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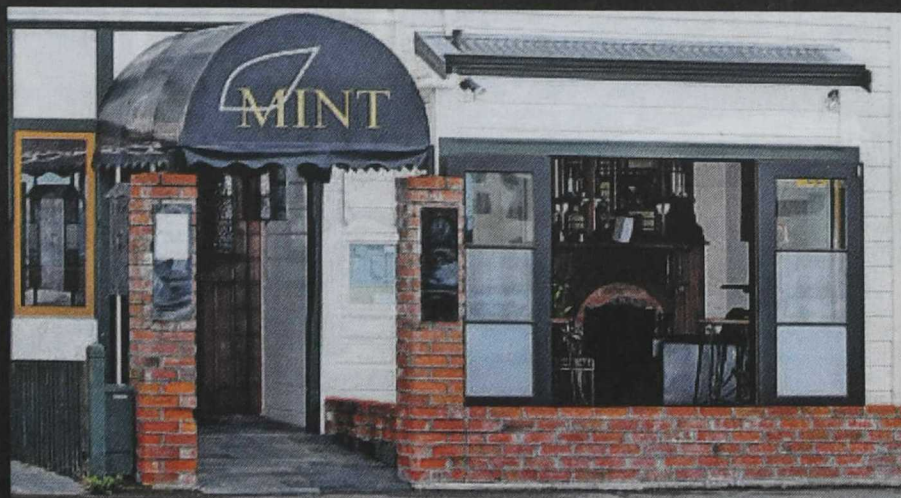


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# INTRODUCTION

This publication marks two occasions in the life of Napier; the first being 160 years since Alfred Domett in 1854 determined that the town he was charged with creating would be called Napier. The second is 140 years since Napier became a borough in 1874 and elected its own council representatives. Napier people were keen to push forward their town, and some of their initiatives, such as the Thirty Thousand Club, enhanced the town's environment – especially the Marine Parade which was admired throughout the colony.

Napier was the first European town to be given a name in Hawke's Bay. Many thought Napier was not an ideal place to start a settlement due to the many swamps and lagoons, and sea that surrounded it, and they would no doubt be surprised at how Napier now looks. While Māori were attracted to the bounty of seafood in the Ahuriri area, Europeans recognised this would be an ideal place for settlement due to the natural harbour, as coastal transport was essential for any fledgling area's growth. The importance of Napier, due to the harbours, would also be essential to the later economic strength of Hawke's Bay, especially with refrigerated shipping of meat beginning in the 1880s.

The influence of two men, who each lived in Napier for only about two years and in different centuries, can still be seen today. Alfred Domett created early Napier by surveying the town, and creating reserves, and John Barton was one of the commissioners who guided reconstruction after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake.

I have tried to focus of aspects of Napier that have not received as much coverage before, so I hope you enjoy the stories of our founding town in Hawke's Bay – Napier: "Bright, breezy and beautiful".

**Michael Fowler**  
mfhistory@gmail.com



**Napier Clock:** One of the projects of the Thirty Thousand Club to beautify the Marine Parade.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heather Mathie and Claire Viskovic from National Library; Gail Pope, MTG Hawke's Bay; Shirley Randell; Madelon van Zijl de Jong; Gillian Christie; David Low; Hastings War Memorial Library; Napier Prison Tours; Bonny Hatami

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*Daily Telegraph*  
*Hawke's Bay Tribune*  
*Hastings Standard*

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# AHURIRI — THE BEGINNINGS OF NAPIER

While Captain Cook in 1769 named the sea area Hawke Bay (and the land mass was later called Hawke's Bay), after Lord Admiral Hawke, he never set foot on land on any of his three New Zealand Voyages. The land area he sailed past and referred to as a "bluff head" was Ahuriri, and it was likely named for Chief Tu Ahuriri. He arrived from Mahia near the end of the 17th century and along with his men dug a new harbour entrance, which is the present access to Port Ahuriri, or the inner harbour as it became known. Another possibility is offered by missionary, and later property owner and administrator/politician, William Colenso, who understood Ahuriri to mean "fierce rushing" in relation to the swift tidal current that existed in the inner lagoon.

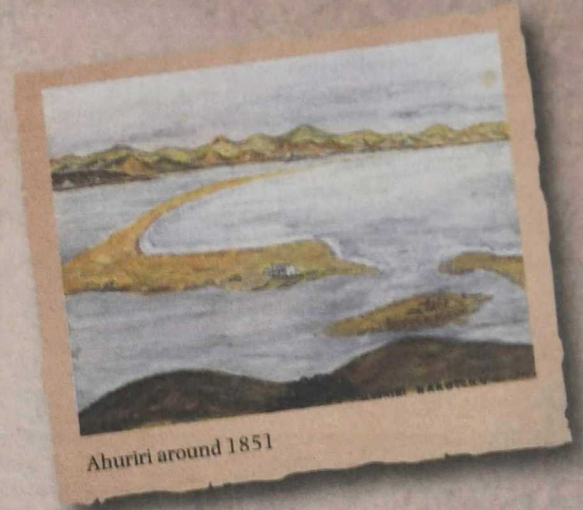
The earliest European settlers in Hawke's Bay were the whalers, who were reprimanded by William Colenso, (who arrived at Waitangi in 1844) at one point for trying to buy Māori wives. Hawke's Bay, or Ahuriri, the main place of settlement didn't have a great reputation in the 1850s before Alfred Domett arrived in 1854 to plan the town and bring some law and order. It was said that "...Hawke's Bay, which seems to be the Alsatia of the colony [an area in London where sanctuary could be had for perpetrators of every type of crime; abolished in the 1700s], where all disorderly and desperate characters resort to be out of the reach of the law". Alfred Domett indicates that

some places in Ahuriri were named after some of these undesirables when he arrived.

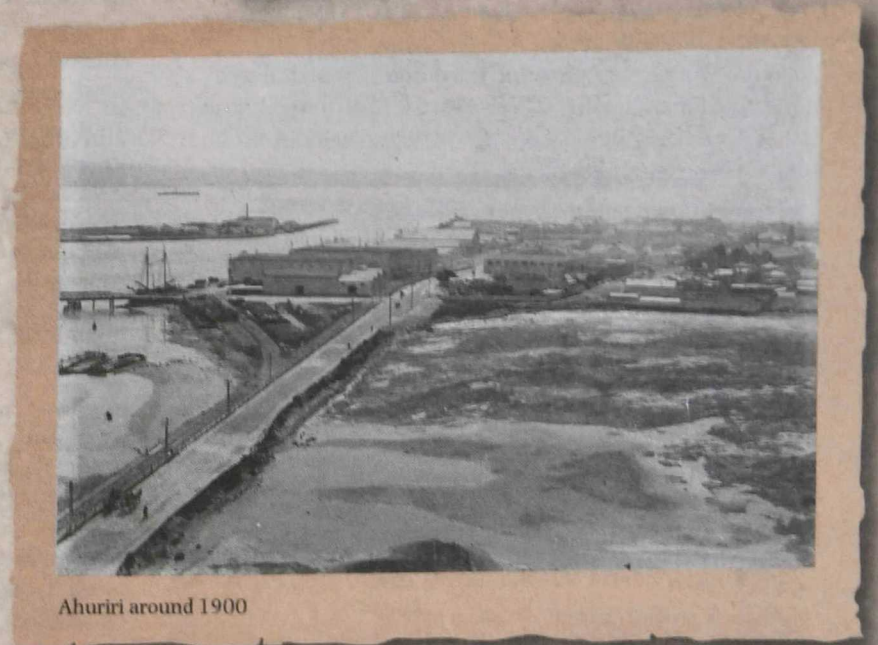
As to Ahuriri, Alfred Domett for one was not impressed and called the now Napier Hill a "precipitous island of barren, uninhabited ridges covered with fern and rough grass dissected by gorges and ravines, with a narrow strip of shingle skirting the cliffs, and joined by the mainland south by a five mile [includes modern CBD area] shingle bank ... a hopeless spot for a town site". W B Rhodes, the self-claimed first European owner of Ahuriri, (albeit dubiously and briefly) did not think much of the site either, and believed a town should be sited more towards the present Hastings.

Māori settlements around the area were in places such as Gough and Māori Islands, and William Rhodes noted that there was some settlement in 1839 on one of these islands in the Ahuriri tidal lagoon near Mataruahou (Napier Hill). These islands are now not visible due to land reclamation and the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake uplift.

The arrival of Alfred Domett in 1854, sent by Governor George Grey, would mean the end of the name Ahuriri as the dominant title of the area.



Ahuriri around 1851



Ahuriri around 1900

## ALFRED DOMETT

Alfred Domett (1811–1887), statesman and poet, was made Resident Magistrate and Commissioner of Crown lands in Hawke's Bay in January 1854, continuing until 1856. Governor George Grey appointed him, saying that "the large European and Native interests which are springing up there, render it necessary". His first task was to plan a new town – a skill he acquired while surveying in Canada as a young man. Around 1853, many settlers asked Governor George Grey to name the principal town of Hawke's Bay, Clive, after Sir Robert Clive of India. However the October 1853 death of Sir Charles Napier (1782–1853), the governor of Scinde province in India, must have swayed Alfred Domett to name Napier after him in 1854. (Clive, he thought, would be for a town situated in Pakowhai, not its present location).

Alfred surveyed suburban sections ranging in size from 2.5 to 8 acres on Scinde Island (Bluff Hill), but he was concerned that the steepness and lack of fuel for fires and water would make many of these hill sections unattractive – although several could be combined to make gardens or be used as paddocks. Town sections on the flatter areas on the hill and surrounding land were in quarter acre blocks. Land was reserved for schools, a town hall, hospital, gaol, cemetery, court, police station and even a slaughterhouse.

When it came to naming the streets, in keeping with the theme of Sir Charles Napier and India, Alfred Domett used the names Hastings, Hardinge and Wellesley, as well as Meeanee Quay and Clive Square for the recreational reserve. The bluff hill he named Scinde Island (it was then almost surrounded by sea) as this was the Indian province Sir Charles Napier governed. More Indian theme names, including Havelock

Scinde Island – Ahuriri being surrounded by sea, tidal lagoons and swamp, and a bluff hill that had few flat areas, led Alfred Domett to conclude his planned Napier was most unsuitable for settlement.



Governor George Grey visited Ahuriri in the early 1850s, and was convinced of its potential before sending Alfred Domett to lay out a town.



Alfred Domett as a young man, looking very much the dreamy poet.

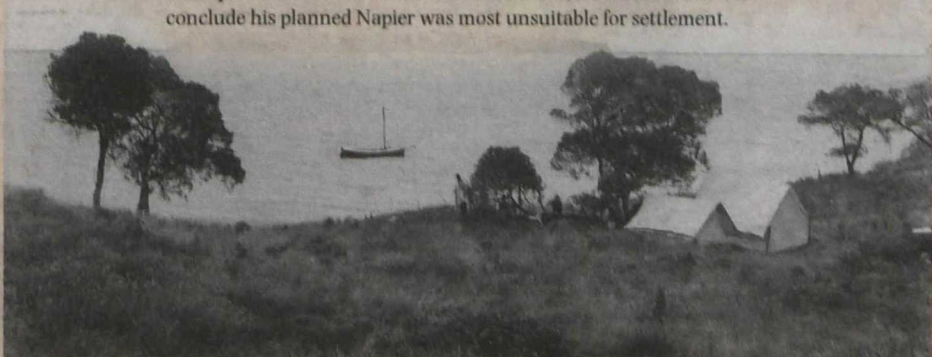
and Delhi, were added by the Hawke's Bay Provincial Council after the 1857 Indian Mutiny. It appears Alfred also renamed the three principal rivers of Hawke's Bay at this time after battles in India, hence Tuki Tuki became River Alma; Ngaruroro, River Plassey and Tutaekuri, River Miani. He then turned to his great love of literature and poetry, assigning street names such as Tennyson, Browning, Dickens and Chaucer. Alfred Domett was not fond of M ori names, finding them difficult to pronounce, and did his best to eliminate them in Hawke's Bay.

Upon leaving Napier in 1856, Alfred returned to Nelson as Commissioner of Crown Lands. He was elected as Nelson's representative for Parliament and had a seat on the Nelson Provincial Council. Alfred Domett's greatest political moment came when he was elected Premier (Prime Minister) in August 1862, serving until October

1863. His term was largely ineffectual, and he would disappear sometimes for days to write long memos on political subjects, which he would "inflict" upon his colleagues, who generally dismissed him as impractical. Perhaps his most notable achievement in Parliament was to have the seat of government moved from Auckland to Wellington, with his resolution in November 1863 that it "...should be removed to some suitable locality in the Cook Strait".

Alfred Domett returned to England in 1871, where he renewed his friendships with literary figures such as Brown and Tennyson. He was invited to stand for the British parliament, but refused.

Alfred Domett, whose legacy in Napier is among the most obvious through the name of the city and many of its streets, passed away in England on 2 November 1887.





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# NAPIER CEMETERY

Part of Alfred Domett's town planning in 1854 included 4.5 acres (1.8 hectares) set aside for the cemetery, which officially opened on Scinde Island in 1855. If necessary, more land could be taken from the neighbouring Botanical Gardens.

By the mid-1860s, it appears the cemetery had fallen into some disrepair and disorganisation. In 1867, some 12 years after opening, the Napier Cemetery was described as being in a "most disgraceful state" by the *Hawke's Bay Herald*, and some reorganisation under the direction of the Hawke's Bay Provincial Council was required in 1868. The cemetery was divided into four sections, with separate areas for Anglicans, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, and one for all other "religious sects". (The Jewish community successfully requested their own area in 1877.) Managers were appointed for each section, and the position of sexton was advertised for a salary of £75 (2014: \$8,500) plus a house. It was hoped he could sort out the "howling wilderness" that the cemetery had become. His

duties included digging all the graves. Fees were set for burials and grave digging. If a family could not afford burial fees, they could dig the grave themselves under the supervision of the sexton.

Before a sexton was appointed, soldiers from the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish cleared a mass of overgrowth which had crept over the graves of family belonging to various regiments. The *Hawke's Bay Herald*, which was continually scolding the Napier public over the state of the cemetery, hoped this would set an example to the civilians.

Michael McGrath was appointed as sexton in 1868, but it turned out that the revenue from the cemetery was not enough to cover expenses, so after being in the job only a year, he was dismissed and tenders were advertised for digging the graves.

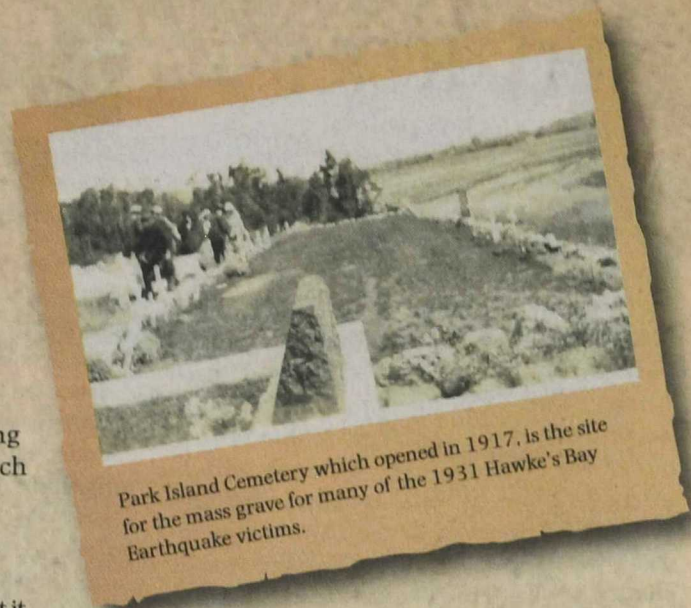
In 1870 the prison's hard labour gang planted cypress and other trees, which had been gifted by H R Russell of Waipukurau.

In 1874, my maternal great, great grandfather, Henry Smith was appointed as sexton, with sufficient revenue now able to support the position.

Some people got upset in 1877 when horses were grazed in the cemetery.

Many old colonists and pioneers are buried in the Napier cemetery, such as land commissioner Sir Donald McLean (1820-1877) and printer, missionary, botanist, politician and property owner William Colenso (1811-1899).

The Napier Cemetery closed in 1917, but families with plots could still be buried there, and the Park Island Cemetery opened that same year as the new burial ground.



Park Island Cemetery which opened in 1917, is the site for the mass grave for many of the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake victims.



Government Land buyer and administrator, Sir Donald McLean's (1820-1877) grave in Napier Cemetery.



Napier Cemetery on Bluff Hill opened in 1855.



## 30 Years Proudly Serving Napier

**As Napier celebrates 140 years, Electrotech celebrates its 30th Anniversary.**

Back in 1984 the dream to own his own business became a reality for Richie Richards as he formed Electrotech Controls Ltd. The family home garage in Tamatea served as Electrotech's first workshop, and the family Holden Kingswood became the very first company car (Pictured right).

Electrotech grew rapidly and the original workshop was quickly outgrown. The company was moved to new premises in the Onekawa Industrial Area and further expanded from there. Electrotech later purchased the former Gilbert's Drinks & Bottling Factory in Kennedy Road - an iconic landmark of Napier which Richie still owns, and he has since become an avid collector of Gilbert's bottles and artefacts. The company moved into and operated from the Gilbert's building in the 1990's up to recently.

Richie's drive and passion for quality local services saw the company quickly grow well beyond the original switchboard specialist and electrical engineering services the company offered. Controls services were soon added to the portfolio followed by security, telephone systems, calibration, data, and the Firetech division. The company staffing had increased significantly by 1990 that Autotech Vehicle Maintenance Ltd was also developed to service the company fleet of vehicles, and also the public market.

The 1990's saw Chilltech, Tech Plumbing & Gasfitting, Tech Construction and Tech Engineering businesses introduced, each adding another specific trade and complimentary to the services offered by Electrotech. Those companies are now amalgamated under Tech Mechanical Services Ltd.



With so many of Richie's companies working together on projects all over the province and nationwide, the need for a single representative brand was identified and the Tech Group was formed as an administrative company of Tech Mechanical Services Ltd, Electrotech Controls Ltd, and Autotech Vehicle Maintenance Services Ltd. The companies all provide design, build, install and maintenance services. With over 70 staff based in Napier we offer the most comprehensive portfolio of building services in Hawke's Bay.

The Tech Group of Companies Ltd has been honored to be a part of numerous prestigious installations all over Hawke's Bay throughout its history. Electrotech is immensely proud to have played its part in that history and looks forward to many years more in Napier.



Richie Richards - 1984



The former Gilberts Building in Kennedy Road - 1990





# NAPIER PRISONS

Alfred Domett, as Resident Magistrate (and Commissioner of Crown Lands) of Hawke's Bay, requested a policeman for the region in March 1854. But when one was sent up from Wellington in April, he was so disgusted by the man's lack of uniform, equipment or credentials that he paid a return fare to send him back. The replacement, Henry Groom, didn't impress Alfred Domett much either, as he commented: "I only have one policeman; he is not young and vigorous or determined enough to be of much, if any use."

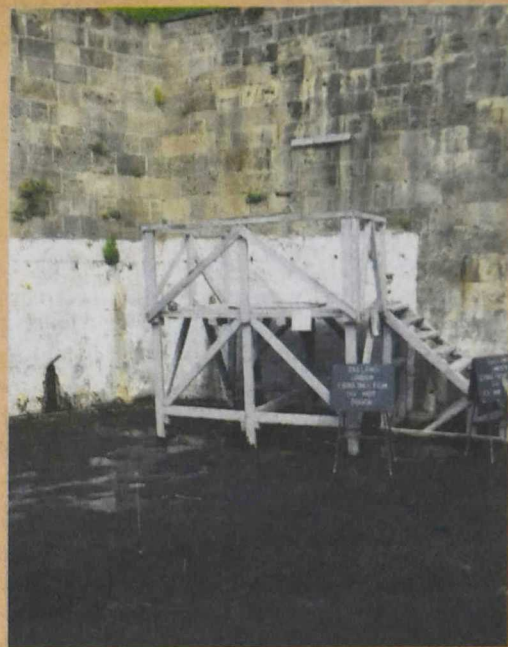
There was nowhere for Henry Groom to stay, so Alfred Domett leased a small whare from

Chief Karaitiana Takamoana in Onepoto. It appears from correspondence to the Wellington Provincial Council that this was also used as a lock-up. (Alfred Domett's surveyors later joined Henry at the whare – but not in the lock-up.)

Alfred Domett had reserved land for a police station in Carlyle Street, and a tender was let to build a station in 1855. One of the builders was Thomas Reynolds, who was later a well-known Havelock North identity. The police station was completed in February 1856. A letter to the editor in December that year reported the lock-up had seldom been used – they were commonly used to hold intoxicated people at that time.

Wellington Provincial Council, Napier's governing authority at the time, decided the lock-up would become the Napier Gaol (as a jail was then called) in December 1856. Constable Henry Groom and new addition John Murray were required to build a fence around the lock-up in May 1857. Both constables were informed that their pay would be stopped immediately, only restarting when the fence was complete. It seems that going unpaid was nothing new to Constable Groom. Both men became fed up with all this, and resigned in August 1857 to go gold digging in Nelson. However, Constable Groom was enticed to stay with a promotion.

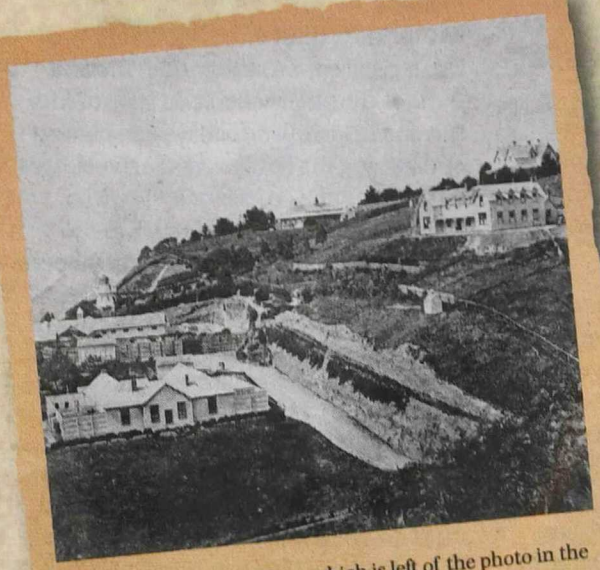
With the Hawke's Bay Provincial Council taking control of the financial affairs from Wellington in late 1858 it was able to channel funds into its own public works. In 1860, money was set aside to build a new gaol in Coote Road, and the successful tenderer was William Miller. There would be space



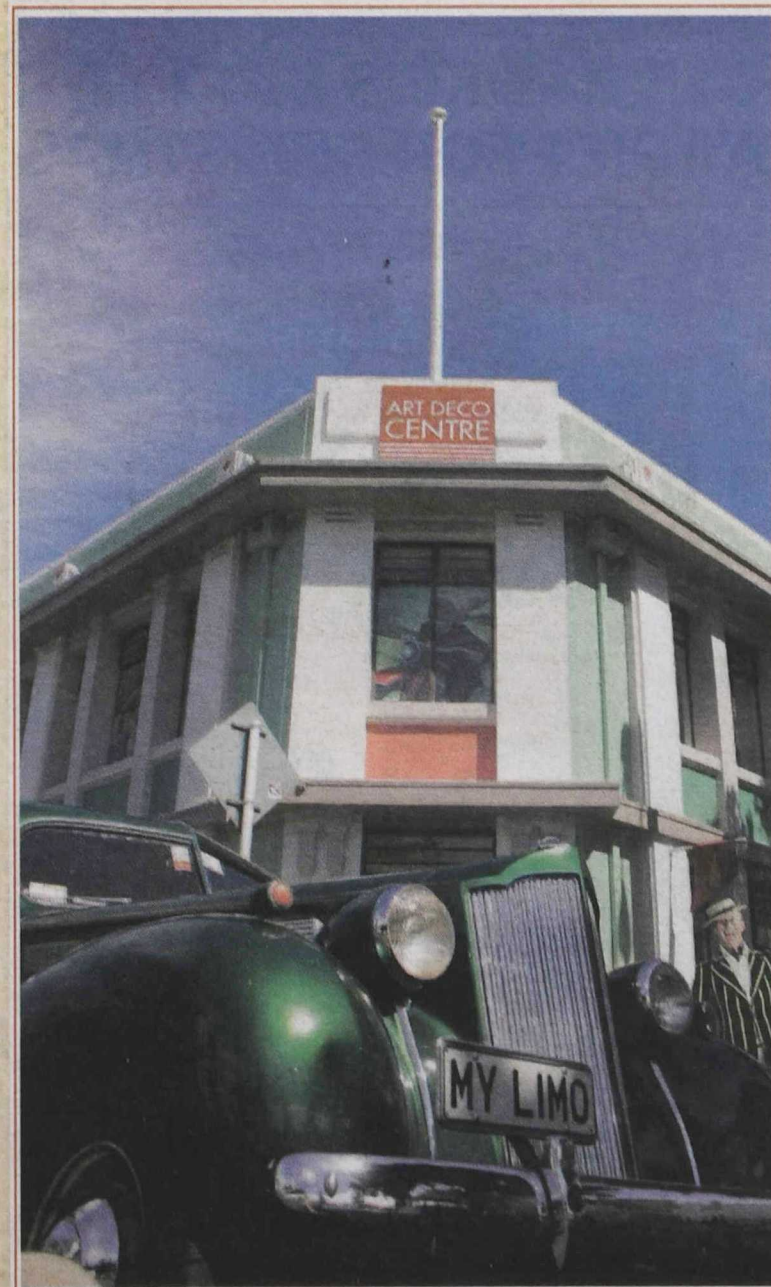
The yard area where hangings in the 1800s occurred. Crowds would gather at the top of the hill overlooking the yard and jeer before the hangings took place.

for 14 prisoners and quarters for a gaoler and police. A newspaper report noted it was "...not inappropriate for a prison, being the top of a precipitous cliff 150 feet high...". The new gaol was opened in 1862, its completion being delayed by slow delivery of the unusual sizes of timber required. This new prison had four hangings of convicted murderers during the 19th century.

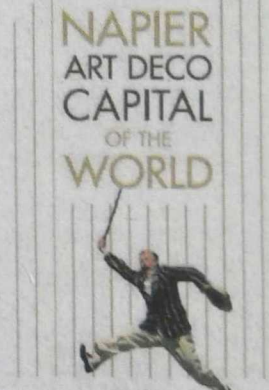
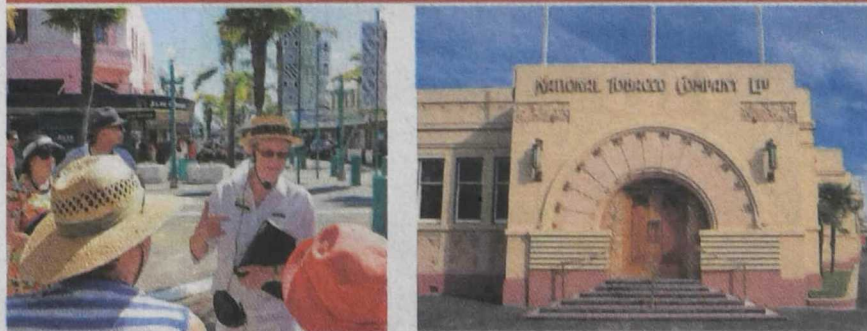
The Coote Road prison was extended in 1906 and was decommissioned in 1993. In 2002 it reopened as a tourist attraction called Napier Prison Tours.



Napier Prison in the 1860s, which is left of the photo in the middle, with the lunatic asylum in front of it.



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# NAPIER'S FIRST SCHOOLS

With the establishment of any new town there was of course a church, many public bars and schools. Early New Zealand colonists were eager to provide schooling. Napier's first was established in 1855, on the corner of Hastings and Tennyson Streets on a half-acre (0.2 hectare) section. The land and school house was purchased by subscription and Mr Marshall was appointed as

teacher. The Napierites had decided to run the school by themselves as they disagreed with politician William Fox's views on "modern" schooling – that it shouldn't be influenced by religion. Napier people wanted to retain some denominational involvement in their children's education.

The school was destroyed by a fire in April 1862, and was not rebuilt due to a

lack of funds. The land couldn't be sold, due to legal reasons but was leased to merchants. When it became apparent that Tennyson and Hastings Streets were to be part of the business district, it was decided that it wouldn't be appropriate

to rebuild the school on that site. The funds from the section's lease were used to support the Napier Grammar School established in 1864, and to fund two new schools – a girls' school and one which became Napier Boys' High School, both opening in 1874. Napier Girls' High School was established in 1884.

Oscar Alpers (1867–1927), who emigrated with his family from Denmark, couldn't speak English on his arrival aged eight. In his biography he noted there were two good schools existing in Napier in 1875, but his family couldn't afford to send him to either. Instead Oscar was sent to a church-run school, which cost a shilling (2014: \$6.50) a week. Oscar recalled that the shilling was too much to charge, and they never really got their

money's worth. Their master, Oscar recalled, was better than those at some of the other schools, in spite of him turning up drunk most days and passing out, leaving the boys to amuse themselves by noughts and crosses or seeing who could make the most darts stick in the classroom ceiling. Oscar Alpers befriended the teacher and helped him back to his seat after his falls. In gratitude, the man gave Oscar free private tuition.

When Napier District School opened in 1879 on the corner of Milton Road and Tennyson Street, Oscar Alpers was a foundation pupil. This school existed until 1916 when it burned down, and was rebuilt in 1920 on Napier Terrace as Napier Central School.



Napier District School foundation pupils in 1879.



Napier District School is on the right of the picture of Clive Square. It was opened in 1879 on the corner of Milton and Tennyson Street, and closed after a fire in 1916, and moved to its present position in 1920 on Napier Hill.

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# NAPIER BECOMING A BOROUGH, 1874

Along with the rest of New Zealand, Hawke's Bay was originally governed from New South Wales, Australia until 1841, when New Zealand was divided into three provinces of its own. In 1852 these were split into six provinces, and Hawke's Bay was part of Wellington Province. At that point the population in Hawke's Bay was sparse, with most Europeans settling around Ahuriri. It was these Europeans who had most interest in the administration of Hawke's Bay – and it was not going unnoticed that Wellington was spending most of Hawke's Bay's land revenue in Wellington. The creation of the New Provinces Act in 1858 meant a new province could be created in an area of between 500,000 and 1,000,000 acres (12,000km<sup>2</sup>) and a population of over 1,000 people, of which 60% had to be in favour of separation from their existing province. This was achieved, and on 1 November 1858 the province of Hawke's Bay came into being (its anniversary holiday is commemorated on the Friday before Labour Weekend).

The earliest forms of local government were the roads boards, which were created to build and maintain roads. Napier was the first Hawke's Bay town to achieve the status of a borough, and on 26 November 1874 Napier

Borough Council was formed. This allowed Napier to raise loan funds to do its own capital works separate from the Hawke's Bay Provincial Council (abolished in 1876 in favour of Hawke's Bay County Council, which looked after all areas except Napier then). At that time there were 493 names on the electoral roll (Māori were not included). The first loans raised were £10,000 for water works (2014: \$1.4 million) in 1876, £45,000 for reclamation of land (\$6.6 million) in 1877, and £70,000 (\$10.3 million) for drainage and street formation in 1879.

After swamp reclamation south of the railway line had resulted in land sales in 1908, Napier South formed its own town board – independent from Napier Borough Council. However, Napier South residential sections had open drainage, and the Napier South Town Board did not have a rating base big enough to fund a covered drainage system. After 46 Napier South people petitioned to amalgamate with Napier Borough Council in 1914, a poll was eventually held in 1915. Despite imminent rate increases if the merger went ahead, the proposal was accepted in April 1915. Loans were raised the next year by Napier Borough Council to provide for drainage, sewerage and water supply.

By 1924, the 50th anniversary of Napier becoming a borough, newspapers ran headlines about "Greater Napier" – highlighting the growth in land value, from the purchase price of £50 (less than \$10,000 today) for 640 acres in 1855 of what became Napier Hill to the 1924 value of £2,870,800 (\$268 million), which included Napier South.

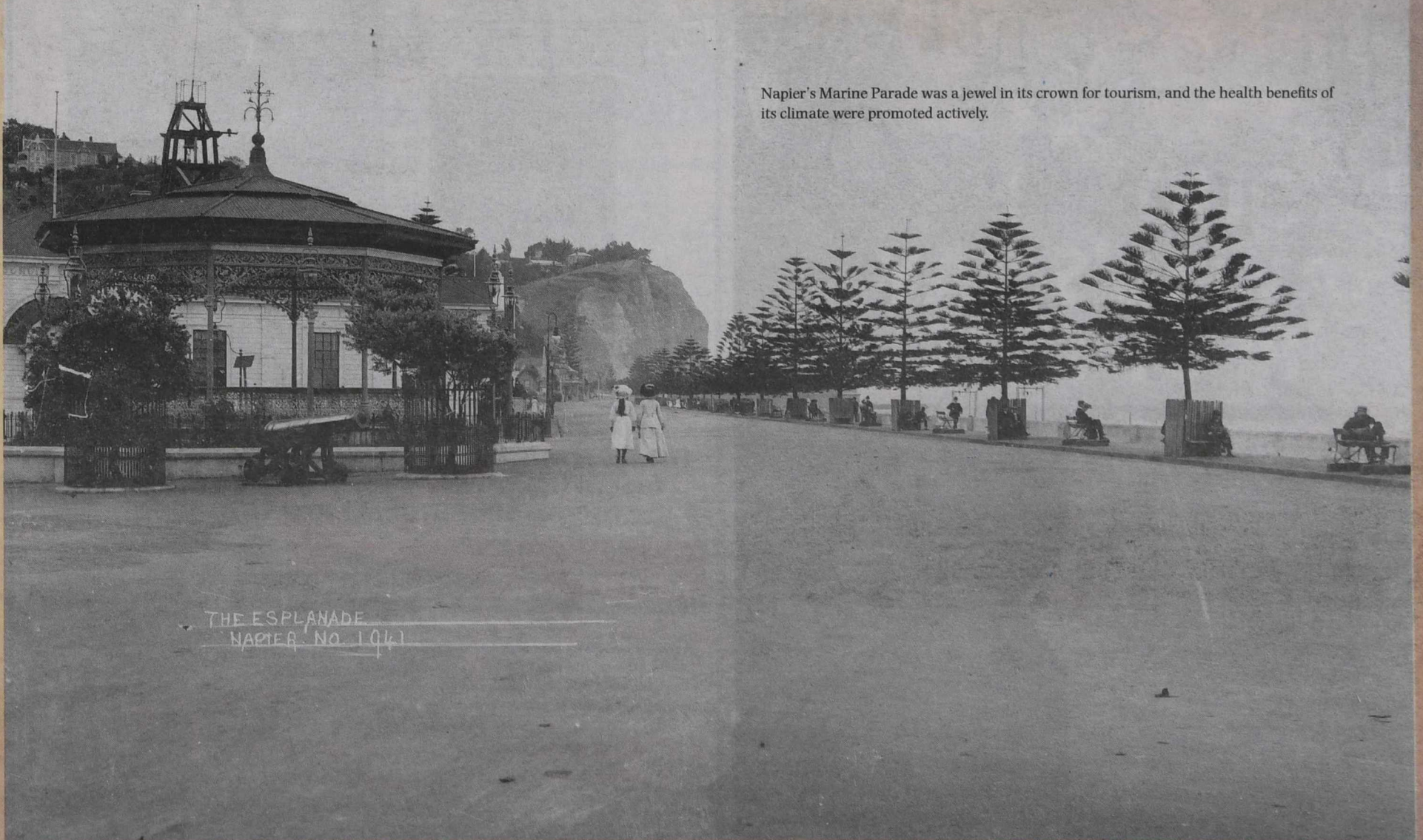
Napier was granted the status of a city in March 1950, with the local government becoming Napier City Council. Taradale became part of Napier in 1968.

Local body amalgamation in 1989 saw around 1.5% of the old Hawke's Bay County Council land transferred to Napier in Bay View, and the city's governing body remained Napier City Council.



Napier in 1874, when it became a borough council. The town is surrounded by swamps. Reclamation would create Napier South, which was a separate entity from Napier Borough Council from its creation in 1908 until 1915, when it amalgamated.

Napier's Marine Parade was a jewel in its crown for tourism, and the health benefits of its climate were promoted actively.



THE ESPLANADE  
NAPIER, NO. 1041



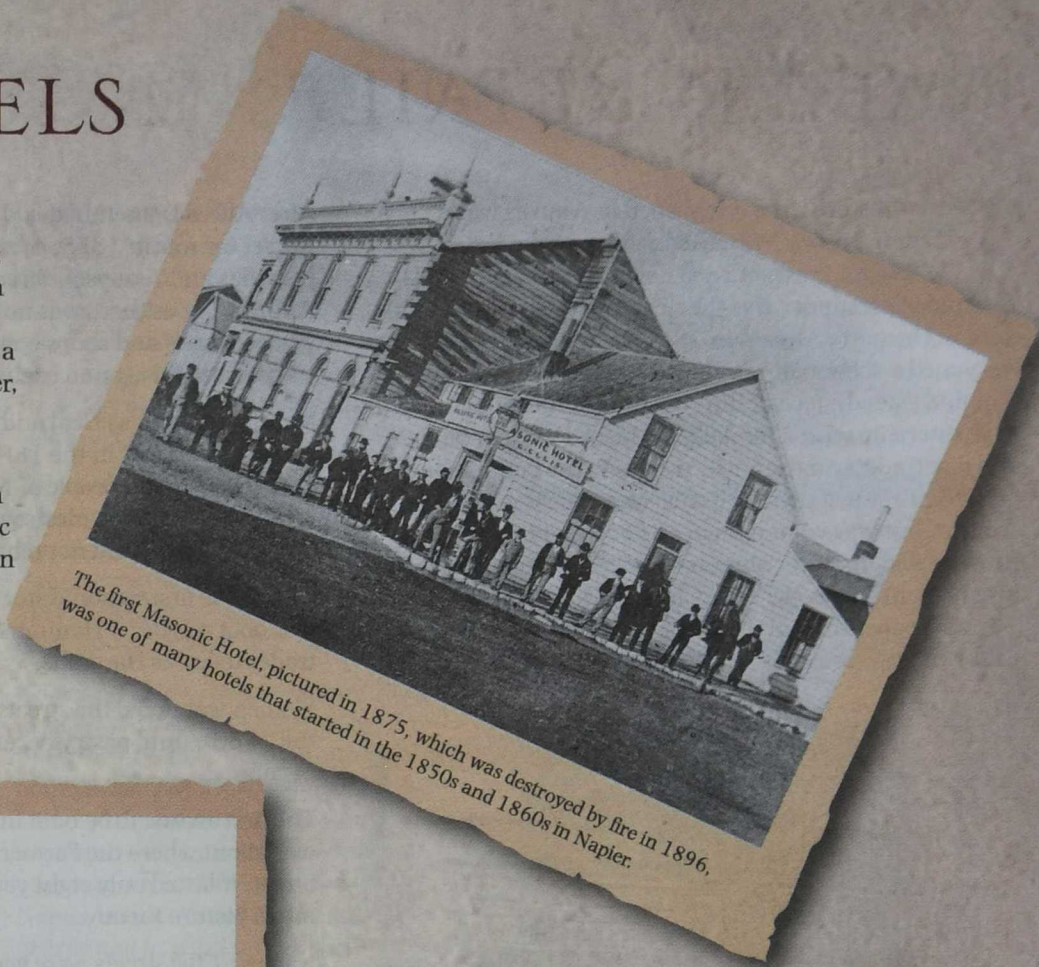
# EARLY NAPIER HOTELS

The families of William Villers and James McKain were the first families to settle at Ahuriri in November 1850, on what was called the Western Spit. James McKain built an accommodation house out of carved pumice blocks, with William Colenso noting in 1851 that James had applied for a bush liquor licence that year, enabling him to sell liquor. By 1853 a full publican's licence had been applied for in the names of both Villers and McKain (Villers later built a hotel in Carlyle Street during this period). When both of these families went to live in Petane, the Ahuriri Hotel was likely operated by Daniel Munn. When the *Hawke's Bay Herald* was established in 1857, Daniel (who was a sea captain) advertised that he wished to take the opportunity to thank those at the Napier Port (Ahuriri) for their patronage of his Royal Hotel at the port. So it appears Daniel Munn had built a new hotel, and the Ahuriri Hotel had been taken over by Messrs Richardson and Charlton in the period 1855 to 1857.

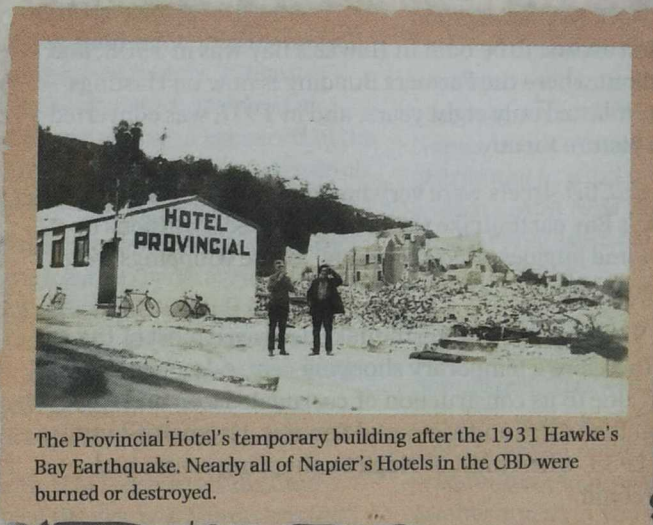
The *Hawke's Bay Herald* reported the licensing of hotels in 1858, and those with existing licences were Daniel Munn's Royal Hotel, now in Carlyle Street, and the Ahuriri Hotel on the Spit. New licences were issued

for Chaucer Tavern in Carlyle Street; the Settlers' Hotel, Shakespeare Road; Golden Fleece, Hastings Street; Bird in Hand, Eastern Spit; and the Victoria Hotel, Onepoto. Clearly that year was a boom for hotels in Napier, and another, the Crown Hotel in Ahuriri, opened the next year.

Other notable Napier hotels to start in the 19th century include The Masonic (1861), Provincial (1876), Caledonian (1878) and Criterion (1860/70s).



The first Masonic Hotel, pictured in 1875, which was destroyed by fire in 1896, was one of many hotels that started in the 1850s and 1860s in Napier.



The Provincial Hotel's temporary building after the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake. Nearly all of Napier's Hotels in the CBD were burned or destroyed.

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# TARADALE/GREENMEADOWS

Taradale was named by its first settler, Henry Alley, who leased property in 1858 from William Colenso. One suggestion is that Henry took part of the name of nearby Otatara pa – long since abandoned – but as he was born in County Meath, Ireland, he was more likely have been inspired by the hills of Tara there. The first house was built in 1860 by Henry; it was later gifted by the Loewther family to Hawke's Bay Community College (now EIT), who regrettably destroyed it in 1981.

Another Henry, Henry Stokes Tiffen, purchased land north of Puketapu Road and west of Guppy Road, and named the area Greenmeadows, after the danthonia grass in the area.

In those days the Ahuriri tidal lagoon came right up to the outskirts of Greenmeadows, and Henry Tiffen built a house and a jetty in Guppy Road, which enabled travel down Salt Water Creek (as it existed then) to Ahuriri by boat.

An advertisement placed in the *Hawke's Bay Herald* in April 1867 mentions the township of Taradale (listed as part of Meanee – later changed to Meeanee to aid pronunciation) and Samuel Laird, owner of section No 2 giving notice of his intention to fence his property. Progress was on the way

for the fledgling township of Taradale when James Anderson opened the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel in July 1869. However, early land sales in Taradale were slow, and settlement struggled – particularly as there was no direct access to Napier until 1873. Henry Tiffen and others had hoped that the railway would go through Taradale to Napier. But with the railway being denied them, a strong case was then made to create Taradale Road, complete with bridges. A tollgate was established to pay for the bridge, but was unpopular and abolished in 1879.

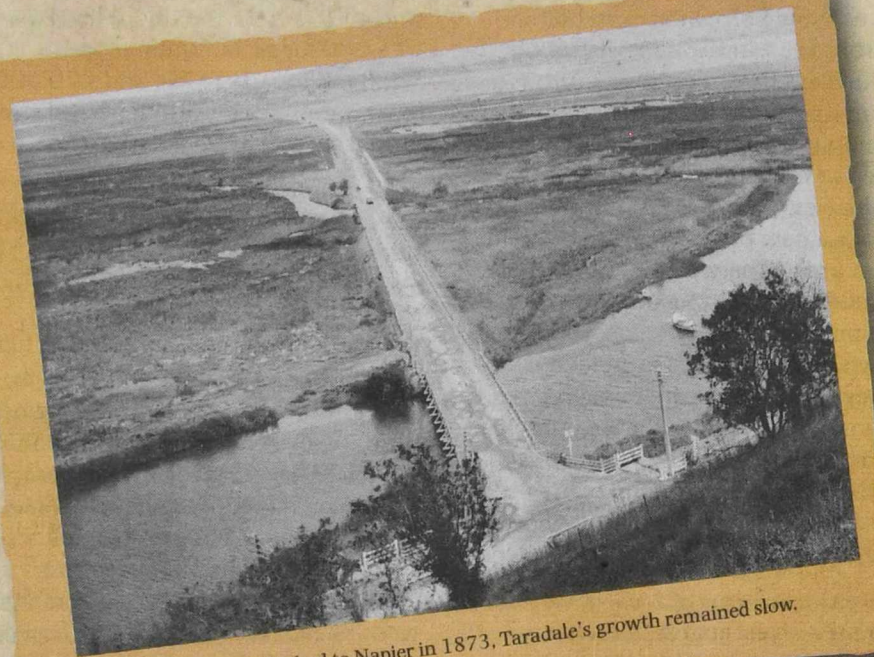
With the road complete, land sales in Taradale took off. In 1872, Meeanee shopkeeper R D Maney had bought most of the land from William Colenso that was subdivided for the township, for £2.75 (2014: \$375) per quarter acre. On selling it two years later he made up to £52 (\$6,588) per section. For the sale, R D Maney had put on a luncheon at Napier's Criterion Hotel and the free-flowing champagne no doubt encouraged lively bidding.

Many social events were held in Taradale and Greenmeadows. Henry Tiffen's racecourse (now Anderson Park) held not only race meetings, but also picnics and brass band performances.

One of the big threats to Taradale and Greenmeadows was flooding from the Tutaekuri River, as happened in 1924. Building a stopbank in the 1930s afforded some protection, as well as providing employment during the Great Depression.

Taradale was one of the first local authorities to amalgamate with Napier, in 1968.

Taradale was chosen as the site for the Hawke's Bay Community College after land was gifted by Margaret Hetley in memory of her husband. The now named Eastern Institute of Technology opened in 1975.



Until a road was established to Napier in 1873, Taradale's growth remained slow.

## PROUD HAWKE'S BAY SUPPORTERS

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See how much we have changed – take a walk around our Taradale campus on Info & Enrolment Day.

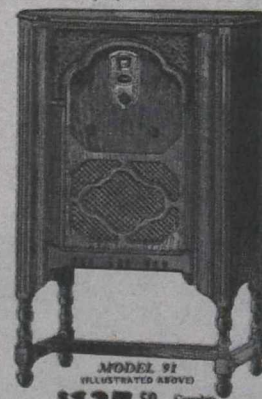
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# NAPIER'S THIRTY THOUSAND CLUB

One of Napier's most significant community service organisations – and one whose legacy can still be seen today – was the Thirty Thousand Club. Established in 1912, when about 11,500 people lived in the town, the Club was to exist until Napier's population reached 30,000.

By some accounts Napier in 1912 was "tired with the drowsiness of doing nothing". To shake off this lethargy, an industries week was held in August 1912, which was like a modern day "Buy New Zealand Made" campaign. Goods produced within the Dominion

were promoted in shop windows throughout the town.

The committee behind the industries week also decided that the people of Napier needed to be stirred up to a greater level of enthusiasm. A progress league (common in the early 20th century to boost a town's profile, population, pride and business) was needed, agreed the committee, to "stick pins into the town and keep it awake". And it was Charles Thomas who came up with the name of the Thirty Thousand Club (after some debate as to how many thousands should be the objective).

The aims of the club were in line with most progress leagues of civic pride, industry establishment, tourism and developing infrastructure. While its initial aims stated the betterment of Hawke's Bay as a goal, it appears that the Thirty Thousand Club almost exclusively focused its efforts on Napier.

One of the first events organised by the Club was a garden party at Nelson Park in 1913, which raised £350 (\$56,000 in 2014). The funds went towards some trees and – as Napier had recently installed electricity – a row of electric lights for the Marine Parade.

When Mr H M Didsbury of the Club promoted the idea of a Mardi Gras this

was eagerly agreed to, although when it was reported in the papers the next day, it was clear that many did not know what a Mardi Gras was. An explanation was required of the carnival celebration originating in New Orleans. Napier's 1913 Mardi Gras became the first to be held in Australasia.

Borrowing from a European tradition, a Queen of the Mardi Gras competition was also held – and this proved to be the biggest revenue earner. The winner was Miss J Rosewarne, who received 26,864 votes across Hawke's Bay.

Napier reached a population of 30,000 in the late 1960s, albeit aided by the absorption of Taradale into the boundaries. The Thirty Thousand Club continued until 1975 – 63 years' existence – when it was decided that other service clubs were now serving Napier better. A sum of \$15,000 was distributed to wind up the club, thereby ending one of New Zealand's longest-serving progress leagues.

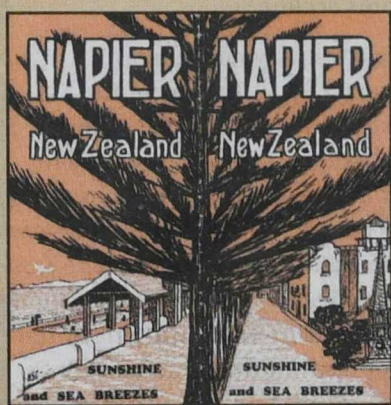
The legacy today of the Thirty Thousand Club includes the floral clock, Marine Parade colonnade, Soundshell, Pania statue, Tom Parker fountain and the open air skating rink (now Sk8 Zone). It also provided seed funding to investigate the establishment of the aquarium.



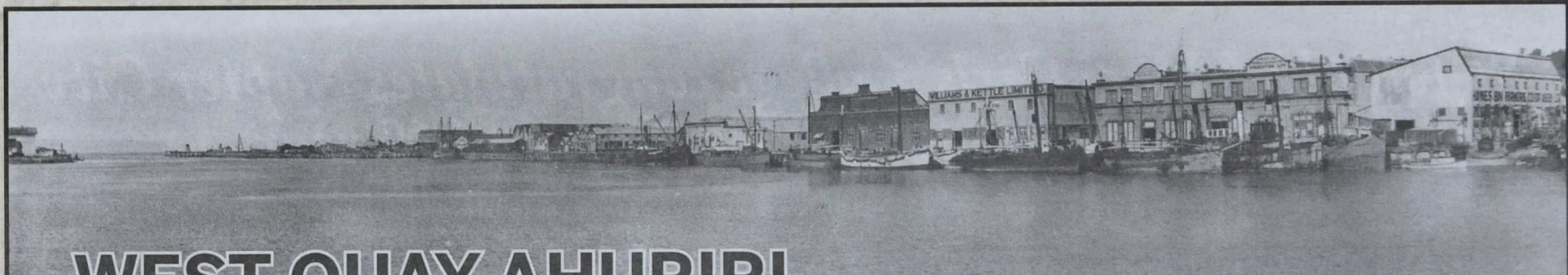
1922 Mardi Gras  
Credit: Mardi Gras, Napier, Warren Studios, gifted by Miss W Smith, collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawhāro Tā-ū-rangi, m73/53.



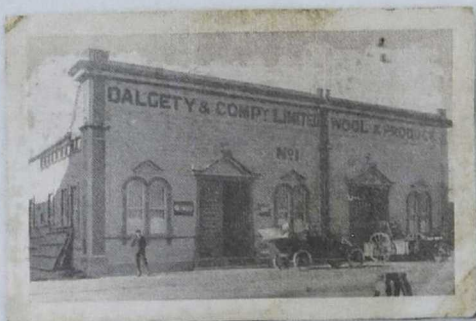
Queen of the 1914/15 Mardi Gras, Miss Bessie Angus.



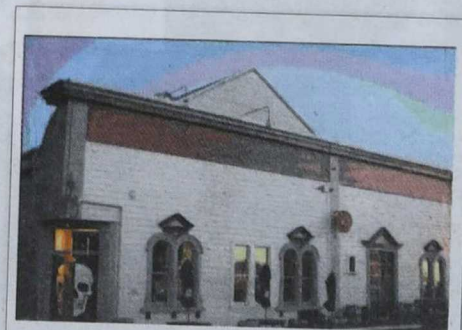
This pamphlet promoted Napier pre 1931, and sun and sea breezes usually featured, as was their slogan "Bright, Breezy and Beautiful".



## WEST QUAY AHURIRI



(above photos) They survived the Quake. The only West Quay buildings to survive the 1931 Hawkes Bay Quake and now sympathetically re-developed into hospitality venues below.



Climbing Wall - Hep set Mooch - Mexi Mama



132 yr. old Iconic Shed 2

Williams & Kettle No.2 Wool Store 56 West Quay was opened in 1882 by Stock & Station Agents Williams & Kettle. Frederick Williams commenced trading in 1880 and was joined by Nathaniel Kettle in 1885. The building was retained and operated for 113 years as a Stock & Station and Wool business by Williams & Kettle until 1995 when the current owners purchased the building and cleared the floors of the last remaining sheep dags. The once proud building by 1995 had deteriorated and was clothed in flapping, leaky rusty old iron sheets. The native timbers had been covered in fire retardant silver paint after a small fire had threatened the building. Steel plates support the fire effected beam. The building devoid of any concrete relied on its native wooden plates and piles to defy the 1931 earthquake. 56 West Quay and the adjoining 58 West Quay are two of a small number of buildings to survive the 31 Quake.

Re-development of the building commenced in 1996 with sandblasting to reveal the great big old native original beams. The new owners carefully retained the essential features of an 1880's working wool store. The merger in 2005 with PGG Wrightsons saw Williams & Kettle disappear from the register. The Head Office Brass Plate and a historic old wool book reside in the back entry foyer of Shed 2. The wool register is well worth a passing moment to admire the 100 year old beautifully ink penned wool sale entries. In terms of history, few buildings can boast such historical richness and example of native timber workmanship 132 years ago. An Ahuriri icon, Shed 2 was the first establishment to emerge in 1996 on the atmospheric West Quay. Step inside and you step back 132 years, for the converted storage shed goes right back to 1882. The days of the square-riggers tied up just metres from its front deck.

Shed 2 is a historical microcosm of Ahuriri, with it's huge timber beams, wooden floor and glowing expanses of copper fittings it oozes atmosphere and rustic class. The adjoining 58 West Quay also built in the late 1880' was owned and operated by Dalgety's and alongside wool trading activities operated insurance and general trading agencies such as Quiibell's who distributed many and numerous oil products. The 100 year old insurance registers have been preserved in the building alongside some 1931 cancelled cheques

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# NAPIER RETAIL

The first store to be established in Ahuriri was a trading post by W B Rhodes, thought to be in 1839, but it was burned down by Māori in 1841. Alexander Alexander was the next to establish a trading store in Onepoto, Ahuriri in 1846 – and he had better luck. He owned a schooner, which was anchored at Corunna Bay, and traded successfully with Māori. Alexander joined in partnership with a Mr Anketell in 1849/50 as bacon and flax traders on the Eastern spit. As the population grew, more stores such as Daniel Munn's established in Ahuriri, but was wound up in 1858, when Newton & Browne sold up the contents of his store – and provided a luncheon to get people along. Daniel Munn advertised in the newspaper that all those who owed him money had better pay up "or else".

After Alfred Domett had laid out the town of Napier for sale in 1855, a retail presence began in Hastings and Tennyson Streets, over the hill from Ahuriri, but as there was no town planning as to where houses and shops could go, they were at that stage scattered around each other.

Merchants such as Neal and Close became very successful traders in the 1800s, and contributed generously to the people of Napier, including the 1894 band rotunda (destroyed in the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake and not rebuilt).

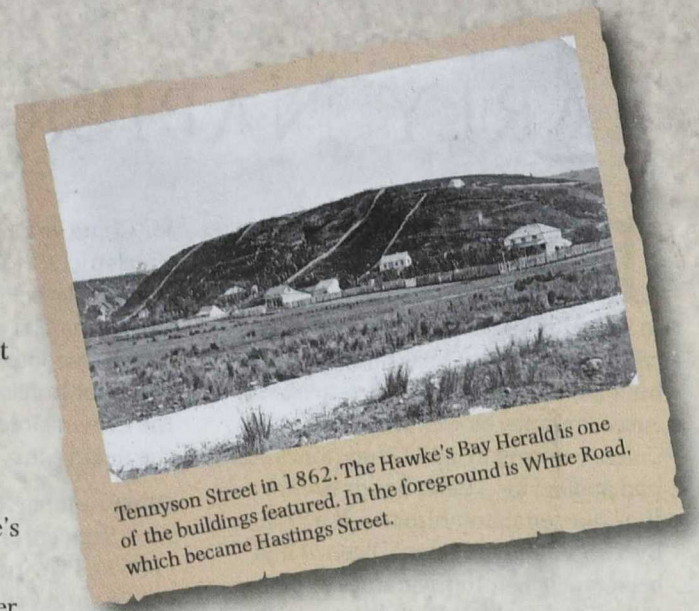
One of the first national stores to establish in Napier was boot retailer R Hannah & Co in 1883, which still trades today as Hannahs.

Piemen wandered the streets selling their wares in the 1880s, until pastry became more commonplace in cafes.

The first arcade to be built in Hawke's Bay was in 1908, and was about where the Farmers Building is now on Hastings Street. It lasted only eight years, and in 1916 was converted into a picture theatre.

Napier's CBD streets were very narrow, and after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake they were widened. Collisions of horses and buggies and "accidental" horse whippings were commonplace.

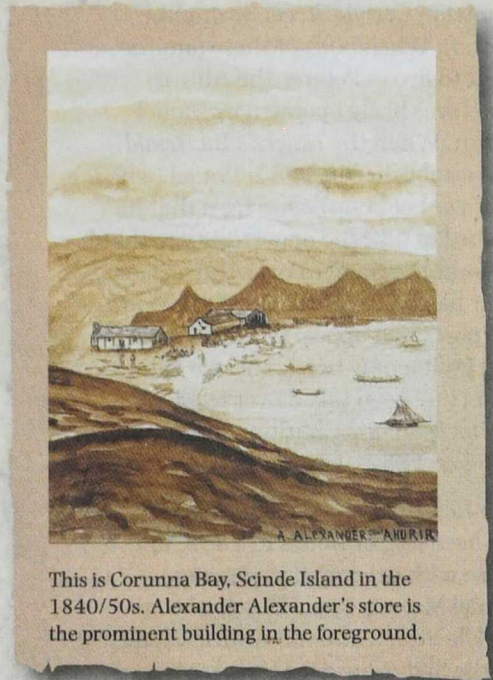
The 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake destroyed most of the CBD, therefore a temporary shopping centre, known as "Tin Town" due to its construction of corrugated iron and wood, was built on Clive and Memorial Squares. It remained until early 1933, when most of Napier's shopping centre had been rebuilt.



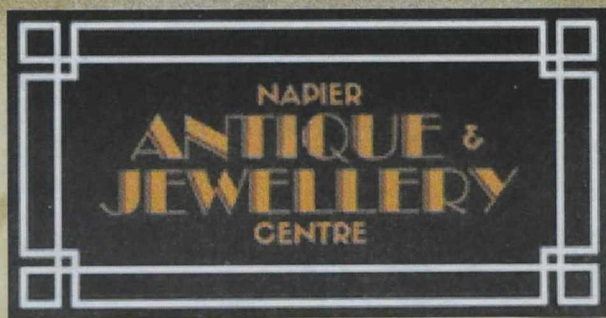
Tennyson Street in 1862. The Hawke's Bay Herald is one of the buildings featured. In the foreground is White Road, which became Hastings Street.



Beginning in 1883, Hannahs still has a retail presence in Napier today, but not on its original position of the corner of Hastings and Browning streets.



This is Corunna Bay, Scinde Island in the 1840/50s. Alexander Alexander's store is the prominent building in the foreground.



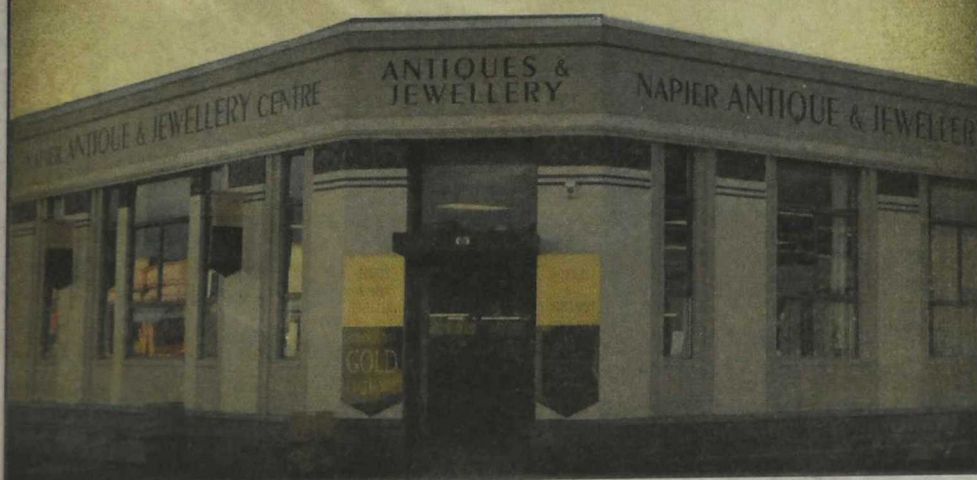
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# Celebrating 10 years of Care at Princess Alexandra

Princess Alexandra Retirement Village has celebrated ten years serving the people of the Hawkes Bay with a refurbishment of one of its most critical areas of care.

The Ahuriri retirement village was first opened in 2004 and its owner, Ryman Healthcare, has invested in a refurbishment of its hospital area and dementia care unit.

The unit includes the latest equipment required for hospital level residents and latest thinking in dementia care, with special design features included to make sure the surroundings are as stimulating for dementia residents as possible.

Village manager Katherine Johnson said the refurbishment included the latest in design thinking. Ryman's designers and staff had input as well to make sure the surroundings worked.

*"Dementia patients tend to navigate in a different way and it is important that we make use of different visual clues as possible to help them find their way around. We use visual clues such as bright colours and different textiles and patterns to help them differentiate between different areas."*

*"We also include memory boxes on their doors so they can see familiar faces and objects which remind them of home."*

Dementia – including Alzheimer's Disease - is considered to be one of New Zealand's most



significant healthcare issues as the population ages.

There are currently about 50,000 with dementia in New Zealand and this is set to triple to 150,000 by 2050.

In addition to the new sensory environment dementia residents at Princess Alexandra are encouraged to take part in Ryman's Triple A exercise programme. Triple A – which stands for Ageless, Active and Aware – is a programme used by 2500 Ryman residents each week.

It is designed for residents at all stages of care and is based on research that shows exercise is beneficial at all ages and stages.

Ryman Healthcare is throwing a party for Princess Alexandra's residents and staff to celebrate the 10th anniversary. Pianist Carl Doy will also perform for residents on 10 November.

Ryman Healthcare owns 30 retirement villages in New Zealand and Australia which are home to 8000 residents.

The company has 4000 staff, including 168 full and part-time staff at Princess Alexandra.

Princess Alexandra was redeveloped in 1994 after Ryman bought the existing hospital and the land next door and redeveloped it as a retirement village.

New sections were added to the building and the design incorporated Art Deco elements to fit in with the rest of Napier. Taylor Allison, Ryman's head of design, has designed 19 retirement villages for the company but said Princess Alexandra remains a firm favourite. *"It's definitely one of my favourites. It has a really nice feel about it and it has aged well."*

The original hospital was named after Princess Alexandra, the Queen's cousin, who opened it during a visit to Napier in 1971. Ryman Healthcare retained the name in her honour.



For further information on Princess Alexandra Retirement Village call Katherine on 06 835 9085



## Quality double glazing options proving well worth the investment

With double glazing now standard in most new homes in New Zealand, many home-owners are looking at options to retrofit existing homes and windows with double glazing.

Barry Pritchard, from The Double Glazing Company explains how opting for high quality and better performing options over cheaper alternatives will quickly provide benefits in health, comfort and energy savings.

Not all double glazing is the same. There are a number of components that make up double glazing that together can make a huge difference. This has a corresponding impact on the comfort levels in your home.

The Double Glazing Company

has developed award winning systems for fitting double glazing into existing timber and aluminium window frames. Proven over the last ten years here in the Central North Island, this has allowed home owners to save thousands - both in not having to replace window frames and in ongoing energy savings.

Today, the benefits are even greater with The Double Glazing Company now able to provide Planitherm double glazing - another step up in window efficiency.

### Can double glazing be retro-fitted into existing window frames?

The simple answer is yes! Most windows and doors can be double glazed without removing the frames. The Double Glazing Company specialises in retrofitting genuine double glazing into existing window and doors frames. The joinery is modified to allow dual-sealed double glazing units to be installed into it. Whether you have wood or aluminium joinery, double glazing can be installed into your home.

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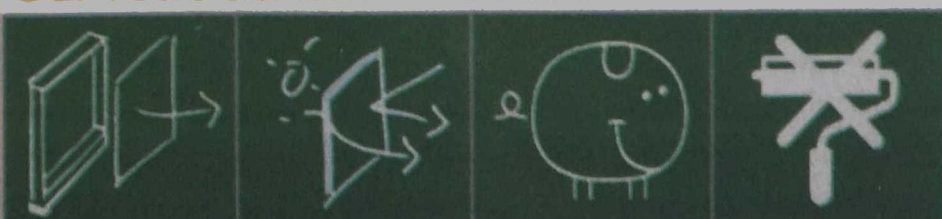
Barry Pritchard, Owner

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# NAPIER TRAMWAY

Napier's ill-fated tramway was first proposed to the Napier Borough Council in 1907, along with electrical supply by a Wellington engineer. Although Napier ratepayers approved the loans to secure this new infrastructure, the government would not supply the funds, due to the explosion of finance being required by local bodies. In 1910 a loan was offered by the State Advances Department – but for sewerage rather than electricity or tramways. This caused some outrage in Napier, especially as Hastings had been given a loan for its street lighting scheme. Mayor Vigor Brown

attempted some financial manoeuvring to raise the finance by calling for tenders in smaller increments to make up the total sum required. This caused Prime Minister Joseph Ward to scold Mayor Brown, saying that while he was not against tramways, "they shouldn't be put before necessities". The finance for the tramway was eventually raised, and planning began in 1911.

Difficulties were experienced in obtaining enough wood for the railway sleepers, so they were sourced from Asia. However, when the 11,500 sleepers arrived in Sydney on a Japanese vessel, New Zealand watersiders refused to unload a ship with any Asians handling cargo, (on racial grounds) when it came to their country.

This held up the opening of the tramway. After the cargo of sleepers was eventually unloaded from the Japanese vessel it was split into smaller loads, with the first 3,000 arriving at Napier Port in March 1913 on the *Kauri*.

The original path of the tramway was two miles and 67 chains (4.3km) long, from the bottom of Dickens Street, along Hastings Street,

over Shakespeare Road to Ahuriri.

As soon as the tramway opened in September 1913, other areas, such as Taradale, were keen to see the tramway come their way. The Taradale tramway never eventuated, but the line was extended along Hastings Street to capture more of the Napier South population.

The tramways were an instant success and soon had five trams running. But within a month of the service operating, the capacity was not enough to meet demand. In those days before radio and television, movie theatres attracted large patronage, and this caused congestion on the trams.

In their first six months the trams had carried 1,401,137 people – and the population of Napier at the time was around 11,000. The service also made a profit of £2,001 (\$312,000) on sales of £9,080 (2014: \$1.4 million). Despite some issues with faulty axles and motormen shortages during World War I, the service was profitable until the 1920s, when competition from

motor buses saw the use of trams decline.

The last trams would run on 3 February 1931 – the day of the 7.8 Hawke's Bay earthquake. Napier Commissioner J S Barton refused to reinstate the unprofitable trams saying it was losing £100 (\$10,000) per week on an original capital cost of £158,341 (\$25 million), and that people should just get used to walking as one of the "minor discomforts". Such future undertakings, he said, should be left to private enterprise.

The chassis of one of the trams was used as an airport terminal at Beacons Airfield, now Hawke's Bay Airport.



A sad ending for one of Napier's Tram carriages, in use as a terminal in the 1930s at the now Napier Airport.



Opening day of the Napier Tramway brought much fanfare, it's early success began to slow down in the 1920s.

## St Joseph's Māori Girls' College congratulates Napier City on its achievements over the past 140 years

St Joseph's Māori Girls' College is an integrated Yr 7-13 Composite Boarding and Day School principally but not exclusively for Māori Girls providing an education where tikanga Māori and tikanga Hāhi enrich and permeate everyday life.

Founded in 1867 by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, St Joseph's first began as a little boarding school Māori Girls known as St Joseph's Providence, It stood on Bluff Hill next to Sacred Heart College that had been established two years earlier. Records show that about 40 to 60 students lived at St Joseph's Providence.

After the Napier Earthquake of 1931, the College was rebuilt on its present property at Greenmeadows and re-opened in 1935 with a roll of 130 boarders. During the 1970's a building programme was undertaken and with this a roll increase to 240 students. The College became an integrated Secondary School in 1982 and from 1993 a limited number of day-students were able to enrol.

In 2013 with the introduction of Yrs 7&8 St Joseph's Māori Girls' College became a Composite Boarding and Day School and is now able to accommodate up to 260 students.

The College motto is "I o mabi katoa, mabia.", "Whatever you do, do well."



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# RICHARDSON AND COMPANY — COASTAL PIONEERS

Ahuriri offered a natural sheltered harbour for a port, and this was an important factor in the settlement of Hawke's Bay. The first charting of Ahuriri harbour was conducted in 1837 by Captain Thomas Wing in his schooner Trent. As more Europeans began to settle in Ahuriri – which was named Napier in 1854 – the demand for coastal shipping increased, not only for freight, but also passengers. The coming of the railway in 1874 would offer some relief for travellers who got seasick, but a line to Palmerston North (connecting to Wellington) was not completed until 1891, and Gisborne until 1942, meaning coastal freight and passenger traffic was still dominant for a long period. An important part of this coastal shipping trade for over 100 years was Napier-based Richardson and Company.

The seed of the company was sown in 1859 when



Though the business closed in 1978, the name Richardson & Company still adorns its old building in Ahuriri.

Captain John Campbell purchased a small schooner called Hero, which was "no bigger than a magnified surf boat". It was used to unload larger boats anchored outside the harbour. This process was called lightering and the boats, lighters (barge-like in shape).

John Campbell's eventual business partner was George E G Richardson, an accountant and merchant who had arrived in Napier in 1858. George became a successful businessman who was apparently of "jovial disposition" and fond of practical jokes. Unaccustomed to wearing a tie, he was noticeable also for his 20 stone (127kg) frame, big black bushy beard, and his bachelor lifestyle – although his idea of a good time was apparently playing whist (cards) and sampling Portugal's best liquor on a Sunday. When John Campbell took delivery of a small iron steamer in 1873, it attracted George's interest. When he learned of John's difficulties in making payments for the steamer, George offered a loan, which eventually led to a partnership between the two in 1875. This arrangement continued until 1887, when John decided to sell his shares and move to a farm in Manawatu.

Through his friendship with William Nelson, George Richardson was closely involved in

the development of the frozen meat trade. And when Tomoana was converted to a freezing works from a boiling down works, Richardson and Company was ready with an iron steamer they called Weka in 1884, equipped with a refrigerating machine. William Nelson himself installed the machinery at no charge – with no one else knowing anything about it. When the Weka was scrapped 32 years later, William Nelson sent a bill as a joke to Richardsons, demanding to know why his property had been sold without his authority.

When the business was converted to a limited liability company in 1899, George only took 50 of the 30,000 shares, as his enthusiasm for shipping had waned since his retirement in 1895.

The Union Steamship Company took a shareholding in Richardsons in 1912, and wound up the business in 1978.

The building once occupied by Richardsons in Ahuriri still has its signage, and the inside has been given some recognition of its heritage by the owners, the McKimm family.



One of the many prints in the old Richardson building that the McKimm family have used to recognise the history of the building.



Captain John Campbell  
Founder of the business which became Richardson and Company  
John Campbell founder of what became Richardson Shipping.



GEG Richardson

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In 1983, another name change was called for. Bill Dalton and Wesley Bruce

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joined the Somerset 'family' and the firm became known as Somerset Smith Partners. Today, current partners include Andrew Pearson, Anthony Sabiston and Martyn Lee.

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# PORT OF NAPIER

Napier was made a "Port of Entry for Customed Goods" in March 1855, when the port was at Ahuriri (later known as the inner harbour).

The steamship *Wonga Wonga* visited Napier Port twice a week with return trips to Wellington, and it took 36 hours for the 203 mile (326km) trip. In 1858 the first ship to carry a wool cargo bound for London via Wellington was the *Southern Cross*. This ship was loaded by lighters outside the harbour, but the next year the *Eclipse* ventured into the inner harbour to be loaded with wool, with almost disastrous results, it having to leave under tow from the *Wonga Wonga*.

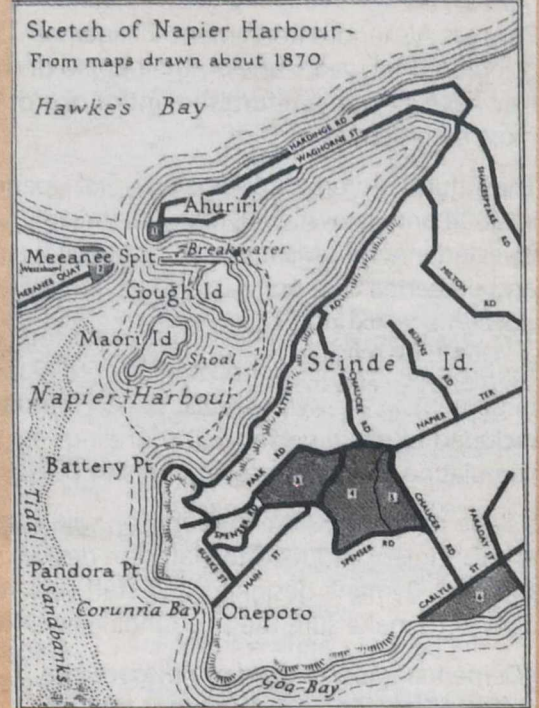
A causeway between Gough and Māori Islands built around 1859 sent sand into the harbour area named the Iron Pot. A steam dredge was purchased, but proved to be useless as sand piled up faster than it could be removed. It was converted into a paddlesteamer

and used to transport troops during the East Coast wars of the 1860s. The inner harbour being too shallow for larger ships would be a constant problem and source of discussion among people in Napier. For many years, lighters served the larger ships by transporting the cargo out to ships anchored outside the harbour

Discontent with the inner harbour led to discussion, mainly among Napier businessmen, about creating a breakwater or outer harbour port at the bluff. If there was one issue that divided Hastings and Napier at that time, it was the inner versus outer harbour debate. Many were upset at having to pay increased rates for the outer harbour – especially those who lived in outlying areas. A typical response was: "...Napierites might rely on it [a port at Napier], but Kidnappers will be the port, and Hastings the

capital of this province ... and to spend more money at Napier for harbour works is just taxing the people for the benefit of a few Napier shopkeepers." However, the matter would not rest, and attempts were even being made in 1885 – by business interests mostly outside Napier – to create a port at Black Reef, Te Awanga. It failed due to a lack of finance.

Those shipping interests which supplied the lighters to load ships outside the inner harbour, were also against the breakwater harbour, fearing a loss of business.



This is Ahuriri around 1870 showing the Islands since reclaimed as land. Note street names and position of Onepoto, a landing point for many immigrant ships.

After much agitation and public voting on the issue, the first block was laid by chairman of the Harbour board, John Ormond in January 1887. The breakwater and wharf were completed in 1893.

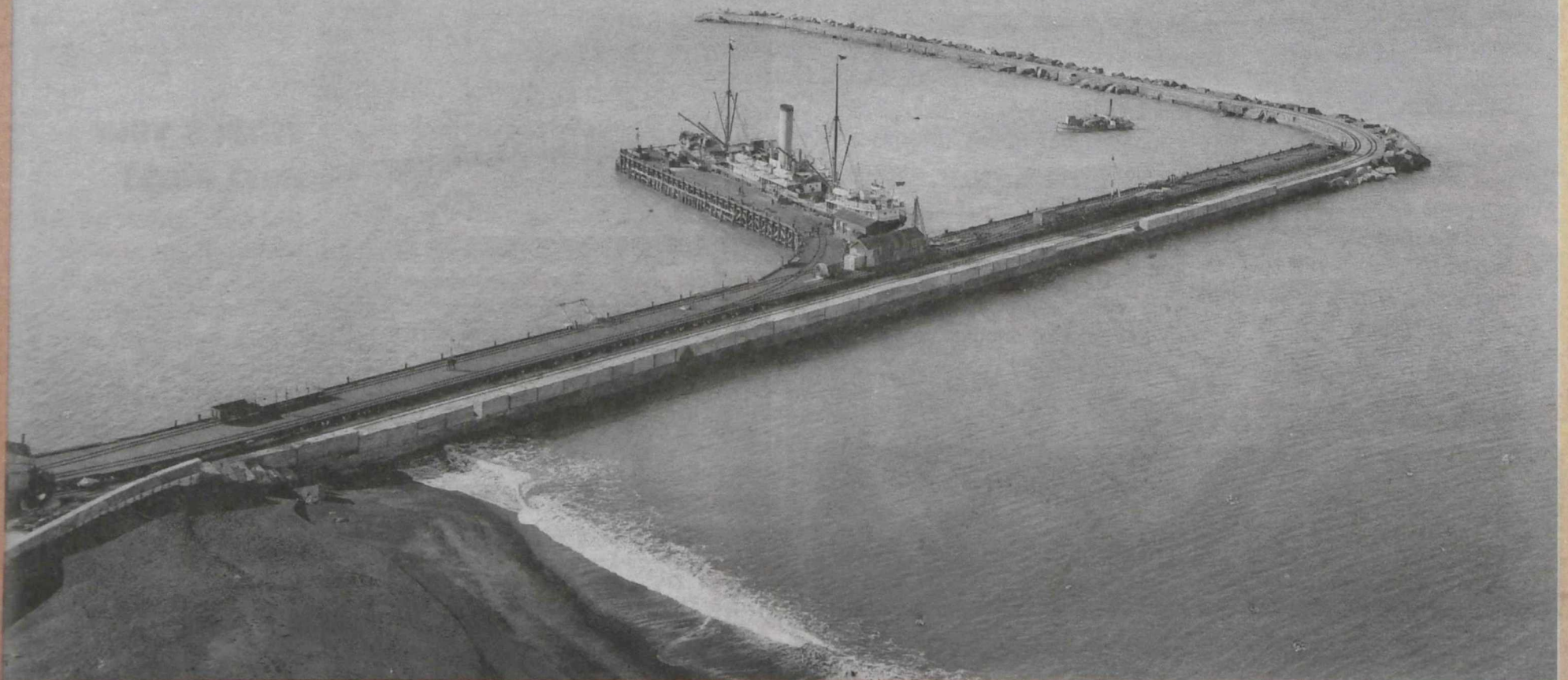
The outer harbour remained a contentious issue though, and any additions to it were fought over.

Finally, the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake sealed the fate of the inner harbour as the main port when the sea floor rose, making the port even shallower.



Port Ahuriri was a natural harbour, but too shallow for most heavy tonnage ships, even before the 1931 uplift of land from the 7.8 magnitude earthquake.

This what the original breakwater wharf looked like when it opened.





# JOHN SAXTON BARTON — COMMISSIONER AND VISIONARY

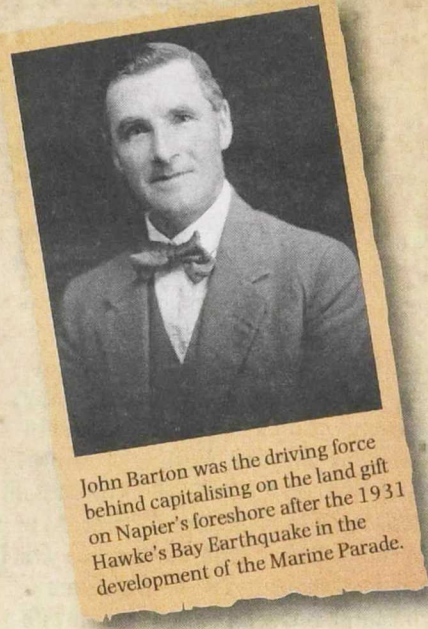
After the 3 February 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake killed 162 people in Napier and wrecked its CBD, a Citizens Control Committee was formed to cope with the disaster, taking over the Napier Borough Council's functions. A few weeks later, Mayor John Vigor Brown pondered the way forward for Napier, and petitioned the government to appoint Commissioners to run Napier. While his argument was that "...it would be good to have trained and responsible people directing matters", it also meant that the government would take on the problem of rebuilding Napier. Napier Borough Council was effectively bankrupt and most of the councillors were busy re-establishing their own businesses.

Two Commissioners were appointed: Lachlan Campbell, a distinguished engineer who had served as a tunnelling engineer in World War I, receiving the Military Cross and rank of captain, and John Saxton Barton, an educationalist, accountant, solicitor and magistrate.

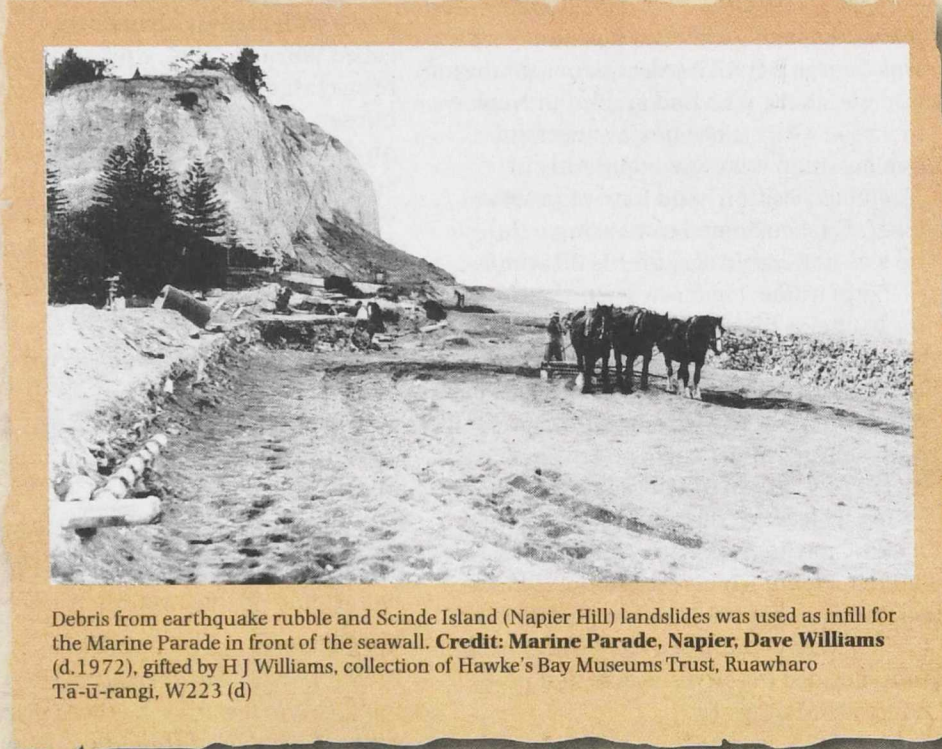
There was much work to do. A priority was the reestablishment of Napier's infrastructure, and some kind of temporary shopping area (Hastings was already making approaches to burnt-out

Napier merchants) and then permanent rebuilding. At this time thousands of Napier's population had left, and the pressure was on to rebuild as quickly as possible to enable their return. While Napier today is a city of around 60,000

people, at one point there was concern that Napier would not recover, and reports to this effect began appearing in newspapers around New Zealand. John Barton at one point called a



John Barton was the driving force behind capitalising on the land gift on Napier's foreshore after the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake in the development of the Marine Parade.



Debris from earthquake rubble and Scinde Island (Napier Hill) landslides was used as infill for the Marine Parade in front of the seawall. Credit: Marine Parade, Napier, Dave Williams (d.1972), gifted by H J Williams, collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawhoro Tā-ū-rangi, W223 (d)

press conference to state the port was functioning – it still had the sea – and this alone would be enough to secure Napier's future.

John Barton proved to be an excellent administrator. The government also appointed him head of the Hawke's Bay Rehabilitation Committee, which gave financial assistance to businesses to support their recovery and rebuilding.

In a talk to Napier businessmen in September 1931, John Barton stated that Hawke's Bay local body reform was urgently needed, citing numerous duplication of resources occurring among the various bodies. He stated to the businessmen: "You are the mugs that tolerate this sort of thing; you're the boys that pay."



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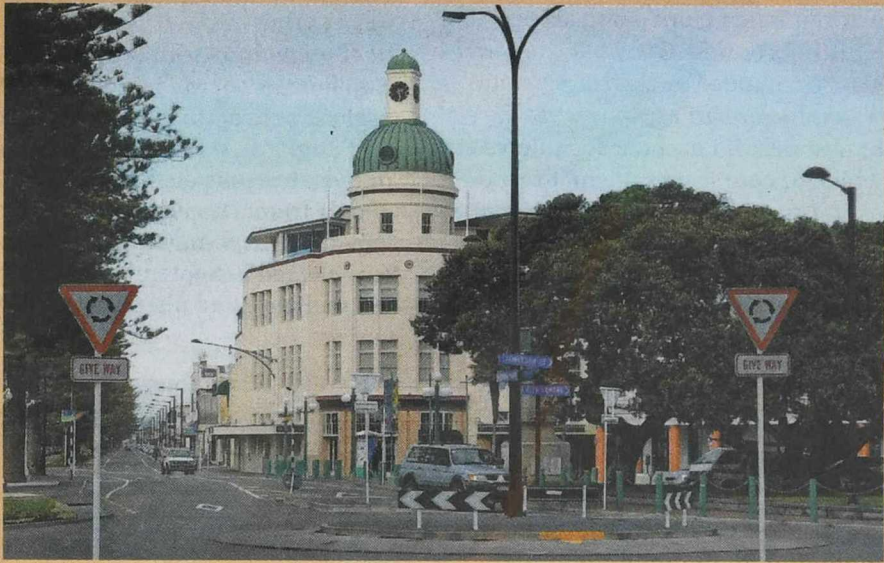


One of John Barton's legacies is the development of the Marine Parade. In April 1931, he requested that soil from the slip at Bluff Hill be used to fill in an area past the Municipal Baths (now Ocean Spa area) and suggested that an outdoor theatre could be built (it was later – the Soundshell, and the current Napier mayor Bill Dalton's father – Douglas Dalton, helped plaster the colonnades memorial on Marine Parade).

In 1922 the YMCA built a large two storey building on the corner of Marine Parade and Emerson Street, which was wrecked in the 1931 earthquake. It was five years until it was replaced by the now Dome building in 1936 (originally T & G Building). This building once contained offices and flats, but the top floors were converted to a conference centre in 1990 and apartments in 2004, including two roof top ones. This building provides a landmark feature on the Marine Parade.

The Commissioners' tenure came to an end in May 1933, when borough elections were held. There was talk of extending the Commissioners' term for another year, and when this didn't occur, many tried to talk John Barton into running for mayor – but he declined.

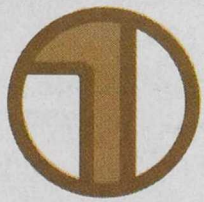
John Saxton Barton passed away in 1961, aged 86.



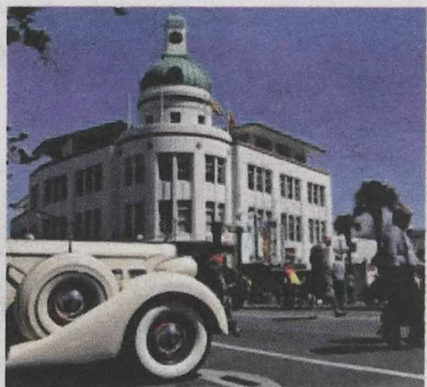
The Dome building, originally built in 1936.



Marine Parade from Napier Hill in the late 1930s.



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After the 1931 Hawke's Bay Earthquake lifted up the land levels, the area once a tidal lagoon, still had to be drained and sea salt removed.

the remaining swamp land in town, which he described as "...the life-killing, pestilent quagmire". The Napier Borough Council's boundaries were increased in 1878 so as to have the power to reclaim the swamp, which created Munroe, Thackeray, Raffles, Sale, Owen, Faraday and Edwardes Streets.

William Nelson, a Hastings-based businessman, (for whom Napier's Nelson Park is named) was involved in a syndicate which reclaimed 1780 acres (720 hectares) of Napier South land starting around the early 1900s and finishing in 1908. River silt was diverted to reclaim land.

Another reclamation took place in 1928 in what would be named Marewa, and the first sections were offered for sale in 1934. The Labour Government's state housing programme purchased some of the sections in 1936.

All of man's planning and engineering couldn't beat Mother Nature, however, and on 3 February 1931, 7,500 acres (3,035 hectares) were reclaimed in around two-and-a-half minutes. As the reclaimed land was once under the control of the Hawke's Bay Harbour Board (now Port of Napier), as it had been under water, ownership reverted to them.

One of the benefits of the 1931 earthquake's 2,200 hectares of reclaimed land was the establishment of Hawke's Bay Airport, officially opened in 1964, but had its beginnings as Beacon's aerodrome in 1935.

There is no doubt that this gift of land, although born of great tragedy, boosted Napier's growth and fortunes.

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## NAPIER'S RECLAMATION OF LAND

Many European settlers considered what is now called Napier to be an undesirable site for settlement. Although Captain James Cook got a hostile reception from Māori when he visited, it's likely on viewing the landscape he decided there was not much point going ashore. The bluff hill contained few flat sites, and was surrounded by tidal or swampy water. In Ahuriri's favour was the almost natural harbour for shipping, which of course was the main mode of transport then (although someone did give walking instructions in a newspaper letter from Wellington to Ahuriri in the 1840s).

It is likely the first man-made land reclamation had taken place at Ahuriri in 1874, around the iron pot area. The reclaimed land was put up for sale.

It was apparent that the swamps surrounding what is now the Napier CBD to the south would have to be filled in due to the sickness caused by sewage and stagnant water. Napier's death rate in 1875 was the highest per capita in New Zealand and England. During that year, one in twelve people died in Napier – 250 people from a population of 3,000. When the new mayor J H Vautier was elected in September 1878, his council accepted a tender to fill in



This what Marewa looked like before reclamation, with Scinde Island (Napier Hill) in the background.

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# NAPIER'S SUNKEN GARDENS

The potential for the Marine Parade to be a jewel in Napier's crown was seen as early as 1889, when Mayor G H Swan embarked on his plan to create a promenade reminiscent of English seaside towns by laying out a walkway and planting Norfolk Island Pines.

The 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake would gift Napier reclaimed land not only in Ahuriri, but also on the foreshore in front of the Marine Parade.

Peter Tait (1915-1996), who was Napier's Mayor from 1956 to 1974, wanted to develop an area which had been used as tennis courts on the Marine Parade as a tourist draw card, although the Napier Retail Association wanted the area to become a carpark.

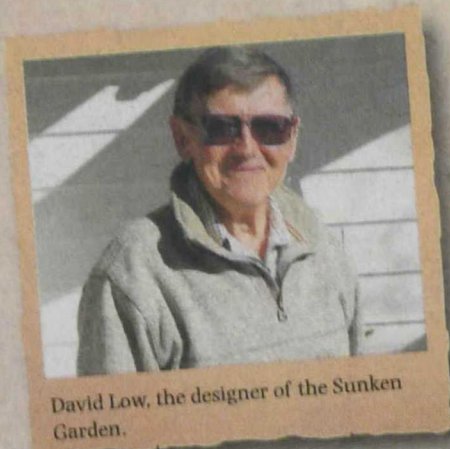
Mayor Tait asked Deputy Superintendent of Parks David Low to create a garden. David suggested a sunken garden, where more varieties of plants could survive by being sheltered from the sea.

While walking along the Marine Parade beach, David observed the waves forming bubbles that popped as they drained back on the shingle. This inspired his design of a series of circles with swirling movements in between,

and water draining back down in random fashion. In the tradition of Brazilian designer Roberto Burle Marx, he interpreted this art work into a design for the Sunken Gardens.

This was accepted by Mayor Tait and his Council, especially when David, a keen modeller, showed a three dimensional model of the garden.

Excavation of the site began in the summer of 1967, digging down to the original pre-1931 beach. Many reminders of pre-1931 Napier, such as monogrammed crockery, were found in the earthquake rubble that had been used as landfill. Thirty thousand cubic yards (23,000 cubic metres) of fill was removed from the site.



David Low, the designer of the Sunken Garden.

The first task was to create retaining walls, and to give a natural rock finish. dacite, a grey and pink stone, was chosen and sourced from Mount Tauhara, Taupo. Pettigrew Transport brought the stone down as backloads free of charge. Napier was fortunate to have the services of stonemason and council employee Len Crompton, who completed many of the decorative features.

Forty tonnes of water-worn Greywacke stone from the Mohaka River was also used, along with manufactured Cotswold Stone from Taradale.

When a large boulder was uncovered when debris from the Bluff Hill slip that occurred in the 1931 earthquake, all 19 tonnes of it was moved to the Sunken Gardens as a feature.

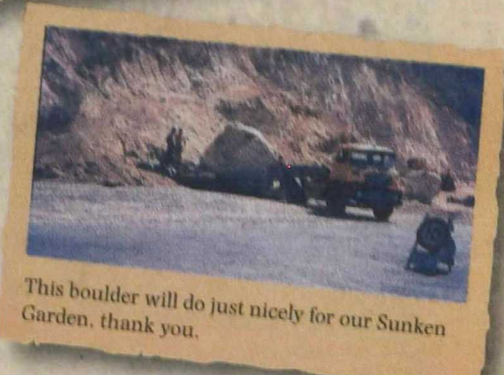
Mayor Tait decided a water feature would be a desirable addition to the Sunken Gardens, and David Low was able to locate a waterwheel that had been used to generate electricity on the Phillips farm in central Hawke's Bay around 1910.

The Sunken Gardens were opened by Mayor Tait and Sir Lou Harris on 16 November 1969.

All editorial in this publication written by local historian Michael Fowler



Sir Peter Tait opens the Sunken Garden in November 1969.



This boulder will do just nicely for our Sunken Garden, thank you.



The Sunken Garden taking shape.



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# Celebrating 140 years of Napier

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