fire plugs put in Duke and Victoria Streets.

The brigade celebrated 100 years of service in 2004. Throughout the decades the brigade continually developed and is now housed in modern facilities with state-of-the-art vehicles and equipment. Today, the community is extremely fortunate to have 24 well-trained and dedicated volunteers, who attend about

300 call-outs annually. In the 100 years, 28 Gold Stars and three Queen's Fire Service Medals were awarded to members.

Don Gerrand, the present Chief Fire Officer, stated at the time of the centennial, "I feel honoured to have served the Cambridge Brigade under the old regime of the Cambridge Fire Board from 1968 to the takeover in 1975 by the New Zealand Fire Service Commission. The feeling at the time of the change was of immense anxiety to the wellbeing of members under a new system that would not have local input. However, 1975 came and went and before long evidence of the new regime became apparent. Appliances became standardised, members from all brigades received a uniform, and buildings and equipment became upgraded, and I believe this brigade and the service nationwide gained immensely."

Fire Chiefs to date: T. Jones, T. Kite, H. Bell, H. Vause, G. Drew, W.J. Harris, J.W. Morris, G.R. Brunskill, G. Haworth, and D.R. Gerrand.

Some notable fires attended by the Cambridge brigade:

1911: Masonic Hotel. It was four o'clock in the morning and the upstairs residents, in their nightwear, were climbing down the back fire escape as the floor started to fall in. One of the guests ran to the Fire Station to ring the alarm bell. It was raining, and as on previous such occasions it was difficult for some members of the Brigade to hear the bell.

1912: National Hotel. The brigade put two leads of water from a fire plug opposite Victoria Square onto the hotel, but the pressure was inadequate to save the building. A willing band of helpers removed as much furniture (and refreshments) as possible and then the brigade concentrated on saving surrounding buildings. As the members rested a cry went up that Mrs Murphy's buildings (along Alpha Street) were on fire and the brigade rushed to rescue them. A hose was put in from Victoria Street but "owing to the excessive zeal

displayed by some of the inexperienced volunteers, a severe wrench on the hose caused the main to burst, rendering useless the water supply," reported the *Waikato Independent*.

1920: F.S. Veale's Buildings, Victoria Street.

1921: Nurse Russell's Nursing Home, Hamilton Road.

1923: Kenilworth Boarding House, Anzac Street.

1926: FAC, Duke Street. The neighbouring Central Hotel burnt down the following day. Later, there were rumours about town that the hotel fire was deliberately lit because it was suffering from bad patronage, was in debt, and a licence renewal was eminent.

1927: Nine shops destroyed in Duke Street.

1927: Dingley Dell, Pukekura Straight.

1928: Broad & Broad's Buildings, Duke Street.

1932: Hinemoa Flats, Alpha Street.

1933: Golf club house; and SPND.

1938: Roto-o-rangi dairy factory.

1941: Three dairy factories. During the Second World War, when the brigade's ranks were thinned by overseas service, six teenage girls gave valuable service.

1942: Bromwich Bakery, Hally's Lane.

1944: Army hut, Te Koutu Park. One death.

1945: Waikato Independent, Duke Street.

1948: Pukeroro dairy factory. The brigade used whey to subdue the flames.

1950: Seth Webb Estate, Empire Street.

1961: Bruntwood dairy factory.

1964: St Andrew's Church, Victoria Street.

1978: Valentines army surplus and State Advances buildings, Hamilton.

1990: Paramount Recaps, Empire Street.

1996: Cambridge High School.

2002: Cambridge High School.



Above: The Cambridge Volunteer Fire Brigade when it formed in 1904.



Above: The destruction of the National Hotel in 1912.



Above: Crowther and Bell's stables burn down in 1913.



Above: All that remained of the FAC in Duke Street after the 1926 fire.