

Whitebaiting season is  
upon us!

# TAINUI TRADING POST

## SEPTEMBER 2017



### ST PETER'S BY THE SEA

*"Jesus taught them to pray like this:  
Give us this day the food we need, and forgive our sins, as we  
forgive everyone who has done wrong to us." Luke ii: 3-4*

September 3<sup>rd</sup> Family Communion 2pm Rev Singh  
September 17<sup>th</sup> Family Service 2pm Paster Tutty

All welcome to the services and afternoon tea to follow  
Enquiries to D Lowry 752 9123

### TAINUI ST JOHN

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Mokau Library Contact ALLISON HAMILTON: PH 7529 855

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**If we don't have it, you don't need it.**

### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE MUSEUM?

As promised – here is the name chosen by the committee for the new brown kiwi in its case at the museum:

And the winner is...Barbara O'Neill from Tongaporutu with the name

**“MOKI”**

‘*Moki*’ is the Maori word for the fragrant fern traditionally used for scenting oils. Perhaps our brown kiwi was fond of eating those fragrant fern shoots (*moki*) as part of his diet. Come in and see ‘Moki’ and his friend the Banded Rail and see what you think. A big thank you to all 83 people who entered the competition to name the kiwi. We hope you like the name ‘MOKI’.

Now for a shout out to the entire Tainui community – the museum is in dire need of a small garden shed. Does anyone have a small unused garden shed out the back? The problem is, our storeroom also houses tins of paint, garden implements, tools and maintenance gear. These should not be next to precious artefacts. Our Collections Manager Amanda would dearly love to have a dry space out the back dedicated to all of the maintenance gear, thus freeing up shelf space for more professional storage methods.

If you have a small implement shed or you know someone who does, please call the museum on 7529 072 or our chairman Belinda Whittaker on 7529 036. Many thanks.

The book box out on the front porch is proving to be a hit. The principle of ‘TAKE ONE, LEAVE ONE’ seems to be working. We have even had the donation of an old fridge/freezer which will be 100% waterproof. Its three sections will soon be labelled BOOKS - ‘Non-fiction’, ‘Fiction’ and ‘Children’s’. Bring some books along and exchange as many as you like.

The end of August saw a changeover in the Art Gallery. Dennis Walton and Peter Holbrook’s paintings have left the gallery and in their place we have installed 20 outstanding photographs by well-known New Plymouth photographer Pat Greenfield. You may have seen Pat on a recent episode of ‘Coast’ on TV1 featuring the erosion of the Tongaporutu coastline.

It was in the 1960s at the age of 16 that Pat Greenfield first discovered photography. Having tried her hand at water colours and drawing, Pat bought her first camera, a Pentax Spotmatic and soon found photography a quick means of gratification.

It was however the erosion on the Tongaporutu coastline that captured Pat’s interest more than anything else. In 2001, Pat sat with her tripod on Pilot Rd point, photographing the Three Sisters rocks. To her dismay, the tripod proved faulty and Pat was forced to abandon her mission. She made a date to return to Pilot Rd in two weeks to complete her shoot.

Pat did return a fortnight later, only to find that the coastline had completely changed. The two big table-sized boulders beneath the Three Sisters where Pat had previously sat and eaten her lunch, had vanished. Pat realised that these boulders and others like them were continually falling from the cliffs. She made the decision to turn her passion into a 20-year project capturing the entire Tongaporutu coastline – a project with only four years remaining. We are so fortunate to be able to show this remarkable pictorial narrative at Mokau Museum and Gallery. Pop in and see this outstanding exhibition.

Jan Brown, secretary  
Mokau Museum and Gallery,  
open seven days, 10am – 4pm

**TAINUI HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**LOCAL SHIPWRECKS – 1921 THE AUXILIARY LAUNCH**  
**TURANGA**

The Turanga was built by Bailey & Lowe at Auckland in 1910 for Bertram Bros. And traded between Auckland and Coromandel for 10 years. She was 55 ft long, 13ft beam, and had a draught of 4 ft 6 in when fully loaded. She was 28 tons gross, had a carrying capacity of 30 tons and was fitted with a 3 cylinder 25 h.p. Standard engine with a speed of 7 to 8 knots.

Her first mishap came when she was 3 years old while new reversing gear was being fitted at Auckland when a workman dropped a lighted candle into the bilge, setting alight some oil which caused £100 worth of damage. A minor collision with the Auckland ferryboat Goshawk on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1920 while both vessels were mooring resulted in little damage.

In early June, 1920 she was purchased by the Awakino-Mokau Shipping Co. (Mr P.E. Stainton of New Plymouth, Managing Director) to trade between New Plymouth and Kawhia calling at Waitara, Tongaporutu, Mokau, Awakino and Marakopa ports. She left Auckland about June 1 under Capt. G. Sang with a cargo of 300 cases of benzine, but ran into rough weather and sheltered in Tutukaka Harbour, north of Whangarei until the worst was over. She rounded North Cape on 7<sup>th</sup> and arrived at New Plymouth on 10<sup>th</sup> remaining at Breakwater until 15<sup>th</sup>, then

headed to Waitara.

Her new owners were most impressed with her estimating that in present day 1920 values it would have cost at least £2,500 to build a similar vessel.

In early July she had a slight mishap with her propeller while in the Tongaporutu River, throwing her schedule out for a few days. Between them the Mahoe and the Turanga gave good service to the small northern ports occasionally overlapping their sailings. One day in mid October when the Mahoe left Awakino the Turanga entered, landed a full cargo and then proceeded up-river to the cheese factory where she took aboard 30 crates of cheese. On another occasion both vessels were moored at the wharf together.

About the middle of March 1921 Capt. Sang was replaced by Capt. F. Stearne. Other members of the crew were an AB named C.H. Smith (a returned serviceman), an engineer named Dave Scott, and a boy named Goddard.

At 11 p.m. on 28<sup>th</sup> April, the Turanga left Waitara with a full cargo (of 23 tons) of general merchandise for Mokau. Conditions were good and the vessel arrived just off the River mouth at about 3 a.m. Just as they were approaching the bar a huge wave caught the vessel, capsized it and drove it ashore where it was dashed to pieces against the rocks. A succession of lighter waves followed quickly and aided the destruction.

The AB Smith got ashore then returned to help the engineer and the boy ashore. A search for Capt. Stearns proved fruitless. The boy Goddard had seen the captain clinging to the rudder; he called out to the boy but owing to the noisy sea could not be heard. He then lost sight of the captain.

The Mokau residents were quick to give assistance to the ship-wrecked men; food and clothing were provided and everything done for their comfort. Search parties were organised and relays took periods of 4 hours at different points along the beach, but it was not until 9<sup>th</sup> May that the body of the missing captain was found washed ashore 5 miles north of the wreck by Mr George Dixon in the breakers off Pioi Station. An inquest was held on 11<sup>th</sup> May, the verdict being "death by drowning" and he was buried that afternoon in the Mokau cemetery.

Captain Stearne was a A1 seaman and careful navigator, he had worked on the dredge Thomas King, recently moved from Lyttleton to Waitara, and left a widow and child. As soon as news of the wreck reached New Plymouth Mr Stainton left for Mokau and while there was told by the ferryman that he had noticed evidence of an unusual occurrence that morning as the tide at the ferry had been 6 feet higher than he had ever known before.

The Turanga was a very sound and seaworthy vessel. She was valued at £3,000 but was insured for only £400 while the cargo was valued at £1,000 but was only partially covered by insurance. The total loss was therefore a heavy one. Wreckage and cargo were scattered along the beach between Mokau and Awakino.

A Nautical Enquiry was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June at New Plymouth. At the conclusion of evidence it was found that

The loss was not due to any negligence of the master, or any error of navigation, improper loading or equipment

The disaster was due solely to the peculiar succession of seas

The conduct of the engineer was not a contributing factor to the wreck.

As no order was made as to costs the Marine Department paid the witnesses' expenses.

*Source: M. deJardine's Shipwrecks On and Off the Coast*

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