

The Albertland Gazette



Patron:

Mr Richard Te Haara



ABOARD THE MATILDA WATTENBACH 23rd June 1862

The Albertlanders boarded the Matilda Wattenbach at the East India Docks on 29 May 1862, and by the 23rd June 1862 they would have been at sea for about 25 days.

The ship passed the English Coast around 9th June, then headed south through the North Atlantic towards the trade winds. Records show that by 27th June 1862, the vessel was near 8 deg N, 21 degrees W, west of Cape Verde Islands and approaching the Equator route.

Therefore, on 23rd June 1862, the Matilda Wattenbach was most likely in the tropical North Atlantic Ocean, west of Africa and north of the Cape Verde Islands, probably around 12 - 15 deg N latitude. The Albertlanders would have been well beyond the sight of land, experiencing the steady northeast trade winds that carried sailing ships south towards the Equator which they crossed on the 4th of July 1862. The first issue of the Albertland Gazette and Ocean Chronicle was printed on the 14th June 1862 by editor Samuel Johnston.

More on this incredible journey will be included in next months edition.



June 2026

Open Hours

Monday, Tuesday - Closed
Wednesday - Saturday - 11am to 3pm
Sunday - 1pm to 3pm
The Museum is open for visitors

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Editors Message:

Time seems to pass so quickly. It feels like only yesterday we were preparing for the long winter months ahead. For many in our community, particularly our farming families, winter is one of the busiest times of the year with the arrival of newborn calves and the extra demands of feeding stock. Yet it is comforting to know that spring is just around the corner.

This year has been a challenging one for many people. Winter is a time to rest, keep warm, take stock, and look ahead. Brighter days are surely on their way when the sun begins to shine a little longer and the countryside bursts back into life.

The museum has certainly been busy recently with the installation of our latest exhibition—something guaranteed to lift the spirits. Without giving too much away, visitors are sure to feel inspired by the beautiful collection of quilts featured in Shared Threads, an exhibition curated by Sandra Berry. The creativity, skill, and stories woven into these works make it a display not to be missed.

We would also like to thank everyone who has taken the time in recent months to provide feedback on our newsletter. We appreciate your comments, enquiries about the stories we share, and suggestions for future content. One of the greatest pleasures of our work is helping to tell the stories of Albertland families and ancestors, and your support and interest encourage us to continue that journey.

Stay warm, take care, and we look forward to bringing you another edition next month.

Warm regards,
Rose and Rob

R H Culpan - Cash Drapers - Our Calendar Story

For those of you lucky enough to have purchased one of our 2026 calendars, you will have noticed the R H Culpan, Cash Drapers featured in the month of June.

Harry Culpan: The Man Who Bet on Wellsford

When the little township of Wellsford began to stir with the promise of growth in the late 1920s, few could have guessed that one newcomer would help shape its future for decades to come.

In 1929, Robert Henry “Harry” Culpan arrived in Wellsford carrying little more than experience, determination, and an unshakable belief in the town’s potential. Born and raised in Coromandel, Harry had learned early that life offered no guarantees. When his father died, leaving behind seven children and dreams of goldfield riches that never quite materialised, young Harry stepped into responsibility. As the eldest child, he found work in the clothing trade, beginning an association that would last a lifetime.

The years that followed took him across North Auckland as a travelling representative for Archie Clark & Company. His journeys were not glamorous. He travelled by coach, steamer, railway, and often horseback, visiting isolated settlements and learning the character of the region. Later he worked for Caro and Jarrett Ltd, but all the while another ambition was forming.

Harry was looking for a town with a future. He found it in Wellsford.

Where others saw a modest rural settlement, Harry saw opportunity. He was convinced the town was destined to grow, and he was prepared to grow with it.

In 1930, at the very height of the Great Depression, Harry opened his first business premises in Wellsford. It was a bold move in what many considered a disastrous year to start a business. The shop stood on property he had purchased where Albert Anderson and Doug Bell once operated their garage. While the business got underway, Harry lived a simple bachelor existence in former mechanics’ quarters behind the building, taking his meals next door at Mrs McDonald’s establishment.



Back in Auckland, his wife Clarice Webb Culpan and their young daughters, Lola and Elaine, remained for a time in the family home on Dominion Road. Clarice was a woman of accomplishment in her own right, sister of a future New Zealand High Commissioner, and later a participant in Wellsford’s vibrant drama scene.

Harry’s business prospered despite difficult times. By about 1932, he had built a family home on a commanding double section in Rodney Street. Yet even this was only a stepping stone.

His next project revealed just how much confidence he had in Wellsford.

In 1936, while many New Zealand towns were still recovering from economic hardship, Harry commissioned a substantial new commercial block built in permanent materials. It included modern living accommodation upstairs and housed the Bank of New Zealand beside the main entrance. It was a statement that Wellsford’s future was bright.

The opening of the new building triggered what locals later remembered as a remarkable chain of moves. On a single day, the Culpan family shifted into their new residence, BNZ manager Frank Moss relocated to the former Culpan home, and builder Harry Wallace moved into another property. The reshuffling became part of local folklore, a sign of a town constantly evolving.

To many people, Harry cultivated the image of a hard-driving businessman. He could appear tough, determined,

even uncompromising. Yet those who knew him best saw another side. Beneath the commercial instincts was a generous and deeply community-minded man.

One story became legendary.

A subscription list circulated around Wellsford seeking donations of five Journey of the Matilda Wattenbach The Albertland Heritage Museum recently celebrated the “29th of May” with an Open Day and Book Fair due to the unsettling time that we are currently experiencing with our economy, price of petrol and global uncertainty. King Neptune and his colourful entourage came aboard to initiate those crossing the line for the first time. The ceremony provided much amusement and laughter for passengers who by this time had spent more than a month at sea. During this time, they had experienced almost every aspect of ocean travel – celebration and sorrow, storms and calm seas, worship and entertainment, companionship and hardship. Through it all they remained focused on the vision that had brought them all together, the hope of establishing a new community in the Albertland on the shores of the Kaipara Harbour. pounds? to purchase additional land for Centennial Park.

When approached, Harry immediately refused.

“No,” he said firmly. “I won’t give five pounds for that.”

The collector was stunned.

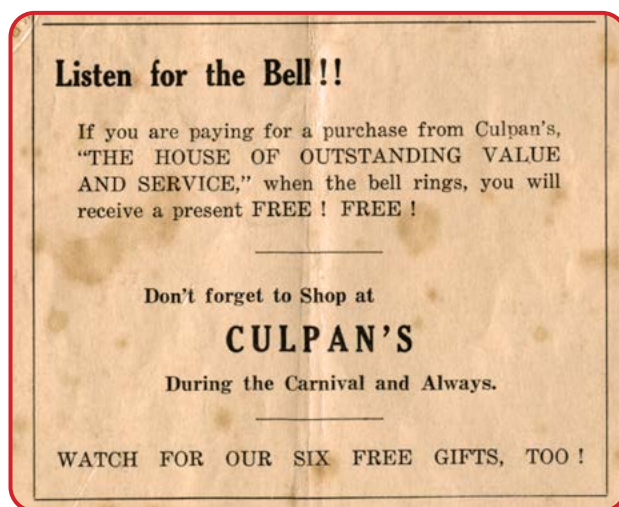
Then Harry continued without the slightest smile.

“But I will give twenty-five.” And he did.

That gesture captured the essence of the man. He disliked doing things by halves.

His greatest contribution, however, was not in business or buildings. It was education.

Harry devoted enormous energy to the development of Wellsford Consolidated School and its District High School, helping create a full post-primary education facility that served families across a wide rural district. He spent four years on the Auckland Education Board, but it was his local educational work that became his most lasting legacy. Generations of children benefited from opportunities that might never have existed without his persistence and advocacy.



Community service became a constant thread through his life. He served as Vice-President of the Wellsford Business People's Association when it was formed in 1937 and was a Charter Member of Lodge Wellsford No. 306. Whether through business, education, civic organisations, or charitable causes, Harry was always involved in building something larger than himself.

The post-war years brought further development. Never content to stand still, Harry rebuilt earlier premises in permanent materials, creating the commercial block that would later house businesses such as Moe Thompson's, Jim Sellar's, and Fred Preece's. Once again, he invested not only in his own future but in Wellsford's. Meanwhile, Clarice contributed to the cultural life of the town. In 1947 she appeared in the Wellsford Drama Club production of Noel Coward's Blythe Spirit, reflecting the family's deep engagement with community life beyond commerce.

By the time Harry Culpan died in June 1961 at the age of seventy-eight, Wellsford had become the thriving centre he had envisioned more than thirty years earlier. The buildings he erected stood as visible reminders of his confidence in the town, but his true legacy was less tangible.

His true legacy were the school classrooms filled with local children, the businesses that followed his lead and invested in the town and the community spirit that he embodied – a spirit that believed progress was worth supporting, not with the minimum contribution required, but with everything one could reasonably give.

Harry Culpan had arrived in Wellsford as a businessman but became one of the architects of its future.

BLOOD CANCER - Auckland 2nd August 2026

Barbara Lane's Story

Having been through treatment for blood cancer myself, I'm now supporting Blood Cancer NZ by raising funds and climbing the Sky Tower in Auckland on the 2nd of August 2026. I would love for you to join me by making a donation online at my page through this charity as follows:

<https://www.stepupchallenge.org.nz/barbara-lane>

Your donation goes directly to Blood Cancer NZ and records against how much I have managed to raise.

A scan in November 2012 showed a tumour growing in my left femur and this blood disorder was Primary Bone Lymphoma which at that time was a rare form, mainly affecting men in their 50's. Since then, I personally have come to know of others who have developed the same blood disorder so not as rare now as in the past.

The drug that killed the cancer cells became free 2 years before I was diagnosed. I am so grateful to all the medical professionals that helped me through 6 months of hospital visits and the chemotherapy with follow-ups until given the 'all clear' 5 years later. There was no question of my following any other path to kill those rogue blood cells.

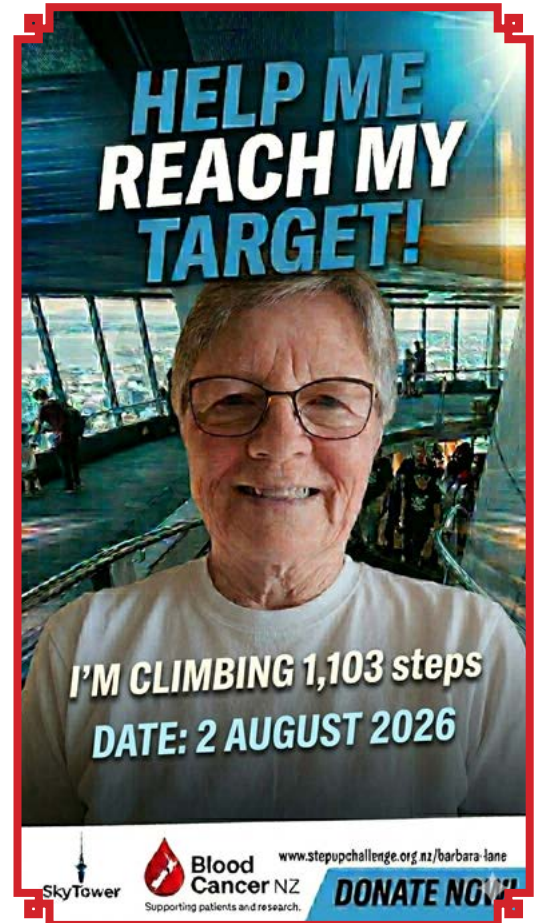
Very thankful to all my family, friends and neighbours who helped me get through all the ups and downs.

I give my thanks in advance for your time in reading this email and considering supporting me in this very worthwhile cause.

All my very best to you.

With love and thanks again.

Barbara



The Colin Rotherham Story' Closes

I hope many of you had the opportunity to visit the museum and enjoy our wonderful Anzac Day display curated by Diane Smith.

The exhibition told the story of local serviceman Colin Rotherham, who enlisted during World War II and spent several years serving in Egypt, separated from his young family at home.

The display was very well received, and we were delighted to welcome Colin's daughters, Maureen and Raewyn (née Rotherham), who visited to see our interpretation of their father's story, based on the diary generously donated by the family.



Maureen was surprised to see herself as a young child tucked up in our old cane pushchair. Thank you to Colin's family for sharing this special connection with us.

Our New Exhibition 'Shared Threads'

Showcases quilts created by local craftswomen who meet each week at Clever Endeavours here in Wellsford. This shop owned by Trish and Peter Cox is a one stop shop for all your quilting and sewing needs. Through their shared love of quilting, the Friday Crafters gather together to exchange stories, support one another with projects, and enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of the group.

The exhibition has been curated by Sandra Berry, who has volunteered at the museum for the past two years and is also a member of the Friday Crafters group.

Alongside the beautiful contemporary quilts are several hidden treasures from the Albertland Heritage Museum collection. Without giving too much away, one remarkable quilt is believed to be around 200 years old and may even have belonged to one of the original Albertland settlers.

To learn more about this fascinating quilt and to enjoy the beauty and craftsmanship on display, we invite you to visit the exhibition. This display will be open on Saturday 27th June and will run until 31st August.



**Sandra Berry Curator of current
'Shared Threads' Exhibition**

The museum is open Wednesday to Saturday from 11am to 3pm, and Sundays from 1pm to 3pm. We are also happy to open by arrangement for groups of six or more outside our regular hours.

Admission: \$5 per person.



Early Victorian Quilt

Remarkable quilt is believed to be around 200 years old



Birthday Wishes for June

Wishing everyone who celebrated a birthday this month a very Happy Birthday! We hope you had a wonderful day surrounded by family, friends, and plenty of special moments. Here's wishing you all the very best for the year ahead.

A Happy Birthday to Clare Joensen, Emma Eagle, Peter Cox, Gillian Reid and Kerrie Reid.

Quotation for June

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless” – Sherry Anderson

The author of this month’s quotation is Sherry Ruth Anderson, PhD, who was educated at Goucher College and the University of Toronto. Dr Anderson has served as Associate Professor and Head of Psychological Research at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry and is the author of numerous articles on psychology. She is also co-author of the bestselling book *The Feminine Face of God*.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK (14 – 20 June)

Recently, nationwide we have celebrated National Volunteer Week (14–20 June).

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our own wonderful volunteers and the things that they do. Throughout the year they generously give their time to support the museum in many ways – greeting visitors, assisting with projects, restoring artefacts, carrying out maintenance, creating displays, researching local history, and tackling the many other jobs that come their way.

If volunteering at the museum is something that interests you, we would love to hear from you. Please come and talk to us or you can phone 09 423 8181.

To each and every one of our volunteers, thank you for your dedication, enthusiasm, and the valuable contribution you make to preserving and sharing our local heritage.

Here are some photos of our volunteers in action.



Volunteers preparing Shared Threads exhibition



Diane Smith curator of Colin Rotherham exhibition



Volunteers doing Community Planting



29th of May Open Day



29th of May Open Day



Volunteers at Warkworth A & P Show



Volunteers at Albertland some new and some old

Can Pigs Really Fly ??

Found in the Wellsford Goodwill Magazine of 1939. Unfortunately, I have been unable to determine whether this tale is based on a true event with names changed, or whether it is purely a work of fiction. Whatever its origins, some parts seem just a little too far-fetched for even the most vivid imagination!

Letter to Insurance Company re Damage to Car.

The Manager,

I.M.P. Insurance Co., Ltd.,

AUCKLAND, CI,

Dear Sir,

I have to report damage to my car, No. 107321, which was occasioned yesterday (Sale Day) in Wellsford.

I was driving very cautiously in second gear at about eight miles per hour well in to the left hand side of Rodney Street, blowing the horn continually, and keeping a sharp look out owing to the number of livestock about, when (as usually happens when my car goes over a bump), the near side door flew open.

I immediately braked, changed into reverse, accelerated and pulled up dead within five yards. (N.B. – My brakes are in quite good order, but I use reverse to take any sudden strain). Just as I was stopping a herd of full-grown pigs belonging to Mr. Ziff Grunt, of Greenmount, Upper Wayby, galloped out of the road leading from the station, frightened, asserts Mr. Grunt, by the noise made by my car. Judge my consternation and annoyance when, as I was changing into neutral, the largest of them rushed at the open door, leapt heavily into my car, and clambered squealing and kicking on to the back seat, where it sat on a bag of new-laid eggs damaging all six (at 2/4 per dozen). The rest of the herd, checked by the farmer, wheeled round in a body against the open door, which promptly slammed and jammed.

As you will appreciate, especially if you have ever encountered a full-grown, frightened Large White at close quarters, my first desire was to get out of the car. Unfortunately, I could not open the door on my side owing to traffic. I therefore did what I could do to pacify the animal, which was struggling furiously and had already put one foot through the speedometer and one through the back window. Not until it had twice tried to bite me, however, was I compelled in self-defence to strike it smartly on the snout with the starting handle.

The consequence was not what I had anticipated. I thought it would cow the animal. Actually it caused it to slip sideways, slither on to the front seat, hit the electric horn (which jammed) and fetch up in difficulties on the floor, thereby shoving the handbrake forward and wedging there. The car at once started moving down towards the station with the horn blasting and the animal squealing and myself in imminent danger of being lacerated by its feet.

The movement of the car, however, seemed to soothe the animal, because directly I applied the footbrake it sensed the diminution in speed and began struggling again. Hoping, therefore, than an increase in speed would keep the animal completely quiet, I put my left foot on the clutch to engage the gears and was instantly bitten very severely on the ankle. Consequently, I was forced to let the car freewheel towards the station, with my knees drawn up under my chin and the pig occupying the entire floor space. I would like you to note that I had no choice but to do this, as Mr. Grunt alleges that I was trying to steal his pig. Eventually, as we hit the railway lines, the bump sent the door of my car flying open and the pig flying out, much to my relief.

The damage done to my car consists of a broken back window, a broken speedometer, torn upholstery and mats, and a singularly unpleasant odour which still persists in spite of repeated applications of lavender water. The pig was undamaged but Mr. Grunt asserts that it is suffering from a form of pig hysteria. Am I liable because my car door swung open, and if so, does my policy indemnify me against pig hysteria, however caused?

I also wish to claim medical expenses for treatment to my left ankle, and for a new starting handle which was bent when I tapped the animal's snout.

Yours faithfully,

G. H. D. DODGE

P.S. – Is a pig a third party within the meaning of the Act?

Catalogue Number 2004.2.96.122

Object Name

Description:

Wellsford Stock Yard Sale - NAK & Alfred Buckland saleyards, (Opposite present day, 2015, Library) Farmers Trading Co in background

Photographer Marsh, Harold

Place Wellsford



PIC OF THE MONTH

Can you solve this mystery?

This great photograph from the 'Don Worsnop Collection' was taken sometime around the 1950s—but unfortunately Don wasn't always the best at cataloguing his photographs, and over the years many of the details have been lost.

Can you help us solve the mystery?

We would love to know:

- Who is this young man?
- What make and model is the car?
- Approximately what year was this photograph taken?

As Don was well known for documenting our local A & P Show days, we think this photograph was very likely taken at one of those events.

If you recognise the young man, the vehicle, or have any clues at all, please email the museum, albertlandmuseum@gmail.com or get in touch on 09 423 8181. \

Every little piece of information helps us preserve the stories behind these wonderful photographs.



Do you know who I am ??

What's On

Don't forget School Holidays are just around the corner!

End of Term 2 - Saturday, July 4 to Sunday, July 19

If you haven't been to the museum for a while, bring your family in for a visit.

10th June 2026 – Matariki Day at Te Hana Te Ao Marama - 10.00 – 2.00pm (see flier attached)

12th June 2026 – Port Albert Community Church Service – 1.30pm at Church Hill Road, Port Albert. Please bring a plate.

2nd August 2026 – Barbara Lane 'Step Up Challenge' – don't forget to support Barbara with this very worthy cause.

The Curator's Chronicle

This month our volunteers have been busy around the museum. Our Anzac Day display featuring local soldier Colin Rotherham and his wife Eva has now made way for a vibrant quilting exhibition. More about this exhibition appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

Following a reshuffle of furniture around the museum, our beautiful kauri washstand was moved into the main gallery. Diane, one of our newest volunteers, decided to decorate it with a few interesting items, which soon became the inspiration for this month's story.

Among the treasures were two unusual objects known as Half Doll Whisks, Crumb Brushes, or Vanity Brushes. Dating from the Art Deco era of the 1930s, they were used to sweep away

loose face powder, remove lint from clothing, or brush crumbs from a table. Attractive and decorative, they were designed to take pride of place on a woman's dressing table.

The ceramic figures reflect the glamour of the Jazz Age, featuring finger-wave hairstyles, cloche hats, dramatic makeup, and elegant geometric styling. The most valuable examples were finely detailed German-made brushes, often marked with mould numbers. However, colourful hand-painted versions were also produced in Japan during the interwar years. Fabric ribbons around the waist held the small brush or whisk attached to the painted porcelain figure.

These particular brushes were donated to the museum by the family of Elva Reid. Included with them was a note written by Elva in 1994, recalling that she had seen similar brushes featured on the television programme Antiques Roadshow, where they were valued at the princely sum of \$34.

On closer inspection, however, it appears that our examples are the Japanese versions, which are generally less valuable. One has been repaired after its head became detached, while the other is missing its skirt, reducing their monetary value. Nevertheless, they remain beautiful and unusual objects, and we are delighted to preserve



them as part of our collection.

Our second item displayed on the washstand is a vintage Art Deco manicure caddy set made of celluloid, a material often marketed as “French Ivory” or Pyralin. These elegant dressing-table organisers were popular from the late nineteenth century through to the 1930s.

The cream-coloured early plastic was designed to imitate expensive ivory, complete with delicate parallel grain lines that closely resembled the real thing. The hanging racks held an assortment of manicure tools, including a nail file, cuticle pusher, cuticle knife, and sometimes clippers or tweezers.

The base, often shaped like a small boat, usually contained a nail buffer or brush, along with lidded containers for storing cuticle creams, powders, or nail polish. Such sets were considered essential grooming accessories and were prized possessions on many dressing tables.

If you look closely at the upright posts supporting the hanging utensils, you will notice small branch-like arms. These provided a convenient place to hang rings while performing a manicure, adding both practicality and charm to the design.

Today these manicure caddy sets offer a fascinating glimpse into the grooming habits and decorative tastes of the Art Deco era. Their graceful styling and clever functionality continue to make them attractive collector's items and treasured museum pieces.

All of these fascinating items sit atop our beautiful kauri washstand, a piece about which unfortunately very little is known. While its history remains a mystery, its craftsmanship and rich timber make it an attractive feature in our gallery.

The washstand provides the perfect setting for these elegant personal possessions from a bygone era. Together, the half doll whisks, manicure caddy, and washstand offer a glimpse into the daily routines and grooming rituals of earlier generations, reminding us that even ordinary household

objects can tell extraordinary stories about the people who once used and treasured them.

Footnote:

These two delightful Art Deco examples were discovered during a quick online search.



The tape-measure head is full of charm and whimsy, while the cigarette holder demonstrates how the art deco style was incorporated into a wide variety of decorative and practical household items.

Today, both would be considered highly collectable examples of Art Deco design and craftsmanship.



A Gum Spear Affray in Albertland, 1876

There is no denying that life as a gumdigger in Albertland during the 1870s was hard. Men worked long hours in often isolated conditions, battling mud, weather, and uncertainty in the hope of finding enough kauri gum to earn a living. Tempers could easily fray, and on 3 June 1876 a disagreement between two young gum diggers escalated into one of the most serious assaults recorded in the district's early history.

The men involved were 21-year-old Jeremiah Pynne and John Hewson (sometimes reported in newspapers as Hudson). They lived in the same whare and, like many gum diggers of the period, shared some of their equipment. On the day in question, they ventured out to the gumfields with only two gum spears and a single spade between them.

After working for some time each man had found a small quantity of gum. At this point Hewson was using the spade. According to evidence later given in court, Pynne asked to borrow it so he could dig around a suspected gum deposit. Hewson refused, telling him there was no point digging there and accompanying his refusal with language that was far from friendly.

Pynne asked again. This time Hewson tossed the spade towards him and turned away, continuing to insist that digging would be useless. Words were exchanged and tempers boiled over. Exactly what happened next was disputed. Hewson claimed that he struck Pynne but did not knock him down. Other reports suggested that Pynne had been knocked to the ground.



2004.2.2007.43 Gumdiggers at work Opou 15/07/1902 - W H Marsh

What is certain is that within seconds Pynne retaliated with the gum spear he was carrying. The sharpened spear struck Hewson in the left side and passed completely through his body, emerging on the opposite side. The wound was horrific.

"You have killed me," Hewson cried out as he fell to the ground.

Although badly injured, he managed to rise and attempted to walk towards several gum diggers working nearby. Before he could reach them, he collapsed. His cries for help were heard by fellow gumdigger Patrick O'Connor, who hurried to the scene.

When O'Connor asked what had happened, Hewson replied simply, "Pynne has stabbed me."

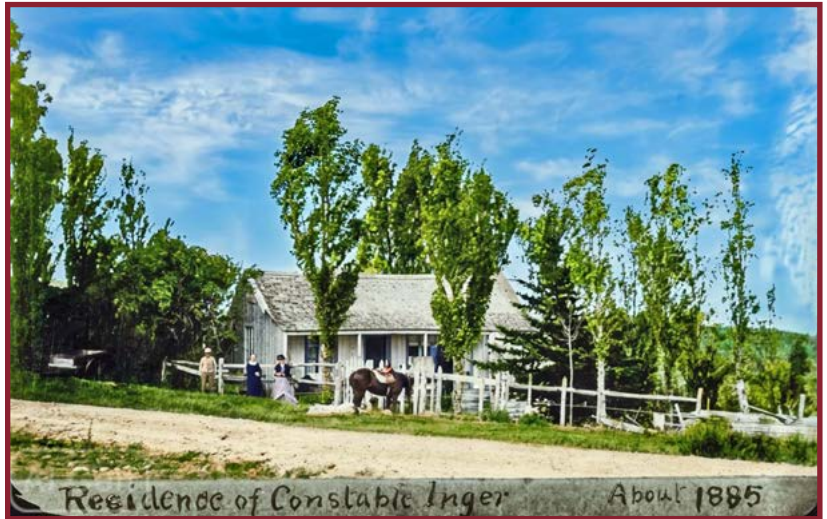
At first O'Connor thought the injury was superficial, but upon examining Hewson more closely he realised the spear had penetrated right through his body. The seriousness of the situation became immediately apparent. Additional assistance was summoned and local resident George Thomas Hunt attended to the injured man, bathing and dressing the wound as best he could.

The isolated nature of Albertland made obtaining medical assistance difficult. On Sunday, information reached Constable Inger at Port Albert, who immediately arrested Pynne. The constable then travelled to Lower Oruawharo in search of a doctor. At the same time, Fred Worker of Wellsford rode across to Otamatea where, fortunately, he found Dr Marks visiting at the home of the Rev. Mr Gittos.

Dr Marks and Worker set off at once, arriving in Port Albert on Tuesday evening. Early the next morning the doctor travelled to the scene of the affray and attended to Hewson, whose suffering had become severe.

Considering the nature of the injury and the delay in obtaining medical treatment, it was remarkable that he survived.

That same Wednesday, Pynne appeared before a sitting of local Justices held in the Port Albert Public Hall. Presiding were John Shepherd, M.P.C., together with J. Dudding and William Payne, J.P.s. Evidence was heard from Constable Inger, Patrick O'Connor, George Hunt and Dr Marks. After considering the testimony, the Bench committed Pynne to stand trial at the next sitting of the Supreme Court on a charge of stabbing with intent to do grievous bodily harm.



The difficulties faced by rural law enforcement were highlighted by what followed. Port Albert had no public lock-up, so Constable Inger was forced to keep his prisoner under guard in his own house. To prevent escape, he nailed shut the windows and maintained a personal watch over Pynne for forty-eight hours while awaiting transport.

When the coastal steamer Minnie Casey arrived, constable and prisoner boarded for the journey south. Severe weather delayed their progress and they failed to reach Helensville in time to catch the train to Riverhead. Undeterred, Constable Inger continued the journey on foot with his prisoner, who was secured with handcuffs described by one newspaper as "a pair of neat bracelets." The pair eventually reached Auckland at eight o'clock on Saturday evening. Contemporary reports praised the constable's determination and perseverance in carrying out his duty despite the difficult conditions.

The case came before the Supreme Court on 4 July 1876. The courtroom was crowded with interest. John Hewson, still recovering from his wounds and described as being in a very weak condition, attended and was provided with a seat while giving evidence.

Hewson recounted the argument over the spade and admitted that he had struck Pynne before being stabbed. He stated that after the incident Pynne appeared genuinely remorseful, offering to accompany him home and expressing regret for what had occurred. Hewson also confirmed that Pynne had offered assistance after the stabbing.



2004.2.95.342 Jack Riley and the Gumdiggers Whare - W H Marsh

Patrick Conway, a gumdigger who had been working nearby, testified that he had heard Hewson's cries and gone to help. He recalled saying to Pynne, "You are a nice sort of mates to fall out like this," to which Pynne replied that they were not mates. Conway also remembered Pynne saying that Hewson had struck him first and that he would not otherwise have used the spear.

George Thomas Hunt gave evidence that shortly after the incident Pynne told him that Hewson had used filthy language, thrown the spade at him and struck him on the ear. Hunt also recalled Pynne saying that if he had possessed a tomahawk, he would have used it. However, Hunt noted that Pynne was in a highly excited state

at the time.

Dr Marks described the wound to the court. The spear had entered below the ribs on the left side and caused serious internal injuries. Fortunately, despite the severity of the wound, the doctor believed Hewson would recover fully and eventually return to work.

Counsel for the defence argued that there had been no premeditated malice. They emphasised the offensive language, physical assault and provocation that had preceded the stabbing and urged the jury to take into account Pynne's youth and previous good character. They argued that a prison sentence would place the young man among hardened criminals and permanently mark him as an offender.

In summing up, the Judge acknowledged the circumstances but reminded the jury that the deliberate use of a dangerous weapon capable of causing grievous bodily harm carried its own implications. A gum spear was not a harmless implement, and thrusting it into another man's body could not be justified merely because of an argument or a blow.

The jury deliberated for approximately forty-five minutes before returning a verdict of guilty. However, they strongly recommended mercy, citing both the prisoner's youth and the considerable provocation he had received.

Several respected local residents, including Joseph Bradley, Edward Kelly, Patrick Heath, George Laurence and Mr Bartley, appeared to testify to Pynne's previously good character.

Taking these factors into account, the Judge imposed what he described as a lenient sentence: nine months' imprisonment with hard labour.

For a quarrel that began over the use of a spade on a remote Albertland gumfield, the consequences were profound. One young man narrowly escaped death, while the other found himself serving a prison sentence. The incident offers a fascinating glimpse into the harsh realities of gumfield life, the challenges faced by early law enforcement in Albertland, and the rough justice of colonial New Zealand.

Shared Threads Opening



**Welcome by President Clare
Introducing Exhibition Curator Sandra**

**Invited Guests to the opening of the
Exhibition**



Journey of the Matilda Wattenbach

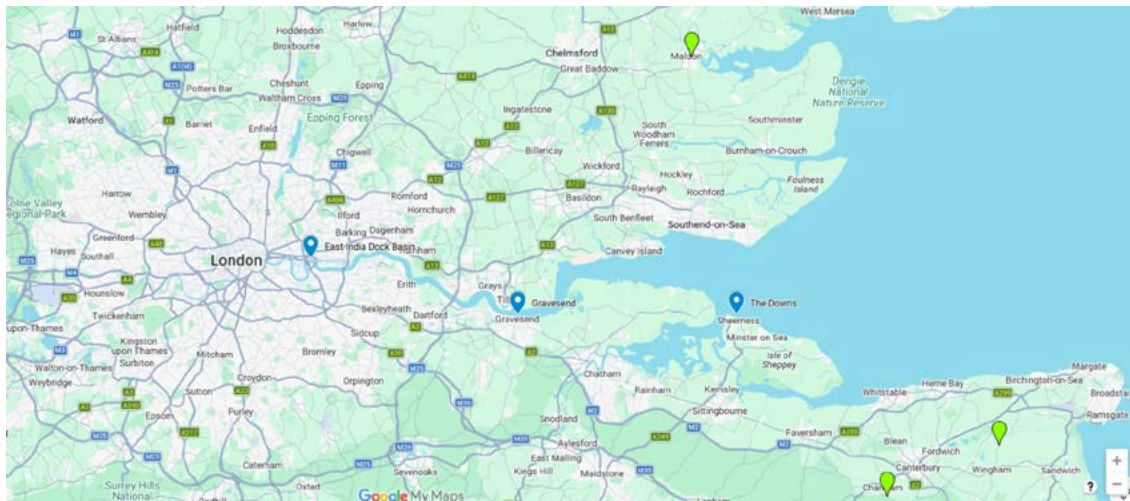
The Albertland Heritage Museum recently celebrated the “29th of May” with an Open Day and Book Fair due to the unsettling time that we are currently experiencing with our economy, price of petrol and global uncertainty. In this newsletter we are going to look back at the incredible first few weeks of the journey of the Matilda Wattenbach. June is the month when the Matilda Wattenbach and the Hanover began their journey together making their way from England towards New Zealand. They had left the East India Docks amidst scenes of great excitement and emotion on the crowded docks.

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vols43-4/pp575-582>

More onlookers accompanied the Albertland Settlers as far as Gravesend postponing their sadness until the last possible moment.

The final stage of departure was the inspection by the Government Emigration Commissioners at Gravesend just before the two boats departed for the open seas. The progress was slow. Light and contrary winds forced the vessels to anchor once more off Dover and the Downs before they could continue their journey down the English Channel.

On Sunday 1st June, as the ship made its way southward, the first Divine Service was held on board. Regular religious services became an important feature of the voyage with the gatherings providing comfort and a sense of unity as families left behind everything, they had known to face an uncertain future on the other side of the world.



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The weeks that followed bought challenges and adventure with a series of severe gales in the Bay of Biscay between 5th and 12th of June. The heavy seas crashed

over the decks and the vessels pitched and rolled violently. But despite this rough weather their worshipping continued. On Sunday 8th June their divine service was held on the main deck after conditions had made it impossible to gather on the poop deck.

Before very long the weather improved and life on board settled into a routine. On 9th June a concert was held with passengers from all classes contributing songs and entertainment. This helped to lift the spirits of all those on board. By mid-June another divine service was held on the same day the passengers sighted the island of Porto Santo and the Desertas Islands near Madeira. These distant landfalls provided a welcome break from the endless seas.

Eventually the vessel moved further south into warmer waters and the weather became calmer. Flying fish were frequently seen skimming across the ocean surface. Yet the voyage was not without tragedy. On 23rd June, a seaman named Robertson fell from the rigging and suffered severe injuries. He died later the same night and the following morning was buried at sea, a solemn reminder of how dangerous it was for those who worked aboard these ships.

The settlers also enjoyed occasional contact with the outside world and on 27th June they met the British corvette, the “Altona” whose officers came aboard to exchange news and take the large mail bags back to England for the Albertlanders. The “Altona’s” band played a beautiful selection of music for the passengers and the two vessels parted amidst enthusiastic cheering.

Religious observance continued on the 29th of June bringing passengers together once again for worship and reflection. Early July marked an important milestone with the Matilda Wattenbach crossing the Equator. As was customary, King Neptune and his colourful entourage came aboard to initiate those crossing the line for the first time. The ceremony provided much amusement and laughter for passengers who by this time had spent more than a month at sea. During this time, they had experienced almost every aspect of ocean travel – celebration and sorrow, storms and calm seas, worship and entertainment, companionship and hardship.

Through it all they remained focused on the vision that had bought them all together, the hope of establishing a new community in the Albertland on the shores of the Kaipara Harbour.

NAU MAI HAERE MAI: COME CELEBRATE

MATARIKI
 WHERE: TE HANA TE AO MARAMA
 311 STATE HIGHWAY 1, TE HANA
 TIME: 10 AM TO 2 PM
 DATE: 10TH OF JULY 2026
 Stalls
 Mirimiri
 Free Hangi served at
 12.30pm
 Free Rides
 Playground Castle, Vertical Bungee
 Free Sausage sizzle
 Kids face painting
 Free entertainment
 Later that afternoon we have
 line dancing from 3pm to 5pm
 For more information call
 0210705948

Green by Nature Te Hana Te Ao Marama Māori Cultural Centre RODNEY COMMUNITY

NEW QUILTING EXHIBITION

Shared Threads

OPENING
 28th June - 31st December

Come along and see
 the work of local group
 'Friday Crafters'

Wed - Sat
 11 - 3 pm
 Sun
 1 - 3 pm

Albertland Heritage Museum
 Library Plaza
 15 Port Albert Road
 Wellsford
 Phone 09 423 8181

**HELP ME
 REACH MY
 TARGET!**

I'M CLIMBING 1,103 steps
 DATE: 2 AUGUST 2026

Mark these
 events in
 your Calendar