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COLENZO



APRIL

“Beastly” – Colenso censored

Censorship and orchids, e.g.

The Roman general Pliny wrote,
... in kindling the heat of lust,
wonderfull is the hearbe Orchis
both male and female, and fewe be
like unto it.... the root likewise is
bulbous and two-fold, fashioned like
to a man's stones or cullions.... given
to drinke in the milke of an ewe bred
up at home of a lambe, causeth a
man's member to rise and stand, but
the same, taken in water, maketh it
goe down again and lie.... Another (if
held in a man's hand) it will cause
the flesh to rise & incite him to the
companie of women, but much more
will it set him in heat if he drinke it in
some hard and green wine....

For the next 1900 years orchid tubers, prepared in various ways, were used as aphrodisiacs (the mediæval “doctrine of signatures” stated that the medical uses for plants were plainly shown by God in the shapes—signatures—of the plant parts: a heart-shaped leaf would clearly make a good cardiac drug; a testicle-shaped tuber had to be an aphrodisiac). A seventeenth century Dispensatory translates Paracelsus, “...by the outward shapes and qualities of things we may know their inward Vertues, which God hath put in them for the good of man”.

The British orchids were known as “cullions”, “ballock-grass”, “bull-bags”, “cockoo-pint”, “fool's stones” “dog's stones” and “fox-stones”—and similar names appear in all European languages. Salep houses rivalled tea-houses in popularity.

Then came the Victorian retreat into prudery, convulsed into reaction by Darwin's suggestion that people were beasts

like any others. This was the straight-laced generation that kept books by men and women on separate shelves, in which the eponymous Dr Bowdler exercised his scalpel on the naughty bits of Shakespeare and the Bible to render them wholesome family reading, that brushed out the nipples in paintings of naked women, covered men's genitals with figleaves and carefully chiselled the penises from Māori sculptures.

Clearly they would have to suppress this filth about orchids.

So Fluckinger and Hanbury wrote in their 1872 Pharmacographia “*Salep possesses no medicinal powers.*” Fernie claimed in the 1895 *Herbal simples*, that it was “...so highly valued for its fine qualities that most extravagant prices are paid for it by wealthy Orientals,” but omitted to mention what those qualities were. Britten and Holland, in their 1886 *Dictionary of English plant names*, could not even bring themselves to print some of the common names of orchids,

We have purposely excluded a few names which, though graphic in their construction and meaning, interesting from their antiquity, and even yet in use in certain countries, are scarcely suited for publication in a work intended for general readers.

By early in the twentieth century the clean-up had gone so far that Sir Arthur Hort, in his translation of Theophrastus's *Enquiry into Plants*, expunged the entire section on the medicinal properties of orchids, a prudishness described by Sarton (*A History of Science*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1959) as “truly shocking” in a scientific work.

The censor and Mr Colenso

Colenso experienced a similarly shocking censorship of three footnotes to his Victorian essay “On the Maori races”, written to order for the Commissioners of the 1865 New Zealand Exhibition in Dunedin. Dr Eccles, the Secretary, found three of the notes objectionable, and wrote “beastly” in the margin of each. Hector went along with the censorship and told Colenso as much. (He noted, “*Colenso’s (essay) is not well written but it is valuable if correct.*”).

Colenso had written from Hawke’s Bay to Hooker about “the precious Scotch clique with which our Province is infected”. He transferred that suspicion to the Commissioners of the Exhibition (“I believe the good Scotch committee have latterly found fault with some of my ‘notes’”) and to Hector and the editorial board of the *Transactions* (“Dr Hector is a very superior man & a nice fellow: is he a Scotchman? I know not: if he is, he is wonderfully different from the many”).

He replied to Hector (letter of September 29, 1865) in a very reasonable tone,

Wellington, Septr. 29th, 1865.

Jas. Hector, Esq., M.D.

&c &c &c

Wellington.

Dear Sir

I have just received your note of this morning, covering an official note (no. 3024,) from the Hon. Secretary to the Dunedin Exhibition to you of the 25th inst., and also Ms. notes, 21, 22, & 29, to my Essay on “the Maori Races of N.Z.”—which notes are considered by the Commissioners to be “objectionable,” and such as “ought not to be printed.”

I have again closely perused them,

and, failing to discover any thing objectionable in them, I confess I scarcely know how to reply.

It must be clear, that in my writing on the New Zealanders, (who have been, and are, so heavily charged with immodesty,) I wished to shew what they were – what the first navigators & visitors found them to be: of course, if those notes (collected from rare and authentic works,) are to be struck out, my own opinion & early knowledge of them (being contrary to the general modern estimation,) will appear still more peculiar; while by such suppression of the truth not only myself but also the N. Zealanders will not have justice done us.

—Pardon me, if I say, I had thought the day of ultra-fastidiousness in scientific enquiry had well-nigh passed away.—

In order, however, if possible to please all parties, I have no objection to the striking-out of the middle part of note 21,—(beginning “the writer recollects,” and ending at “comforted,”)—also, the first part (or the whole) of note 22 (at the same time I feel such would be a suppression of the truth)—and, the term “making water,” in note 29, could perhaps be modified by some more delicate word, or euphemism,—or given in Latin!—or, if still objected to, let this note (29) be struck out altogether.

Once more, and in conclusion, may I be permitted to observe—I. That, viewing the Ms. Essay and Notes as being the property of the Commissioners, they should deal with them as they please: but, if they should choose to print them with much alteration or suppression of parts, or

of (necessary) notes, that I should be allowed to reprint them in full (say, at least 2 (two) years hence,) if by me desired.—2. That, if the Commissioners should on the whole prefer to decline the printing of them, I am quite willing to receive them back, leaving it entirely to them to make any allowance to me for trouble expense and loss.—

Should I live to complete my large projected work on N.Z.,—statements and notes of a much more “objectionable” character than any to be found in the present Essay & Notes, will, of necessity, be found in it.—

*Believe me
Dear Sir
Yours truly
Wm. Colenso.*

The prudish Dr Alfred Eccles (1821-1904) qualified as a surgeon in London, emigrated to Otago in 1861, becoming the first Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons to practise in the province. He was involved in the origins of the Otago Medical School. He returned to live in his home county of Devon in 1871. His action must rank as the earliest, even if not the most outrageous, act of censorship in the history of New Zealand science. Colenso's essay was a masterpiece of anthropological writing of its time.

What was so beastly?

On 23 November 1869 Colenso wrote to JD Hooker, saying,

With this I send you a packet (registered) being my only single copy of the Essay on the Natives, with all the notes, & wanting appendix, in Ms. — I send you my copy, in order that you may have the proper places

of the notes indicated, together with a few typos! corrections marked, — and that you may keep in your Libr. your own presentation copy”

That copy has not survived in the Kew library, but the three contentious notes are bound with the final handwritten copy of the manuscript in the Alexander Turnbull Library, and part of an early handwritten copy containing drafts of all of the other notes is in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, (in an almost illegible scrawl, among Coupland Harding's Colenso papers). The three contentious notes read...

Note 21. Cook says:— “I have observed that our friends in the South Seas had not even the idea of indecency, with respect to any object, or any action; but this was by no means the case with the inhabitants of New Zealand, in whose carriage and conversation there was as much modest reserve and decorum with respect to actions, which yet in their opinion were not criminal, as are to be found among the politest nations in Europe.... The women wore their lower garment always bound fast around them, except when they went into the water to catch lobsters, and then they took great care not to be seen by the men. Some of us happening one day to land upon a small island in Tolaga Bay, we surprised several of them at this employment, and the chaste Diana with her nymphs, could not have discovered more confusion and distress at the sight of Actaon, than these women expressed upon our approach. Some of them hid themselves among the rocks, and the rest crouched down in the sea till they had made themselves a girdle and apron of such weeds as they could find, and when they came out, even with this veil, we could perceive that their modesty suffered much pain by

our presence." (Cook's *Voyages*, Vol III pp 450, 456) "Among the men, nudity at any time, or on any occasion, is not considered indecorous; but a dereliction of feminine modesty by the women is seldom known." (*Cruise's Journal*, p.281).

The writer recollects a middle-aged chief, several years back, sitting down on a low fence dressed in a large loose mat, at his work carving a small image, when suddenly he fell to the ground in a fit,—(to which,—epilepsy—he was subject,) on his recovering, the first question he asked the writer, was, whether in his fall he had exposed himself to the other natives of the place, mostly women; and although he was assured he had not, he burst into tears, crying bitterly for a long while, and would not be comforted.—

Dr. Forster says:— "The principles of chastity we found in many families, exceedingly well understood and practised, to the great satisfaction of all those Europeans in whose hearts lewdness had not yet effaced every notion of purity and morality. I have with transport seen many fine women, who with a modesty mixed with politeness, which would have graced the most exalted character of our polite nations, refuse the greatest and most tempting offers made them by our forward youths. But it is necessary to observe, that a nation still enjoying that just and noble simplicity of manners, & living in large houses with several families together, in the midst of their children, cannot conceal certain actions, which none of our Europeans, who have feelings and breeding, wished to commit in so great companies.... Virtuous women hear a joke without emotion, which amongst us might put some men to the blush. Neither austerity and anger, nor joy and ecstasy is the consequence, but sometimes a modest, dignified, serene smile spreads itself over their faces, and

seems gently to rebuke the uncouth jester." (*Observations*, p.392).

Note 22. "In New Zealand the fathers and nearest relations were used to sell the favours of their females to those of our ship's company, who were irresistibly attracted by their charms; and often were these victims of brutality dragged by the fathers into the dark recesses of the ship, and there left to the beastly appetite of their paramours, who did not disdain them, though the poor victim stood trembling before them, and was dissolved in a flood of tears." (J.R. Forster's *Observations* p.420).

"The favors of the women did not depend upon their own inclination, but the men, as absolute masters, were always to be consulted upon the occasion, and won with a spike-nail, or a shirt, or a similar present.... Some among the women however submitted with reluctance to this vile prostitution; and but for the authority and menaces of the men, would not have complied with the desires of a set of people who could, with unconcern, behold their tears and hear their complaints. Encouraged by the lucrative nature of this infamous commerce, the New Zealanders went through the whole vessel, offering their daughters and sisters promiscuously, in exchange for our iron tools, which they knew could not be purchased at an easier rate. It does not appear that their married women were ever suffered to have this intercourse with our people.... It may therefore be alledged, that as the New Zealanders place no value on the continence of their unmarried women, the arrival of Europeans among them, did not injure their moral characters in this respect; but we doubt that they ever debased themselves so much as to make a trade of their women, before we created new wants by

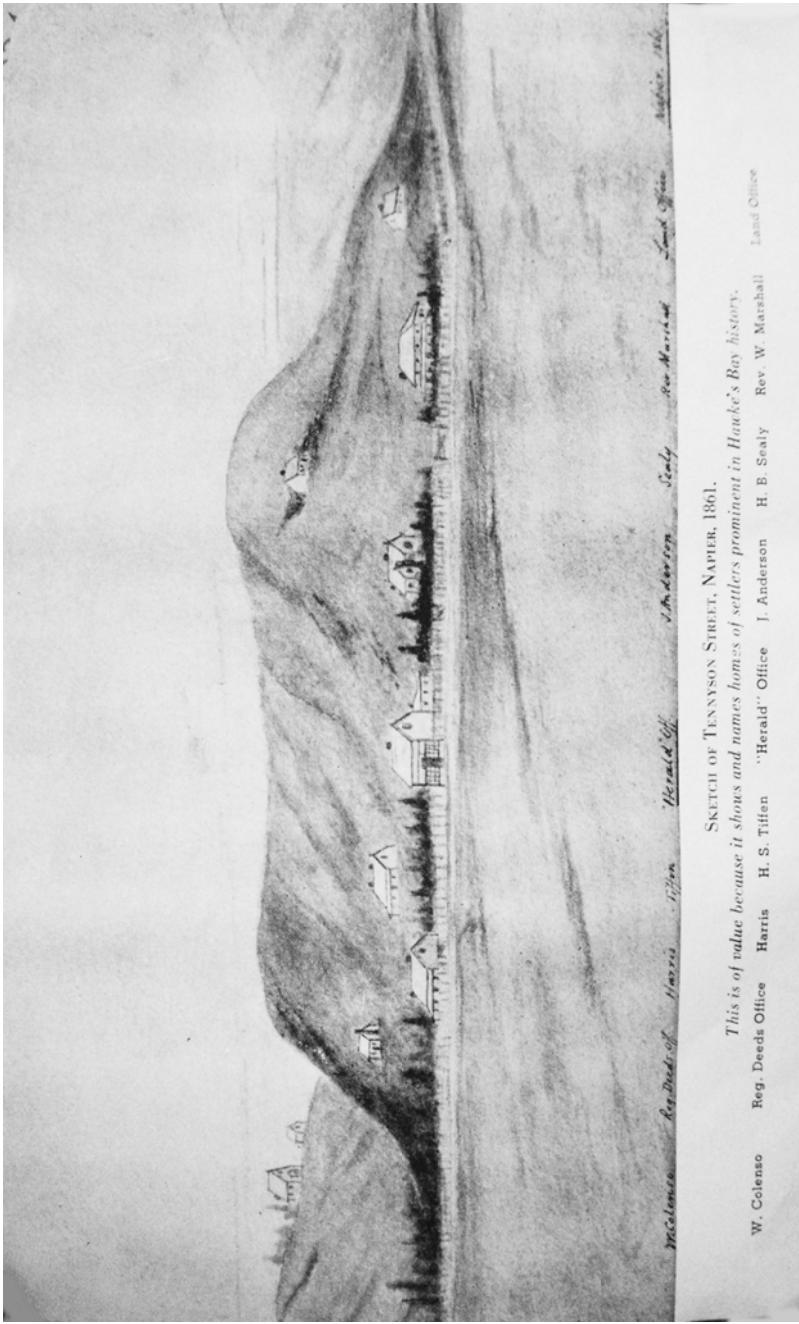
shewing them iron-tools.... Whether the members of a civilised society, who could act such a brutal part, or the barbarians who could force their own women to submit to such indignity, deserve the greatest abhorrence, is a question not easily to be decided." (G. Forster's *Voyage*. Vol.1, p.211). "...I fear that hitherto our intercourse has been wholly disadvantageous to the nations of the South Seas; and that those communities have been the least injured, who have always kept aloof from us...." (*Ibid*).

Note 29. On one of the visits made by the writer to Taupo (1846) across the

Ruahine mountain range, then under snow, he was not a little amused and instructed, in hearing one of the old chiefs gravely affirm the cause of their war party (of which he had been one) meeting with the disaster they did in attempting to cross the range at the same place, when on a marauding expedition into the present Hawke's Bay district;—viz. through one of them (mentioning his name) having dared to violate the sanctity of the summits by making water on the top of the range! through which impious act he and several others lost their lives; and the expedition returned with difficulty, and without effecting their object.



The ruins of the Botallack mine on the north Cornish coast, 2010—discussed at some length by Colenso in his last paper in 1899: *Memorabilia, Ancient and Modern; being Remarks and Information respecting some of the Tin-mines in Cornwall*, England.



This sketch was published in a booklet marking the Hawke's Bay Centennial celebrations; its provenance is unknown.

CALL FOR PAPERS
(CLOSING DATE 30 APRIL 2011)



Wm Colenso.

WILLIAM COLENSO

BICENTENARY
A CELEBRATION
OF HIS LIFE
AND IDEAS

HAWKE'S BAY
9-13 NOVEMBER 2011

**2011 IS THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BIRTH OF
WILLIAM COLENSO**

Printer of some of the most significant documents in New Zealand history, missionary, explorer and botanist, a free-wheeling politician and controversialist – William Colenso was a maverick.

To celebrate the life and ideas of Colenso – one of the fathers of New Zealand – on the bicentenary of his birth Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery is planning a programme of events from 9 – 13 November 2011 centered on an academic conference.

We are now inviting proposals for the conference, to be held from
10 – 11 November 2011.

We welcome new, established and independent researchers to submit proposals for papers and panels on all subjects associated with the life and ideas of William Colenso (1811 – 1899). Potential themes include, but are not limited to Colenso's links with Maori, botany, religion, education, printing, exploration and local history.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

For all individual and panel proposals, please include the name, institutional affiliation (if any), contact address and email of the presenter, a 250 word abstract, and a brief biography that provides details such as publications and current research interests. Proposals will be subject to a peer review process.

Proposals should be submitted by email using the template provided on the website to colenso@hbmag.co.nz no later than 30 April 2011. Please ensure that the proposal includes your name, paper title and contact email address.

The conference format for individual papers will be a 20 minute presentation followed by 10 minutes for discussion and questions.

There will be an opportunity for selected papers to be included in an edited publication on William Colenso, released to coincide with an exhibition and research project to be developed by Hawke's Bay Museum & Art Gallery upon the reopening of the Museum in 2013.

A wide range of events will be taking place as part of the bicentenary and there are still opportunities for your organisation to host an event, wherever you are in the world, as part of the celebrations. Please contact Eloise Taylor at colenso@hbmag.co.nz for more information.



PLEASE CONTACT

ELOISE TAYLOR

PUBLIC PROGRAMMES TEAM LEADER

PHONE 06 835 9243

EMAIL COLENSO@HBmag.co.nz

WWW.HBmag.co.nz



HAWKE'S BAY MUSEUM & ART GALLERY NAPIER

Vandalism on Napier Hill

Bagnall & Petersen wrote, "The reader may have formed the impression that the manuscript sources for this study are richer than those existing for many more prominent figures. This is correct, but what has been used is unfortunately only a fraction of what has been lost. Colenso in the 'nineties mentions sorting out and burning old letters, but when Latimer visited Napier to clear up the estate after his father's death it is variously reported that an extensive bonfire and a disused well near the house accounted for most of the papers. These would have included hundreds of important letters from many of the leading scientists of his age, apart from journals and family correspondence. Henry Hill, it is reported, obtained possession of a mountain of material for the auction price of 5/-, to the chagrin of that avid collector, Augustus Hamilton, whose bid narrowly missed the time of the sale. This acquisition contained mainly duplicates of Colenso's early printing, individual examples of which are now worth several times as many shillings as the whole batch fetched fifty years ago.

"Some years later a similar nest of papers was found in the servants' cottage. Again many were destroyed, but three sacks went south to Dunedin, a considerable proportion of this being the uncompleted *Happy Deaths*, now in the possession of Mr. W. A. Thomson. Drafts of published articles and speeches, with the Harding letters from 1890 until his death, were disposed of through Messrs. Angus and Robertson, and found a resting place in the Mitchell Library. It was undoubtedly a major but often repeated tragedy that such a unique collection of papers was allowed to be dissipated."

They went on to report an excerpt from a paper by the Cook scholar and lexicographer EE Morris (*Trans Volume 33, 1900. Art. LXII.—On the Tracks of Captain Cook.* By Professor E. E. Morris, M.A., Litt.D., Melbourne University. Communicated to the N.Z. Institute by Sir James Hector.)

"On my leaving Napier an incident occurred which wears a comic aspect. Napier was the home of the late Mr. Colenso, the well-known Maori scholar. Having seen sundry remarks of his about traces of Cook quoted in books, I made inquiry what had become of his papers, and found that the bulk of them had come into the hands of a friend and admirer. A visit to this gentleman won speedily from him a promise that he would look through the papers and send me any printed documents that might be of service. Most kindly he began the search at once. I went on board the steamer at 8 in the evening. There were cricketers returning northward, there was a crowd, there was cheering. After the vessel had cast off, the gentleman, it seems, came breathless on the scene with a parcel of documents, and consulted the good-natured Irish policeman on the wharf, who promptly volunteered to fling the parcel on board. He flung, and it fell into the sea. 'Oh! Mr. Constable,' one is tempted to exclaim, 'you little know the mischief you have done'; nor, indeed, do I, for I know not what was in the parcel that wasted its lore upon the waters of 'Hawkes Bay.' "

Colenso himself had shared in the destruction: RC Harding wrote in his eulogy after Colenso's death, "Several times I told him that he possessed a small fortune in old New Zealand stamps alone yet a few months ago he told me that he had lately destroyed over a thousand very old envelopes with their letters, without remembering the value of the stamps."

Harding was referring to this passage in Colenso's letter to him of 12 May 1898: "I have had, & still have (one by post this day) *repeated applications* for old P. stamps: did I tell you, I destroyed over 1000 letters in the winter of '96,—& of (say) *half* of their envelopes—before I thought of preserving any? and now I have *many* more to destroy—some very old, no doubt."

He had written earlier (26 November 1896): "I have been doing some *strange* work of late! Going through *old* letters & MSS., have already burnt *several hundreds* of letters—from 1835 downwards, saving their envelopes & stamps,—& occupied in like manner today—& have a full week's work of same sort before me...."

The oenophile

The Reverend William Colenso's cellar contained 95 bottles of wine when he died. Stuart Webster, a partner in the Napier law firm Sainsbury Logan & Williams (Lawyers since 1875) recently sent copy of the probate inventory, a list of Colenso's possessions and an estimated value of each at the time of his death (**see Supplement, this issue**).

(3.) Wines, Spirits, and Liquors.	Value.
5 Bottles of Wine	10 .
4 Cases of Colonial Port.	5 . . .
1 Case of Champagne	5 . . .
16 Bottles of Champagne Cante L'or	4 . . .
2 Cases of Mission Wine	2 8 .
1 Case of Colonial Wine	1 4 .
1 " " Wine (Waterhouse)	1 4 .
18 Bottles ..	1 16 .
12 " " Colonial wine	1 4 .
10 " " ..	1 . .
11 " " " Port	1 13 .
12 " " ..	1 16 .
2 " " French wine	10 .
	£ 37 5 .

Detail of Colenso's probate inventory

Temperate, but not teetotal

He was never a teetotaller, nor a prohibitionist: in an undated letter of November 1841 he (aged 30) wrote to the departing JD Hooker, “According to promise I send your Books to Dr. Sinclair’s in Lodgings; availing myself of the opportunity of sending a $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. Stout and a Bottle Claret, for your use when Botanizing at the base (or peak) of Mt. Erebus, which I pray you to accept. Would that my Cellar allowed of my doing so in a manner more worthy of your acceptance.”

Hooker mentioned this to his father in a letter of 23 November 1841: “Since I left Paihia some bottled Porter and Claret have reached me as a present from him, for which I am sorry, as I am sure his poor cellar could ill afford such a diminution.... I should mention that a most kind note accompanied the wine.”

In 1850 Colenso wrote to McLean from the mission station at Waitangi, “We send you a few loose cherries, a little wine, milk & Butter, and a cake, & would that they were both larger & better”—and the following year, “There are however a few bottles of gooseberry & elder wine remaining which are wholly at *your* service.”

Years later he would write again to his old friend JD Hooker (22 January 1883), “Thanks hearty real big & manifold for your very kind letter of Septr 21/82. The very sight of your hand-writing (so well-known & so stereotyped within!) do me more good than—well, an A.1. Doctor’s prescriptn., or a bottle of Australian wine—my favourite beverage (always in moderation).”

His public letters (to newspapers) repeatedly extol the virtues of moderate alcohol consumption, decry the extreme position taken by teetotallers, prohibitionists, the Independent Order of Rechabites and others. He was vocal against women’s suffrage, because he thought women would be the first to vote against open liquor licensing (to keep their menfolk out of the bars). He protested that “Temperance” meant just that – not an absolute ban, but a moderate approach: he should know, he claimed, having been a member of the first Temperance Society, and having printed its report (the first book to be published in English in New Zealand).

In 1878 the gourmet wrote to Andrew Luff in London, “with a small order”

20–30 dozen Guiness’ extra foreign stout, pints, bottled by Burke of Dublin,
if possible.

2–3 doz. good old Port, @ £4–£5.
2 doz. Sherry (mild, pale) @ £3–£4.
2 doz. E. I. Madeira, @ £5.
20lbs. Tea @ 3/- (Cooper’s as last large lot).

1 case Cornish sardines (from Curing Store at Mevagissey Cornwall) say
100 “halves”.

From Moir, Glasshouse-fields, Brook St., London.

2–3 doz. Scotch Salmon, in 1lb. tins)
4 doz. fresh Herrings in 2lb tins) all
“1 Case about $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt.” (as stated in their own catalogue) of Yorkshire) first
Hams, 12lbs.–14lbs.) quality

In 1889 he wrote again to Luff, now in Wellington, “Several times of late I have been thinking much of you! —partly owing to my daily using the excellent Port Wine you had got for me—I glass a day: and I wished to know if it were possible to get more. I

have a good resident agent there.” (i.e. in London).

In 1894 (aged 83) after getting lost in the bush and tiring himself out, he wrote to Harding, “A glass of wine proved of service...” and later that year, “Yesty. was rather a sad day w. me—not well able either to write or to read! still *very weak* (shall I say to you—*both body & mind?*) I wanted something *nourishing*: Dr. presd. Brandy in *milk* this *latter* I dislike raw—however I used it—wishing for my *old sustaining* regimen—“Guiness Extra stout”, which Dr. disappd. of, fearing return of diarrhoea, [at my house in N., in *this respect*, I could have fared better:] finding myself so *low & cold*, yesty. evg., I (having abjured By. & Mk.) got a bottle of port wine, & 2 glasses, w. hot water & nutmeg & sugar, I took last nt. at x. & to bed, & feel better today.”

Later again, after he had read a paper at the Hawke’s Bay Philosophical Institute meeting, coffee was served, and “I was courteously pressed to partake but I refused—at length, saying If a glass of stout, port wine, or ½ glass Brandy were offered me, I would accept it w. *thanks*. Your Uncle near me smiled:—Dr. Moore said, come over to my house, close by, & take some”. (Coupland Harding’s uncle John Harding was such a teetotaller that he called his son Rechab). At the next month’s meeting “I... this time brought a little *Wine* & took my glass before them all—who looked pleased.”

His cellar

His cellar contained a mix of “colonial” and French wines (it had clearly been possible, after his 1889 letter to Luff, to get more colonial port).

Drappier Carte d’Or bubbly is still made in Urville, Champagne region, and was a favoured tipple of Charles de Gaulle. Their website tells us in glorious Franglais, “Formerly occupied by the Cistercian monks of Clairvaux, the seat of the house includes some marvellous vaulted cellars from the 12th century. Moving to the more recent past, the Drappier family tree nevertheless has its roots in the 17th century, when Remy Drappier was born and became, like Nicolas Ruinart, a merchant draper in Reims. His grandson Nicolas (1669-1724) was a supplier to Louis XIV: One must wait until 1808 before one of the ancestors of the Drappier house, Louis, settled in Urville and began to exploit the vineyards which today extend to over 40 hectares, without counting a dozen contracted parcels of vines in the Montagne de Reims and the Cote des Blancs.... Fiercely opposed to the excessive use of sulphur, we apply the smallest quantities in our profession. The Champagnes acquired thus have more natural colours with rich, sometimes coppery golds and more developed aromas.” Hence, I suppose, the name “gold card” [1].

The “Mission” wine of the probate inventory may have been more or Colenso’s gooseberry or elderflower wine from Waitangi, or might have been from the current Mission Vineyard. The Rev. Father Yardin, Superior of the Meanee Mission, wrote in 1890, “About twenty years ago, vines were planted in the garden of the Catholic Mission at Meanee for the purpose of making wine only for the service of the altar. The attempt was successful, and the small vineyard was increased to the extent of a little more than half an acre. The plants were of the best quality: Black Hamburg, White and Red Sweet-water, Chasselas, and Alexandria Tardif. They have produced every year a larger crop of grapes, which make wine of excellent quality. When leaving New Zealand, Comte d’Abbans, the French Vice-Consul at Wellington, took with him some twenty bottles of 1885 to 1888 wine of different qualities, made at Meanee, and had it exhib-

ited in his court at the Paris Exhibition.... the Comte subsequently obtained the opinion of some of the best wine merchants in Paris, who have unanimously pronounced it unmistakably superior to anything produced in Australia.... Comte d'Abbans is confident that Hawke's Bay could be made a great wine-producing district, as the dry climate is especially suitable to the cultivation of the grape" [2].

The only other identified wine is "Waterhouse" in brackets. Waterhouse Range vineyard in S. Australia is recent, and I can find no other reference for its possible source, except an entry in the *Evening Post* (19 November 1885 p.2): "Messrs. George Thomas & Co. will sell tomorrow, by order of the Official Assignee, in the estate of R. S. Waterhouse, wines, spirits, and tobacco; also, the contents of a country general drapery and fancy store." Perhaps Colenso bought some of the wine, valued in the inventory at 2/- a bottle.

References

1. http://www.pinotnow.com.au/html/getFile.asp?table=tbl_TCA_Article_Files&field=image&id=470
2. Yardin Fr. 1890. *On Vine-growing in Hawke's Bay*. Trans. N.Z. Inst 23: 528.

The Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery holds Colenso's original probated will and codicils and all of the attendant estate documentation that followed.

Stuart Webster, partner in the Napier law firm Sainsbury Logan & Williams writes, "The documents were in our strong room and survived the 1931 earthquake and fire through the amazing foresight of one of the solicitors who re-entered the building after the initial shock and closed the door of the strong room to prevent damage from the fire that followed. During a 'spring-clean' some time in the 1960s, the documents were rescued by one of the partners and donated to the Hawke's Bay Museum.

"The firm acted for the Executors and Trustees of Colenso's Will (Knowles et. al.) and for young Ridley Latimer Colenso the main beneficiary and so the name of the firm (as it was in 1899) is on the backing sheet of the Order of Probate. Colenso died on a Friday, was buried at 3pm on the Sunday and his probate application was granted the following Wednesday. Some poor unlucky Confidential Clerk had the task of drawing up the Probate Application including the Will and Codicils in copperplate writing on 12 pages of foolscap size velum (including a coloured diagram of Colenso's landholdings) all in time to be lodged, checked and granted within the first 3 days of the next working week. For anyone wishing to know a little more about the process, the last Will and Testament (including any Codicils) are located and presented to the Court. The Registrar then checks them (including the affidavits of the Executors swearing to the fact that they are the latest documents) and then the Court Seal is affixed to the Order of Probate to say that the Will etc are officially the last testamentary documents relating to the deceased and the Executors can then get on with the job of gathering up the estate assets, paying the debts and following the testator's instructions as to the disposal of the net assets of the estate. So this firm would have prepared the documents which followed probate including the probate inventory and all of the other documents and paid the estate duty on behalf of the executors."

Stuart has written a history of the firm, to be published in November this year.

SEE SUPPLEMENT TO THIS ISSUE.

Following the Footsteps of William Colenso

By Tony Gates

It is fitting that the pioneer work begun by Colenso with Missionary zeal and made feasible by the loyalty and bushcraft of stalwart Maori guides should be an inspiration to future New Zealanders, where the open tops and bushed ranges stretch serenely on the horizon, encouraging travellers to find in toil and sweat the fortuitous satisfaction of achievement.

John Pascoe (1959)

William Howlett: dedicated Ruahine explorer/ botanist/ hut builder, teacher, store keeper, journalist, and Commission Agent.

William Frederick Howlett was born in Torquay, England, in 1850. He was well educated, then in 1875 sent to New Zealand as a “remittance Man” with a regular income from home. Maybe his Victorian England clergy family didn’t want an intelligent and obviously strongly opinionated young man at home, preferring simply to pay him to go away. Maybe he relished emigration, with the exploration opportunities available in the colonies. For what ever reason, Howlett made New Zealand and the Ruahines his home. Like Colenso some fifty years before him, Howlett explored and botanised high in the Ruahine mountains.

Howlett was a school teacher at Nelson College, where his photo was taken about 1878. His chosen area from the early 1880s was in southern Hawke’s Bay, where he taught at Makaretu School, and kept a general store. His remittance payments from England must have allowed Howlett some financial freedom, and time to explore and botanise in the Ruahine Ranges in an area similar in many ways to the places that William Colenso knew so well. “Howlett country” is located a few catchments south from “Colenso country”, and overlooks the Tukituki (Hawkes Bay) and Oroua (Manawatu) catchments.

Howlett the hut builder

Like William Colenso, William Howlett was something of an interesting character with an enquiring mind and often idiosyncratic viewpoint. He was a good teacher, with many friends, but certainly wouldn’t hold back his tongue or pen on some comments. He raised the ire of the Makaretu School Board, and some sections of the establishment. As a journalist, he wrote a column “*Olla Podrida*” for Hawke’s Bay and



Howlett's hut, August 1955, photo by Allan Berry

Wairarapa newspapers, featuring a wide variety of topics—including some of his Ruahine activities. During 1893–1894, Howlett built a summer camp beside the Tukituki River headwaters, and another beside a tarn high on the main Ruahine range. This tarn no longer exists, apparently a result of the Napier earthquake, and the hut has twice been replaced. The original Howlett Hut construction utilised locally grown split timber from pahau-tea/mountain cedar/*Libocederos bidwillii* trees which sometimes grow prolifically near the upper edge of the extensive *Nothofagus* forest. Howlett botanised from his high Ruahine hut, and investigated possible roading routes, timber and grazing lands, and interestingly for the time, mountain recreation.

Howlett the botanist

There was definite botanical interest from Howlett, as seen with his correspondence to Colenso below, and with the specimens that he collected of *Podocarpus nivalis* in Colenso's herbarium. Indeed, from 1882 till about 1895, William Colenso mentioned some of Howlett's writings, and in 1894 received personal correspondence from him.

...one (letter) is from another (nearly as bad, but an educd. person) Howlett—which, has surprised me not a little: perhaps I told you, how, 4–5 wks. ago, he had sent me sundry small spns. of alpine plants to be named (pretending to a sup. kn. of Boty. &c)—those were left at N., but I got them, & worked hard at them: all mere bits; no flrs., & succeeded in naming them all—adding, 2 might be new, & if he wod. send me a spn. or two (or even a leaf or two) more, I should be certain, & if new, would describe, w. some of Hill's (from E. Cape), & mine, from Dvk.—Recd. a long ramble, in reply, of what he is going to do next season,—barely thankg. me for my note—“being unwell & in bed (?) could not write”—without replying to requests in my letter, & closing w., “Dont reply to this.”—H. may rest assured—it will be long, ere he hears from me again.

Colenso to Harding, 30 May 1894

Howlett collected and named a species of Spaniard plant from high in the Ruahines that was thought at the time to be the same as a common species from coastal regions of Marlborough. *Aciphylla squarossa* var. *flaccida* (Kirk 1899) collected by Howlett during the 1890s was however found later to be a distinct local endemic species, along with several other species found in the Tararuas and Kaimanawas. Norman Elder and others conducted an extensive botanical survey of the Ruahines during 1941, and, with



Howlett Hut and some of the high Ruahine Range, featuring typical tussock and beech forest vegetation. The *Aciphylla* species that Howlett discovered probably still grows here, but would not always be easy to find.

difficulty, rediscovered a colony of Howlett's *Aciphylla* species near Howlett hut [remember, alpine vegetation can be difficult to tramp through, particularly the aptly named tupari/ leatherwood/ *Olearia colensoi*]. Little would be missed by Elder, who had an exceptional botanical knowledge, and is a deserving subject for further editions of *eColenso*.

Howlett collected many other specimens, including the ones mentioned above by Colenso. Also on his list were fern spores and seeds of gentians, tussock grasses, totara, and others, with collection and germination instructions. Some were even sold in London, for apparently very good prices.

In 1902, William Howlett was aged 52 when he took his 21 year old bride Olive to honeymoon at his summer camp in the Tukituki river headwaters (probably also up to his hut on the main range). This is remembered by employees whose job it was to carry Mrs Howlett over the many river crossings. There were no children. The Howletts shifted to Pahiatua about 1906 to run a hostel. Mrs Olive Howlett died in 1922, and William, whilst retaining many eccentricities, died an old man in 1936.

Howlett Hut nos two and three.

Palmerston North based Ruahine Tramping Club was active during the 1930s. With Heretaunga Tramping Club friends, including another great botanist by the name of Norman Elder, they constructed Howlett Hut number two on the same site, opened November 1940. It was a Herculean effort using human pack horses to get the building materials on site. This hut played a vital role in recreation and government deer culling operations after 1945, and in 1948, provided crucial shelter for searchers for the bodies of the three airmen from the crashed RNZAF Airspeed Oxford NZ 2127. The popular and well appointed modern day Howlett hut was built in 1979. William Howlett is remembered with this hut, and with nearby Howlett Creek.



Club members at the opening of the Howlett hut in December 1940:
courtesy Ruahine Tramping Club

References

- Great days in New Zealand Exploration John Pascoe (1959) Reed.
Colonial Outcasts. A search for the Remittance Men. By Neil Hartley (1993) Arrow Press.
W F Howlett, Pioneer Ruahine Botanist. By J F Findlay. NZ Journal of Botany 1979.
William Colenso, 1882, private letters to John Drummond about William Howlett.
Huts. Untold stories from back country New Zealand. Mark Pickering (2010). Canterbury University Press.

Makaretu Cash Store

Until 8.pm on Tuesday 18th December, all stock will be for sale at reduced prices, and the **Store finally closed** on the 19th. The remaining stock will be **auctioned** on Thursday the 20th December at 10.30 am. The stock to date includes considerable quantities of general goods. Carpenters, Builders, and all in want of small house furnishings would do well to look in. And under mentioned is a selection of the goods on sale:—

Groceries and Sundries. Arrowroot (6d), black lead, blacking, sago, candles, cocoa, coffee, lollies, coffee and milk (1s), cocoa and milk (1s), lobster, kippered herrings (1s), sardines, blue ruddle (2d), fancy ornaments, boots (watertights and shooters nos. 9, 10, and 11, at 10s), feeding bottles, garden and flower seeds, seed pockets.

Hardware. Axes (5s), Augers, billies, basins, baking tins, braces and bits (8-16s to 14-16s), barbing tools, bill hooks (3s). tower bolts, japanned brackets, bridle hooks, candle moulds, chisels, castors, cattle bells, cup hooks, ceiling hooks, churns, clothes lines, files, fly traps (1s), forks, frypans (1s), hinges—both tee and butt, hat and coat hooks, hatchets, irons, knives, milk dishes, oil stones, plaster of paris, sash weights (d lb), reaping hooks, screws, spouting and downpiping, ridging, tin tacks, galvanized tubs, paints guns, powder and ammunition generally, yellow paint 8d lb, acme wire strainers 3d, spade handles 1s, zinc 3d lb.

Drapery. American leather, moleskins, tweed trousers, suits, black coats, white coats, youth's suits, boys suits, American duck riveted goods, sewing cotton, cretonne carpet, flowers, feathers, linoleum flannel, fingering, gloves, silk handkerchiefs, men's hats, summer straw hats, lace, crape muslin, mosquito netting, ribbons, scarfs, shirts (white and Oxford, half price), undershirts pants, red and green and baize, fringe.

Goods not delivered. Hours 8.am to 8.pm. No trade on Sundays.

W F Howlett.

(From Pahiatua Newspaper, 14 December 1888)

Sunrise, Howletts. By E.R.P. 1981. From Howlett Hut log book.

Glowing the air now, the colour up running
Shining the peak above soft morning cloud,
Below are the flatlands, still covered with darkness
There the snow glistens, the brilliance bursts forth.

Mountain beech shimmers, the frost on the leaf edge
Gilded with light, ice golden and rose.
Ridges catch light as the cornice, transparent,
Shines like a sword edge transfixing the peak.

A letter from Howlett

Makaretu
Waipawa

5 Sep 1896

The Director
Colonial Laboratory
Wellington

Dear Sir

I enclose some stones taken from a fowl's gizzard. They appear to be nothing but pieces of glass, but I have no means of testing the hardness, and they scratch window panes easily. If they are not glass, I should be glad to learn whether it would be worthwhile examining the place where the fowl ran, and what one might expect to find there. I understand colored quartz, even if transparent has little commercial value.

Yours truly
W F Howlett



William Howlett

A letter about Howlett

Napier, 1979

Dear Mr Findlay

I received your letter today and yes I did nurse a Mr Howlett who had earlier in his life lived at Makeratu. This was in 1927 in Wellington Hospital and at that time I was a very junior nurse in training at that time.

Mr Howlett was a learned but rather eccentric old man and Ward 4 to all intents and purposes was his home at that time and as far as I know for many years. As far as I can recall Mr Howlett had few visitors but seemed content and I would think quite happy. He had earlier on fractured a femur and was not really mobile requiring assistance to get in and out of bed and so on. He occasionally talked to me about Makeratu and the Ruahines and he knew my relatives up there. However I feel sure that many nurses well remember him as a great stickler for time. For example every new nurse had written on her list - left side of ward - Bed 1, Mr Howlett - Morning tea 10am sharp, tea with two teaspoons of sugar - one slice of bread, butter and jam cut into squares which he eats with a fork. If this didn't appear at 10am he would watch the door closely, and each nurse, almost willing her to produce the goods. The same applied to getting up - going back to bed - all at a set time, but I must add that he was liked by the nurses, and the younger patients in the ward also, who were interested in him & enjoyed talking to him.

As far as I know he ended his days in Wellington Hospital and so records of his death would be in Wellington. You asked if Mr Howlett had married again. As far as I know there was no wife, in fact no real family in Wellington.

I trust this may be of help to you.

Yours sincerely
Doris T Pedersen

Colenso and Chevalier Gustav Schmidt

In a letter to JD Hooker dated 23 February 1855, the Reverend William Colenso wrote (his last letter to Hooker from Waitangi, apparently in response to the suggestion that he ought to go and explore the botany of the South Island), “If you have received my last letter you will have known my thoughts respecting a visit to the Mid Island. Strange to say, an offer quite in accordance with my wishes, has already been made me, but, coming so very unexpectedly as it did & demanding instant compliance, not forgetting my sworn fealty to you & your father, I withheld all solicitations, and returned a direct refusal. The circumstance was this: about a week before Xmas I was surprised by the sudden arrival from an unbooked visitor – a ‘Doctor’ or ‘Chevalier Smith’ – a foreigner (a German, I presume,) who came here overland from Auckland *en route* to Wellington – where his suite (he said) was. He only spent a night with me (in my hermitage) – arriving at vi. p.m. and leaving the next morn. at viii – which night however we contrived to make the most of, spending it (much as *you* & I would do) in looking over such specimens as were at hand, & in talking about Botany & its kindred sciences, taking only about 1½ hours sleep. Dr S was greatly pressed for time, having engaged to be at Wellington by the 29th of that mo. He was then (he told me) going to explore the Mid. Island. He repeatedly urged me to accompany him, tempting me with a *large* salary, &c., but I could not anyhow leave here at a moment’s notice. He appears to be in the employ of more than one Govern. but of his employers, I know nothing – only he assured me that he did *not* want money &c. He greatly wished me to *sell* many of my specimens, and

urged me to put myself in correspondence with some rich & scientific individuals *on the Continent*, all of which, I for the time (at least) have declined. He assured me that after spending the summer in the Mid. Island, he should return to these parts, when we are to go to the neighbouring mountn. range together.

“He seems to be more of a Geologist than Botanist: – but, truly, we were together for so very brief a time, and his understanding so very little English, & speaking less, and my (now) knowing nothing of French, that I ought not to pass an opinion upon him. I lent him however, at his earnest desire, 7 of my old & best N.Z. sketches which he was to have returned ere this from Wellington, but they are not yet to hand.”

On 24 September 1869 Colenso wrote a letter to the editor of the *Hawke’s Bay Herald* (“Lieut. Saxby’s prediction”): “Writing of Wellington reminds me of another false prophet, named Schmidt, a character not wholly unknown to the old settlers here: I knew him a little too well. In January, 1855, he went overland hence to Wellington; he was there at the time of the severe earthquake, which happened on the 23rd of that month. Very shortly afterwards he gave a kind of lecture on volcanos and earthquakes, and ‘predicted’ that a far severer shock would take place in the night of a day which he named; consequently, it being a time of great fear and excitement, and small shocks being also common, many left their homes and passed the dreaded night on the hills in the open air. But that night

passed off quietly, and the prophet Schmidt quickly skedaddled to the Middle Island. For my own part I would that all such vagabond and vainglorious false prophets or alarmists, who live by their wits, whether theological or natural, as Schmidt, Saxby, Cumming, or Baxter, were just fairly though rudely dealt with, as Peter of Pomfret is said to have been by King John,—laid hold of and put into ward until the predicted time had passed, and then, if correct, rewarded; if not, immediately strung up à-la-lanterne. Such fellows, in my estimation, are far worse than ‘Hauhaus.’”

In 1892 he referred again to one of his drawings in a letter to RC Harding: “Polack’s slight knowledge (?) of moa bones, he got, no doubt, while he was a kind of prisoner at Tolaga Bay, where in 1838 I saw the hull of his unfortunate craft high & dry & ½ destroyed on the sands of the shore, (this formed a conspicuous black object in my pencil drawing of Wairoa—which I had foolishly lent to that Schmidt!)”

Who then was Schmidt? and what became of Colenso’s drawings?

John Adam writes (*pers. comm.*), “After his one day visit to William he appears in Putiki near Whanganui on 23 December according to the journals of Richard Taylor’s daughter (Laura Taylor 1993. *The Missionaries’ Daughter*. Randal Springer. Commercial Print, Whanganui. 284p). While staying with Taylor Schmidt was taken to see a local coal seam and I believe that it was the fossil plant record that Schmidt was searching for as much as new living biological specimens.

“I had a hunch that Schmidt may have written to the NZ Government and after a

short search found a letter in English he did write deposited in Archives NZ, Wellington, where he stated he had visited the Governor’s residence in Wellington to find a room there displaying a collection of artifacts – probably associated with George Grey?”

John guided me to a number of references to Schmidt: “As early as 1955 AH Reed wrote a story in the *Otago Daily Times*, 24 March 1955 p4 titled ‘German Scientist On Museum Expedition...’. Others include Dr Chris Hoogsteden in ‘Survey Quarterly’, Issue 7 September, 1996. pp 23-26; C. McDonald. *Otago Daily Times*, 4 April, 1936, p18 C6-7; and a Philip Andrews in the NZ Geological History Society Newsletters in the 1990s.”

The *Otago Witness* of 17 February 1855 reported, “Amongst the passengers by the ‘Nelson’ we have to notice the arrival of Dr. Shmidt, a gentleman who has been for the last 9 months engaged in exploring the Northern Island, and has discovered many important minerals in addition to the number already known to exist in New Zealand. He proposes to expend four months in exploring this Province. Dr. Shmidt having been at Wellington during the late earthquake, and having made accurate scientific observations, will render the lecture which he proposes to give on Tuesday particularly interesting, and we have no doubt it will be well attended, more especially when it is known that the funds contributed on the occasion are to be applied to the formation of a museum in this Province.”

Schmidt wrote to the Provincial Council seeking financial support (Fig.1).

A week later the *Witness* would report, “A committee consisting of Messrs.

Gentlemen.—You will excuse my few lines, but she been to me from importance. The high expenses more as see you on the Northern Island left me now a very few money behind. This high wages, this enormous expenses here again, make my exploring undertaking very difficult, and for this reason I speak plain. I want a little assistance, I very well know you have no much to spare, and I for my own wants no assistance but my science, and this high wages, and high expenses for cattle and boats as mans. Will you be so kind and vote a sum of money from £100 £200, this time to assist me and my staff in exploring and Geological Maps, etc., from your Province. You will be so kind and send me an answer return so early as possible is—but can you not assist me, I speak plain, I cannot take such mans as I want and cannot be exploring in such a manner as it should be, every Colony settlement—must assist my undertaking, like I have sent letters to Canterbury and Nelson and Wellington where I have received in person the promise (I come there) from Canterbury and Wellingtons Superintendents' assistance.

I have the honour to be, your much obliged servant and friend, Dr G. F. R. Shmidt.

Fig.1: Otago Witness 17 February 1855

A NY Person desiring to accompany DR. SHMIDT on his Scientific and Exploring Expedition through the Province of Otago will be so kind as to forward his address to Messrs. J. Macandrew & Co.

The Exploration will commence on Monday at the entrance of the Harbour, onwards to Dunedin, and the Expedition will proceed in the latter end of the week to the Bluff and Stewart's Island; thence to the South-west coast of the Middle Island, and through the interior.

N.B.—Only strong healthy men can be accepted, as it must be remembered that such a tour, occupying from four to six months in the 'terra incognita,' is not a mere pleasure trip.

Fig.2: Otago Witness 24 Feb 1855

Harris, M'Glashan, and Rennie, was appointed to report on the application of Dr. Shmidt for assistance in exploring the interior of the Province." In the same issue this advertisement appeared (Fig.2).

£100 was granted, and in a letter dated 2 March Shmidt thanked the Provincial

Council and set out his plans for his journey, ending, "In conclusion, should any misfortune befall us, and His Honor or the Provincial Council shall not hear or receive information of our loss, I confide in the kindness of the colonists, who I believe take an interest in the result, that they will institute a search for my papers, collections, journals, maps, and instruments; and for this purpose I will leave marks in the course of my route, namely, in the bush, the letter S cut in the wood, and on the plains small mounds. On the western coast small tin boxes will be left here and there, containing written information. I may also add that every box in my possession during my excursion is marked with my name, Dr. S. Tin boxes painted brown, and marked 'Province of Otago.' My tent is painted a red colour. Again thanking you for your kindness, and with every hope of success in exploring this Province to your complete satisfaction, I have the honor to be, Honourable Sir and Gentlemen, Your humble and obedient Servant, G.F.R. Shmidt, H.M., S.M."

It's as well Colenso didn't accept his invitation, for he was never seen again.

Several issues of the *Otago Witness* in the early and middle months of 1855 are missing and I can find no contemporary report, but in 1893 the paper carried this story: "Dr Schmidt, a German geologist and traveller, left Dunedin early in 1855 for the purpose of exploring the then quite unknown country lying between the Molyneux and the Mataura rivers coastward, and now known as the Waikawa district, but has never since been heard of. He was said to have gone into the bush at South Molyneux, intending to shape his course for Catlin's River. A young man who was to have accompanied him in his explorations left the doctor on his entering the bush and

returned to Dunedin. The Otago Government sent out a search party under the guidance of John Hartley, an experienced bush traveller, towards the middle of 1855, four months after the missing Doctor had left, but no trace of him was ever found.”

Hocken thought him a charlatan, but most disagree, and there is a strong hint of foul play (he treated his Maori companions very badly, and one of them was found in possession of Schmidt's rifle, compass and watch).

Schmidt had left his other possessions with the German missionary, the Rev Johann Friedrich Heinrich Wöhlers on Ruapuke Island. When no sign was found of him they were brought up to Dunedin and auctioned (Fig.3).

SALE BY AUCTION OF INTESTATE ESTATE PROPERTY.

MESSRS. J. MACANDREW & Co. have been instructed by the Official Administrator of Intestate Estates at Otago to Sell by Auction, at their Store, Dunedin, on Wednesday the 11th day of February next, at One o'clock,—

14 Cases and their Contents, the property of Dr. Schmidt, deceased intestate, consisting of a considerable quantity of Stores, New Clothing, Jewellery, Tools, Medicines, Books, and sundry other articles.

Also, 2 Cases of Straw Bonnets, in lots to suit purchasers.

Fig.3: Otago Witness 31 January 1857

John Adam suggested, “Perhaps the seven Colenso drawings were part of the auction.”

Aciphylla colensoi Hook.f.

JD Hooker described the speargrass *Aciphylla colensoi* in the 1864 *Handbook*, from, among others, plants collected from the “top of Ruahine mountains” by Colenso. Colenso was later to recall its collection in a letter to the editor of the *Hawke's Bay Herald* of 6 February 1894....

The “Wild Irishman”

SIR,—In the vivacious and amusing narration, entitled,—“Up the Kaweka with a mustering Party,” lately given to your readers in three numbers of the HAWKE'S BAY HERALD, mention is made of some of the peculiar and striking plants of that elevated region, especially of one termed the “Wild Irishman.” And as with this plant you have prominently coupled my name, I may be permitted to add to your remarks about it; seeing, also, that the said strange mountain plant is so very little known among us.

My first practical and experimental experience of this plant took place nearly 60 years ago (in the autumn of 1845), on the high summits of the Ruahine mountains, when I attempted to cross the range on my way to visit the Maoris living isolated at Patea; and in my writing a semi-scientific account of that journey (with special regard to the botany of that region then unknown), I have thus recorded my introduction to and acquaintance with this plant—a species of *Aciphylla*—styled by you the “Wild Irishman”;—but of its names more anon.

Of all the peculiar and novel plants which grew on the mountain tops, the large new species of *Aciphylla* was the one which we were all the more likely to remember,—not only for a few weeks but for all time! It gave us an immense deal of unpleasantness, trouble, and pain,—often wounding as to the drawing of blood. I suppose, that each one of the party (six Maoris besides myself), speaking quite within probability, received at least 50 stabs from these plants, which my Maori companions, (in shoulder mats without boots or trousers) justly termed *infernal!* I will attempt to describe it. Imagine a living circle of 5 feet diameter (the size of the full-grown plant), with all its many harsh spiny ray-like leaves radiating alike outwardly from the crown of its carrot-shaped root, forming almost a plane of living elastic spears, composed of sharp and stiff points or flat spikes, each several inches long; these make up the leaf, and many of them are set on each long leaf stalk of nearly 2 feet in length: from the centre rises the strong flowering stem, an erect orange-coloured spike or stalk 5 or 6 feet high, containing many hundreds of small flowers, gummy (or having a varnished appearance) and strong-scented, each a little cluster securely guarded with similar miniature sharp spiny bracts or leaflets. The general appearance of these plants, at times, reminded me of a lot of shallow umbrellas opened and fixed upside down on the ground. Of course there were hundreds of smaller plants, also forming circles, of all sizes—from 3 inches diameter upwards; while some still younger (seedlings) were just pushing up their needle-like points (not in a circle, but drawn together) through the mossy soil. These larger plants rarely ever intermixed their spear-shaped leaves to any great extent); they seemed as if they had just touched each other, with their living circle of points, and when we should put down our feet as warily as possible on some tolerably clear spot between them, we were often caught on all sides as if in a man-trap, and not infrequently roared pretty loudly from the pain—while our vain attempts to extricate ourselves often increased it. More than once each one of us was so seriously caught as not to be able to move without assistance.

On one occasion in particular we all (save one—the sufferer) had a hearty laugh over one of these plants:—One of our party, a strong robust Maori, had been pricked or stabbed rather severely by a large *Aciphylla*, insomuch that the blood spurted out: at the sight of this he got enraged (a very natural thing for a Maori in those early days,) and throwing off his back-load, and obtaining the long handled axe, which another was carrying, he hastened towards the plant, vowing he would cut it up by the roots! The spear-like leaves, however, spreading out all round it like a circle of fixed bayonets—being longer (including their big leaf stalk) than the helve of the axe and very tough and elastic, quite kept him from doing any harm to the plant, which seemed to mock his impotent rage; so, after gaining a few more pricks from it for his labour, he was obliged, doubly vexed though he was at our looking on and laughing, to give up the unequal combat. This story was too good to be lost, especially to a fighting race like the Maori, and the joke was long kept up after our return, and repeated with additions at the expense of the poor fellow.

I may here mention, that when I next travelled over the range from Hawke's Bay, I took two extra Maoris with me specially armed with long-handled axes to clear the way a little, otherwise baggage bearers could never have got over those spots which abounded with *Aciphylla*. My bearers, too, having been warned, some by experience on that former occasion and some by hearsay, took with them sundry old cast off

clothing and pieces of matting to use as a defensive armour.

One of those little open summits bore the name of Maunga Taramea (Mount Taramea) from the plant growing so profusely there. Taramea = *the rough spiny thing*, being the Maori name of this plant, not unlike in meaning the botanical name of *Aciphylla*, = *needle-pointed leaf*, given to the genus by Forster, the German botanist who accompanied Cook on his second Voyage to New Zealand. But Forster's plant, on which he founded the genus, is another species (*Aciphylla squarrosa*); it is very much smaller than this one in all its parts, and has fine narrow pale-green lax leaves—though sharp enough! He got it at Dusky Bay in the South Island; I, also, early found it in Palliser Bay and Wairarapa. Wild pigs grubbed up and ate its thick succulent carrot-like root, which is aromatic, and I think edible for man.

Our Ruahine plant is thus described by Sir J.D. Hooker:—

“*Aciphylla Colensoi*, Stem 6 to 9 feet high. Leaves forming a circle 5 to 6 feet diameter of bayonet-like spikes, two feet long, pinnate; leaflets 8 to 10 inches long, half-inch broad, very thick and coriaceous, narrow linear acuminate, &c.

“N. ISLAND, top of Ruahine mountains, *Colenso*. MIDDLE (S) ISLAND, Nelson mountains, above 2000 feet, *Bidwill*, *Monro*, &c. Canterbury, ascending to 5500 feet, *Raoul*, *Haast*, &c. Otago, *Lindsay*. There are apparently two varieties; both are called “Spear-grass,” and “Wild Spaniard.” Monro states that it forms a thicket impenetrable to men and horses.”—“*Handbook Flora, N.Z.*”, p. 92.

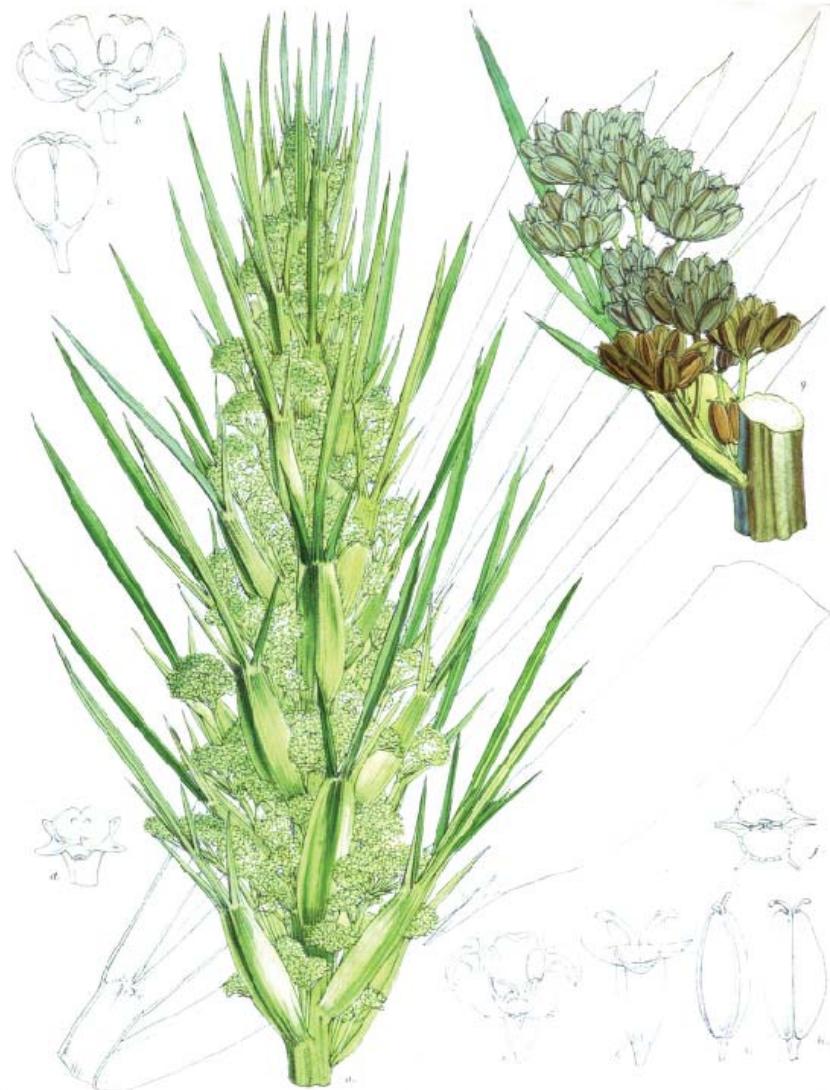
A description of this plant with a coloured plate is also given by the late Dr. Lauder Lindsay, F.L.S., in his “Contributions to the Botany of New Zealand,”—a copy of this scarce work is in the Library of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute.

As stated in the “Narration,” I brought plants of this species from the mountain (with many others), and they did well and flowered in my old garden at Waitangi, until a heavy flood which submerged them and leaving a deep deposit of fine mud killed them all.

Hooker describes five species of *Aciphylla*; and says of the plant,—“a very remarkable genus, confined to N.Z., and the Australian Alps.” The Australian 2 to 3 species, however, are small.

I may also add another curious and interesting item concerning this Ruahine plant *Taramea*, as it is little known. I copy from a paper read before our H.B. Philosophical Institute in 1891, (and published in “Transactions N.Z. Institute,” vol. XXIV,)—“Reminiscences of the ancient Maoris” § VI. “of their fine smelling sense and taste for perfumes,” and, after mentioning several, I go on to say:—

“The choicest and the rarest was obtained from the peculiar plant *Taramea* (*Aciphylla Colensoi*, Hook.f. which inhabits the Alpine zone, and which I have only met with near the summit of the Ruahine range, where it is very common and very troublesome to the traveller that way. The gum-resin of this plant was only collected through much labour toil and difficulty, accompanied, too, with certain ceremonial (taboo) observances. An old *tohunga*, (skilled man and priest) once informed me, that the *Taramea* gum could only be got by very young women—virgins; and by them after certain prayers, charms, &c, duly said by the *tohunga*. This prized perfume is quaintly and



W. Hood Fitch

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Aciphylla colensoi

Aciphylla colensoi: Walter Hood Fitch's lithograph from Lauder Lindsay's *Contributions to the botany of New Zealand*.

lovingly extolled in a sweet little nursery song by the Maoris." (See more concerning it in the place quoted.)

Although my letter is already long, I must fain say a few words about the names used in the original narration. And, first, of the "Wild Irishman." This low uncouth vulgarianism has been (unthinkingly) given "down South" to a species of thorn, a close-growing spiny shrub with very small and few leaves and long spines—appropriately named by the old Maoris — *Tumatakuru*—Face-smiter, and by the French Botanist, Raoul *Disccaria toumatou*. I early discovered this plant at Poverty Bay in 1838, and also grew it in my garden at Paihia, Bay of Islands, (as is stated in Hooker's "London Journal of Botany," vol. IV, p.17, 1844,) but Raoul first fully described it with a place in his "*Choix de Plantes*," in 1846, he having found it at Akaroa. In those Southern parts, according to the late Sir Julius von Haast it grows tall—"15 feet high." In 1838–1842 it was common at Poverty Bay on the flats near the sea, and I have seen it growing scantily in the Hawke's Bay District, (2.) It appears from Hooker, (who, no doubt, received the information from his Southern scientific correspondents,) that our big *Aciphylla* was termed "Spear-Grass," and "Wild Spaniard" by the settlers in the S. Island; while "Spear-Grass" is a fair enough common English name for the plant (although it is not a grass, and there are several large and sharp true grasses), the latter name of "Wild Spaniard" is another equally objectionable term; surely the Maori name of *Taramea*, if not the botanical generic one of *Aciphylla*, is far better than either—neater, fitting, and more euphonious. And here I would observe that I am not certain of the "Wild Irishman" of the "Kawekas" being identically the same species as the large *Aciphylla* of Ruahine; as, from the description given of it in the narration, it seems to be a smaller plant, and I have seen no specimens; but the difference in size may arise from the ground having been long used as a sheep run, and so the larger plants have perished, or been cleared off, and those seen only young ones. (3.) Of the name of the country visited: that high hill land to the west of Napier is called in the narration "the Kawekas;" and here, as I take it, is another error in etymology which should be abandoned. Kaweka is the old proper name of that mountain district; and if the Maori name is to be retained (as I hope it may be, not only there but in most places), the terminal letter s, not being Maori, and not agreeing (as a kind of English termination) with Maori idiom and rule, should be dropped. — I am, &c,

W. COLENSO.

Napier, February 3, 1894.



eColenso is a free email Newsletter published by the Colenso Society.
The editor invites contributions on any matter relating to the life and work of
the Rev. William Colenso FLS FRS.

Such contributions should be emailed to ian.stgeorge@rnzcgp.org.nz.

The cover of this issue is derived from the Inland Printer, Chicago, 1893.

Please forward *eColenso* to anyone who may be interested.



The Adventures of a Surveyor in New Zealand

Rochfort J 1853. pp.42-44. [Early New Zealand books (<http://www.enzb.auckland.ac.nz/>)]

We soon emerged on to the Ahuriri plain. This is a fine plain, and standing in the centre you see a clear horizon all round, such as you would at sea. After crossing several creeks, which were dangerous on account of the quicksands, we rode at full gallop up to Hapuka's house. He is a fine well-made man, about six feet in height, and of an intellectual cast of countenance. He has lately been made a magistrate, and decides disputes among the natives. I asked him to lend me the mare as far as Ahuriri, and told him of the desertion of my guide, and that I was two days without food. He readily granted my request, saying at the same time, that, if the natives had not lent her to me at the last pah, he would have gone over and stockwhipped them.

The Roman Catholic Mission has a handsome station here. The resident priest invited us to dinner, but, having still a long way to travel before nightfall, we declined his hospitality--a virtue for which the gentlemen of this mission are justly celebrated, whilst the reputation of the Protestant missionary, Mr. C--, is of an opposite character.

After fording an arm of the sea, we arrived at Mr. A.....r's, where we dined. Mr. A. is married to a native woman, and, through her, possesses great influence with her countrymen, with whom he traffics for maize and pork, buying the pigs alive at a penny per pound, which he cures, and ships his purchases down to Wellington. In this way he carries on an extensive business, his expenses averaging fifteen pounds a day.

In the evening we crossed the river Ahuriri, and put up at McCain's public-house, just in time to attend the wedding of a half-caste girl to a white man.

....

The morning of the wedding-day set in wet and miserable, and Mr. C--, the Protestant missionary, would not marry the couple at McCain's, although he had to pass by that very morning; but obliged them to walk seven miles, through the bush, to a native church: so we determined to pay him out for it. On his way back he had to pass the house again, and to be ferried across the river. We got out Mr. P.. k's five-oared whale-boat for the occasion; and A.... t, who was staying there, and myself, gave one of the schooner's seamen two bottles of grog to give him a ducking, which was accomplished in the following manner.

A.... t and I each took an oar in the whale-boat to see the fun. As soon as we grounded on the opposite side, which was about twenty yards from the shore, Jack jumped out of the boat, touched his hat, and said "I'll carry you ashore, Sir." Mr. C-- answered by getting on his back. Jack took about half a dozen steps, when he pretended to fall down, throwing Mr. C-- over his head, where he lay at full length like a half-tide rock. The missionary did not trust himself again pick-a-back, but got up and walked ashore, having received a wholesome practical lesson on the folly of putting people to unnecessary trouble.

Well satisfied, we returned, kissed the bride, and had the wedding dinner. At six o'clock, after the bride and bridegroom's health, and a few more toasts, had been drunk and responded to, a fiddler was engaged from the schooner. A number of natives crowded round the house: we admitted the women, and stationed "Boots" at the door to keep the men out. The fiddler struck up a polka; we each seized a Maorie girl, and joined in the dance.

X rays

On 4 October 1896 William Colenso wrote obscurely to Coupland Harding, “Have run through your X Rays, No.3: and have thought—I should like for you to be well able to be above the printing such: it is just possible that harm (serious) may arise among the Maoris through such caricatures—especially if fomented by designing pakeha-Maoris.”

He wrote again on 26 November 1896, “I have recd. nos. X Rays—*thanks*: but I do *not* know the folks caricatured.”

Harding, desperate after the failure of *Typo*, printed and published twelve issues of a new weekly satirical newspaper between September and December 1896. He called it *X rays* with the slogan “X rays penetrate everything and everybody”.

Röntgen had discovered X rays in 1895 and in 1896 the newspapers were full of Xray chatter—writers wondered how they might be used to read people’s minds, stage shows were presented with Xrays, reports were printed of bullets being removed with their help, X-radiation therapy for cancer was tried. When Harding used the term “X rays” to imply penetrating insight his metaphor was at the height of fashion.

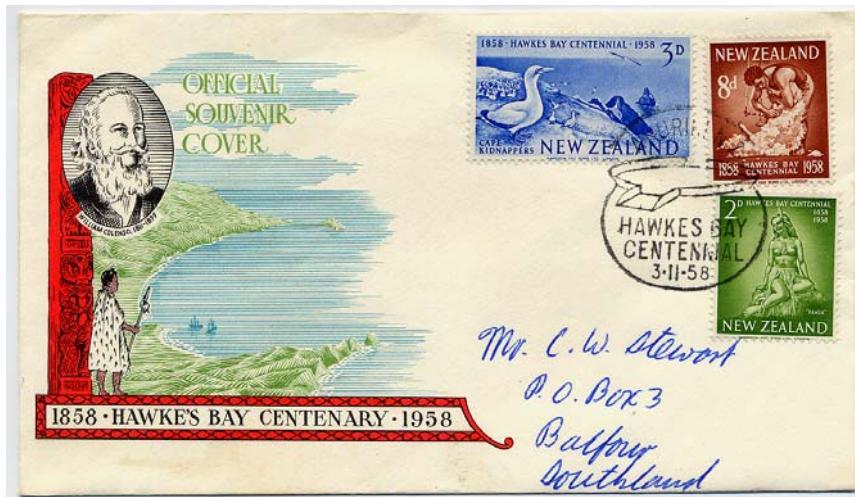
The *Bruce Herald* of 16 October 1896 didn’t think much of it: “We have received a copy of the new Wellington alleged funny paper called ‘X Rays,’ The title is a singularly appropriate one, for it would require Edison’s X Rays to discover the jokes the paper is supposed to contain.”

The papers were also full of Thomas Edison’s inventions, especially his “kinematograph”—the first movie projector—and it is true Edison did work with X rays, but abandoned the work around 1903 after the death of one of his glassblowers, who used to test new X ray tubes on his own hands, and so developed a radiation-induced malignancy that led to bilateral amputations and early death.

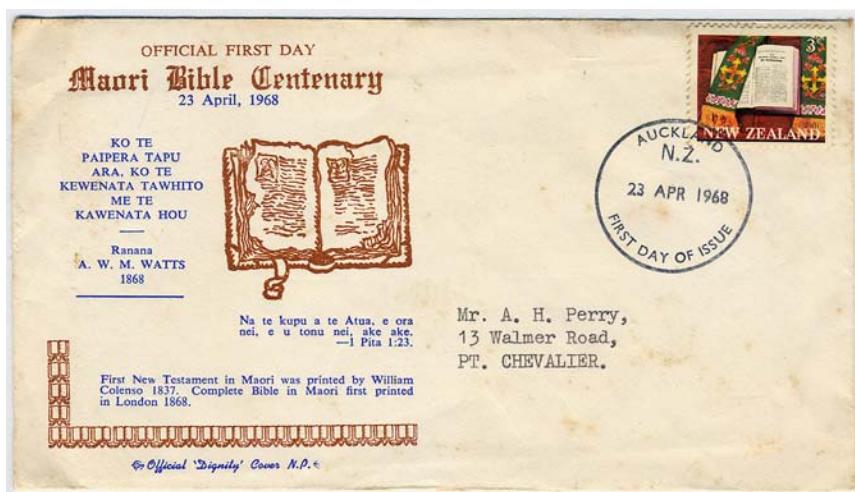
X rays No. 3 contained a political cartoon showing Prime Minister Richard Seddon as a sandwich board man, trying to sell land tax and other ideas to an uncomprehending Maori chief.

That, I think, is what Colenso thought racist, and it is.





1958 First Day Cover designed for the Hawke's Bay Centennial, celebrating the separation of the new province from Wellington in 1858: the stamps issued on 3 November 1958 showing the Cape Kidnappers gannet colony, shearing, and the "Pania of the Reef" sculpture, the envelope showing Colenso and a Māori chief keeping watch over the horseshoe shape of Hawkes Bay.



1968 First Day Cover designed for the centenary of the first printing of the complete Bible in Māori in London in 1868, 31 years after Colenso printed the New Testament in Māori in Paihia in 1837.