

THIS STONE WAS LAID BY
JAS. WILLIAMS ESQ.
CHAIRMAN TOWN BOARD
TO COMMEMORATE THE
CORONATION OF
KING EDWARD VII
26 JUNE 1902

LITTLE KNOWN RELIC OF THE PAST.....

Within a mile of the Waipawa Town Clock and the busy State Highway lies a stone laid to commemorate the Peace and Coronation Celebrations of King Edward VII ⁱⁿ 1902.

This stone, the whereabouts of which is probably unknown ^{to} the greater proportion of Waipawa residents today, is perhaps appropriately, sited in the Waipawa Domain property behind the recently ~~opened~~ ^{lawyer's} ~~Waipawa~~ ^{mother's} Pensioner Flats. ^{complex}

It lies in an apparently abandoned state but the inscription "This stone was laid by Jas. Williams Esq., Chairman, Town Board, to commemorate the Coronation of King Edward VII 26 June 1902" is still quite plainly visible.

The stone was not however laid by James Williams but by a well-known "old Identity" of the district Mr. A. E. Jull who was called to officiate at the last moment due to the illness of Mr. Williams' daughter.

THE DOMAIN.

The Waipawa Domain in its hey-day was a centre for town recreation. Many residents, even today, remember the traditional Sunday outings to stroll

down the nice walks and listen to one of the two bands in the area who performe regularly on Sunday afternoons. [Senior Citizens ~~are~~ remember the creek and lake in the Domain which seemed to be the centre of attraction for the children of Waipawa at the turn of the Century. Some remember with horror that it did not always look either clean or hygeinic. Children from the Waipawa Convent School also used the playing area regularly during the school term for recreation. [The Domain sported several ~~items~~^{pieces} of playground equipment some of which was later transferred to the present ~~site of the~~ ~~Waipawa~~ playground in Nelly Jull Park.

Citizens and the children, all dressed in their "Sunday best" gathered in large numbers at the Domain each Sunday and the Town Board Minute Books of the day make several references to the Domain and its requirements. An entry on record against 1st October¹⁹ 1900, records the public spirit of the young men of the district in those days. It ~~is reported~~ that three young men of the Town asked the Chairman for permission to each keep a flower bed in

the Domain -"in perfect order". Mr. Jull suggested at the time that the Board erect a standard and plate over each bed, bearing the name of the "keeper" of the bed.....

COMBINED CELEBRATIONS.....

Arrangements for the commemoration of King Edwards Coronation were coupled with Peace Celebrations and a Committee with the austere title of "The Peace and Coronation Celebrations Committee" was set up. One of the first moves of the Committee was to approach the Town Board for financial assistance. The Town Board agreed to meet the application for a £15 subsidy towards the Committee funds. The Clerk was however instructed to write to the Acting Premier, Sir J.G. Ward to enquire whether "Small or Town Boards would be treated the same as Boroughs as to the £1 for £1 subsidy in connection with the celebrations?" The reply from the Acting Premier granted a 50% subsidy to the Town Board. Total expenses for commemoration festivities was estimated at less than £20.

THE TOWN PREPARED.....

Greenery was the main means of decoration and roads in the Town were apparently given a "spring clean" as the overseers report of the day advised the Board that "The roads had been scraped and all the mud carted away" The Chairman of the Town Board made a special request to all householders "to illuminate their windows on Thursday night" He also received advice that school children from as far away as Takapau were coming to Waipawa for the festivities. A deputation of maoris from the Waipawa Pa waited on the Board and advised that they would be attending the celebrations and that the macri band would play. A generous resident offered them a section in town for use as a camp.

Details of Coronation Day celebrations received a great deal of publicity It was decided to start the day with a Flag Saluting Ceremony followed by a Thanksgiving Service. Eleven-thirty was the time set down for - laying the Foundation Stone of the Band Rotunda.

In the afternoon plans were made for a Grand Procession - headed by the Waipawa Brass Bands. The evening programme included a Torchlight procession - again with the Bands in attendance - Fireworks, tableaux and a Grand Concert.

CURTAINMENT OF FESTIVITIES

The Waipawa Town Board Meeting of the 7th July 1902 records that numerous telegrams were received from Sir J.G. Ward referring to the Kings illness and directing postponement of festivities " other than the childrens functions and feeding of the poor" [An old identity can remember no necessity in this district for the latter direction but feels that these telegrams, one of the fastest methods of communication in the early days of the century, were almost "mass produced" and sent to all Local Body Authorities in New Zealand. She cannot remember any arrangements for the specific "feeding of the poor" Newspapers of the day carried daily bulletins on the state of the King's health These progressed from "critical condition" to "spent a restful night"

"Taking light sustenance" to "holiday to recuperate"
CORONATION DAY RESCHEDULED...

The King improved daily and plans were made to celebrate the Coronation on 9th August 1902. A special edition of the "Waipawa Mail" - on best quality paper - and printed in ^{Royal} special blue ink, carried a full report of the days activities. Evidence of the postponed Coronation is borne out very clearly in this "special edition" - The front page, which includes suitable local advertisements is dated 26th June but all subsequent pages are correctly dated 9th August. Special mention is made of the presence in town of the Te Aute ^{Wally} Cadets "resplendently dressed in naval uniforms"

~~THE STONE~~ THE STONE IS FINALLY LAID.

Mr. A.E. Jull, deputising for Mr. Jas Williams said "I am about to lay the foundation stone of an edifice which will prove a lasting tribute and bear testimony of the event for those who come after us" "The Domain was given to this town many years ago" he said " but it is only recently

that steps have been taken to utilize it for the purpose for which it was originally dedicated - an open air space for the young and old of the town" "It is very necessary that some provision should be made for a place in which instrumentalists can sit in comfort and discourse sweet music to the townspeople" Mr. Jull said. "The stone I am about to lay is evidence that in the near future reasonable accommodation will be provided in the rotunda for the instrumentalists of the town to perform their duties with comfort" Mr. Jull concluded his address by telling the towns people "We are indebted to the Wai-pawa Volunteers, who because they are not numerically strong have decided to disband - in preference to carrying out their duties in a perfunctory manner- and have made a gift of £75 towards the erection of a structure" "In the death of the Corp the building to be erected ~~xxxxx~~ will serve as an indication of their loyalty in the time to come when the descendant of the youngest present will be gambolling in the Domain"

EVENTS FORGOTTEN....

Strangely enough the Coronation Celebration do not seem to hold pride of place in the memories of our senior citizens. Most remember the joyous celebrations held when Baden-Powell and his soldiers were freed in the famous release of Mafeking. Residents showed their jubilation and the air rang with the banging of kerosene tins and the noise of firearms being discharged.

THE DOMAIN TODAY.

The activities of the early 1900's have waned. With the formation of football teams and other sporting bodies in the area the ground was used less and less. It was not suitable for rugby and the Tennis Club in Waipawa sported its own ground - one of the oldest remaining clubs in the history of Tennis in New Zealand. The Domain was still used for bazaars and other fund raising activities but gradually the townsfolk began to meet at other grounds and develop other interests.

WHAT OF THE STONE TODAY

It lies to-day - it is thought in its original position, but certainly not fulfilling the original purpose - to form the corner stone of a proposed band rotunda envisaged as the final "grace" to the Waipawa Domain.