

# COLENZO





# OLD GEORGE WORGAN

*To the Editor of the Hawke's Bay Herald.*

"BE GAE! HERE'S MONSIEUR TONSON COME AGAIN."

SIR,—And so "old shiver-the-mizen," *alias* old Worgan, is out again! Hooray, I say, that's jolly. Fun for Christmas and no mistake. What a vain old fellow Georgy must be! How the deuce is it that he has not a single friend to advise him? Can he really think "the Electors of Napier division of Hawke's Bay" to be downright fools and asses? If he must forsooth come forth for political honors, why does he not try us his old acquaintances and neighbours at Ruataniwha? Surely we cannot fail to appreciate him? Would not Mr. Gully, think you, gladly propose him, and so gratefully discharge an obligation?—or his old neighbours Harding or Fannin, or his dear friend H. Russell, for whom he did so much? Sure now, he's slighting his old neighbour run-holders in running away from them. Lack-a-daisy! Poor old Georgy! thou'rt surely getting cranky! My eyes! what a go it would be only to sum up all the shifts and doubles of this cunning old 'coon! Oh! aye, Georgy can blow high or blow low—hot or cold—all's one to Georgy. But, methinks, both his age and experience should have taught him that men want a little *honesty* in their representatives. Aye, Georgy, my boy—"Honesty is the best policy"—the honest penny wears well—and so on: ta-ta, you know, old cock. And tho' the British House of Commons have lately done away with the property qualification, still Englishmen like to see in their representatives something more than men of straw. By Jove! Mr. Editor, if you would but give me room, and lend me your file of *Heralds*, what a string of Georgy's diamonds and pearls—blessings and goodly wishes!—anent our new Province of Hawke's Bay I could cut! Or, shall I dissect his precious letter and Address to Electors in your last? He says, "*I have been invited*." Name, name. "*I am willing*:" without doubt; blushing so; modest, very. (Don't you wish you may get it? as Worgan said to FitzGerald or Newman or Colenso, or to some one of the popular speakers at the great Separation Meeting.) "*I solemnly promise to act conscientiously*." Oredit the Jews! "*I should support the Governor's Ministry*." Nae doubt, if they threw you sops—Postmaster would do, eh Georgy? "*I should support the New Provinces Act*." Whew!! what think you of that? Isn't that a crammer? Capital, from one of the immortal "SIX" who opposed Separation to the last. "*Rely upon the integrity of my motives, my ability and experience*." O! the wicked old creatur! what lots of soft soap and sawder—impudence an' brass! Only fancy him, smiling blandly and bowing profoundly, bell-topper in hand, t'other hand placed on his heart, looking so demure, so prim, so honest, so Peck-sniffian, so devoted to the public weal, so indignant at the bad waste of public funds! (Cause why, Georgy got none.) Could he but be carried, then, Down with bribery and corruption; up with the yellow flag and Worgan for ever! Hooray!!

But how is he to be carried? Who are his supporters? The friends of the General Government? He has slandered them. The Church and Missionary party? They *know* him. The many Magistrates? He has derided them. (Sour grapes, perhaps.) The Superintendent, Executive and Provincial Council? He has roundly abused them; and they know better. The Military? He has defamed their officers. The working men? They remember that somebody walked-in-to somebody's hardly-earned wages. But, goodness gracious! how upon earth is Georgy to get in? Be aisy, my jewel! wait a bit: we shall see. Georgy says he has been "invited."

Talking of his getting in—I yesterday heard two men discussing the point, when one, a jolly Scot, said—"Oot'mon! to gain votes, puir auld Geordie mun e'en gae whither the auld wife sold her cock,"—and so say I.

Yours,

RUATANIWhA.

Napier,

December 21, 1860.

P.S.—Since writing the above, an acquaintance has borrowed one of your *Heralds* of September '58, in which is an account of the great Separation Meeting, at which old Worgan said—

"The New Provinces Act was passed through the House at the fag-end of the session, when many of the members were absent; and was moreover nothing more than a result of the well known rivalry between Auckland and Wellington—a side stab to a political rival..... The Separation movement had not emanated from *bona fide* settlers. He (George Worgan) asked delay as a matter of courtesy. If such were denied, then the (Featherston) party he represented would use every legitimate means to defeat the object in view—they would know how to deal with such ungenerous rancour—they would meet such petty selfishness..... But he saw that they were determined on hounding on Separation by mere force of numbers. Do it, in God's name! but remember, when the time of danger and difficulty arrives, that old Worgan told you how it would be." And then the old chap proposed as an amendment, "that we should still stick to Wellington!!"

So, to all you Napier electors I just say, that if such a thing happens as for "old Worgan" to get in by a fluke, or "by hook or by crook," you needs must be prepared to be eternally sneezed at, and sarve you very right. R.

[We do not like the style of the foregoing letters; but insert them on the ground of the latitude allowable to correspondents during the excitement attending an approaching election; for while deprecating, in general, allusions of so personal a nature as those made by our correspondents, we yet doubt whether, without reference more or less to private character, the qualifications of a candidate for public honors can be so thoroughly sifted as they ought to be. It would seem indeed as if an aspirant for political distinction must needs place himself, as a preparatory process, on the political pillory.

—ED.]

In his eulogy to William Colenso, Coupland Harding remarked that, “tremendous were his battles with opponents such as George Worgan the aged (*eColenso* 1: April 2010).

It began with Colenso’s attacks on the runholders, the landed gentry of Hawke’s Bay who for the most part had obtained vast tracts of land directly from Māori, a practice Colenso regarded as immoral.

In his *Tracts for the times* Colenso had accused three runholders of coercing their workers not to sign a petition for separation of Hawke’s Bay from Wellington. George Worgan, a Ruataniwha plains runholder, contradicted him. Then runholder HR Russell wrote,

“I do not hesitate again to repeat the expression of my belief that the whole affair is a pure invention by the author—be he who he may—and I in unmistakeable language declare that, unless he can either prove his statement, or *give up his authority for the same*, I denounce Mr. Colenso as the mischief-making originator of what was in my last mildly described as ‘a pure invention brought forward for political purposes,’ or, if he likes his own translation thereof better, of ‘a bare-faced falsehood brought forward with dishonest intentions.’ In conclusion, Mr. Editor, allow me to say that I cannot for my life make out why Mr. Colenso should have come forward so prominently as professor of politics, morals, and manners to the new province. I am afraid he is scarcely qualified for the situation.”

(*HBH* 2 April 1859).

Worgan stood against Colenso for the Napier constituency in the 1861 election, and the *Herald* published his statement to the Napier electors. This was followed, on 22 December 1860, with the letter on our page 2, from a writer using the nom-de-plume “Rua Taniwha” and, as the editor’s faux tut-tutting indicates, it is pretty strong stuff.

Worgan’s reply appeared in the *Herald* of 12 January 1861, and he was in no doubt that Rua Taniwha was his political opponent Colenso—see our page 4.

As I have pointed out elsewhere, in later life Colenso wrote often and mercilessly against “anonymous scribblers”,

*“As a rule I never reply to anonymous letters; but you have one in your paper of this day (Tuesday) which, for 3 reasons, I would notice.—1. Because the slanderer has dared falsely to assume an honorable name (I.O.G.T.) which does not belong to him,—neither are those letters—(or any of them) the initials of his own well-known name:—2. Because of his malevolent intention,—although some allowance is generally granted to such low principled persons at election times:—and, 3. Because no lie is so base, or so deep, as that which contains half of the truth.”*

(*HBH* 14 February 1877)

And later still he expanded on his let-out clause in no. 2 of that paragraph,

*“Possibly, however, at Election times (such being a kind of Saturnalia, Carnival, or Free-licence time,) anonymous letters may be permitted,— ‘for the fun of the thing,’ as the boys say; but, sir, there is a vast difference between Comedy and Tragedy; between writing for ‘fun’ and laughter, and writing traducing ‘the powers that be’ and howling for human blood!”* (*HBH* 28 February 1883).

Was “Ruataniwha” really Colenso? Was he, in later life, justifying his own anonymous letter? I rather think so: the style is very much his.

*To the Editor of the Hawke's Bay Herald.*

SIR,—A less hurried and more careful perusal of the scurrilous effusions of your correspondent Rua Taniwha, renders it imperative on me, in deference to public opinion, that I should take further notice of the malice prepense and moral assassination therein exhibited, than is contained in the few indignant lines written by me, and transmitted to you on the spur of the moment. I would first observe my conviction that the signature (Rua Taniwha) is a mere blind; the reptile whose venomous spawn has been allowed to defile your pages lives not on the fair plains of Rua Taniwha. No, no: nothing but a compound of the festering drainage of commingled salt and fresh water could have produced anything half so loathsome. Let the crawler beware my heel! Now for the matter before us. The thing begins with a miserable attempt at drollery, in the style of a drunken cobbler, aiming to turn me and my candidature into ridicule, striving to be very witty and funny, at the expense of my age, name, and presumed vanity. Ye gods! Vanity? the vanity of daring to compete with the eloquence, the character, the intellect of the immortal author of the "Tracts for the Times," the great tribune, the disinterested auditor, the great gun of our honest and consistent Superintendent, the veritable ostracised rat himself. Out upon old Worgun, this was really too audacious, too conceited of you: you vain old 'coon, shut up and hide your diminished head. Sir, all this may be very droll and amusing to your readers; yet, methinks, that old Billy or Thommy sounds quite as funny as old Georgy, or old Geordie. This sort of thing, if you can think such trash worth printing, I should not complain of; but the villainous insinuations that follow, and the deliberate attempt to blast the character of an honest man is perfectly diabolical. The vulgar and insolent familiarity with which he alludes to the private affairs of a brother settler, is only to be equalled by the lying distortions of the facts hinted at. In respect to Mr. Gully: that gentleman is here, and will speak for himself. I challenge him to come forward and substantiate in one instance what it so basely implies, viz., that he had been taken in by me. I feel assured that Mr. Gully will repudiate with scorn any complicity in this malicious insinuation. All acquainted with the transaction referred to, know full well that I was a most reluctant seller, not seeking, but sought. Next it is intimated that I oppressed and wronged a working man. The facts being that a young man in our employ was fined by the Bench at Waipukurau for misconduct, having at the time he left us overdrawn his wages to the extent of upwards of four pounds, which sum, together with the fine, I have heard nothing more of from that time till now. So much for the artful attempt to prejudice the working men against me. In respect to labour, few settlers have employed so many hands as ourselves, none have paid or fed their better. To have been in the country upwards of seven years, to have gone

through every phase of bush life, where roads there were none and people few, to have kept open house during that time, to have paid every man twenty shillings to the pound, to have discharged creditably the duties of a public officer, representing in his own court the authority of the Crown, to have the acquaintance and friendship of some of the best educated, and most respectable settlers in this Province, is quite sufficient answer to all the mean, depreciating insinuations levelled at my social status; doubtless written to deceive new chums. Next, the creature has actually the effrontery to read me a lecture upon honesty, who, if I could only have turned my back upon my convictions and jumped Jim Crow with the multitude, should not now be taunted with the lack of wealth, or the desire of place. One grain of truth there is in his bushel of falsehood. I did some 12 months or so gone by, apply to the Superintendent of this Province (he being one of my earliest acquaintances here) to obtain for me the appointment of the Postmaster, in the event of it becoming vacant, and that the billet could be had without injustice or detriment to any other party. Perceiving after a lapse of time that the way to office was through political subserviency, I personally withdrew my application. Thus falls to the ground another of his poisoned arrows. Now, Sir, I cannot close this letter, much as I hate sickening and inflated egotism, without telling my calumniator that I will not yield, in honesty of purpose or in firm consistency in supporting my true convictions, to any man in this Province; my fault ever being too great a candour and impetuosity of disposition, leaving me open to the attacks of the crafty and selfish. Enough I think I have proved the writer signing himself Rua Taniwha to be a wilful slanderer of his neighbour, in short, a man that would, by any falsehood, murder the reputation of an opponent. Should it turn out that this scribbler and another defamer under the signature of a Settler, prove to be one and the same, and should it also turn out that one William Colenso is the author of both, then all those persons who vote for, and support his election will be knowingly and wilfully assisting in returning to represent the Province a man under the ban of his Diocesan, and a convicted slanderer, with whom no honorable men could associate without pollution. The last effort made to disparage me in the eyes of the electors is to throw doubt upon the sincerity of my declarations; my former firmness in opposition to the Separation movement, and the correctness of my judgment in predicting the evils that would ensue, are sufficient guarantees of the courage and firmness with which I will maintain the interests of the Province as now constituted, should they be entrusted to my keeping.

Farewell! Preserve the liberty of the press, but do not let it become the vehicle for the indulgence of private malice and individual spite.

I am, &c.,

GEORGE WORGAN.

Mangaone,  
Dec. 31, 1860,



# COLENZO'S CONDITIONS<sup>1</sup>

Retrospective attempts to diagnose with today's knowledge the ills that have beset yesterday's great men seem arrogant and intrusive—but tempting nonetheless.

Colenso's personality has been the subject of a good deal of comment. That he was a conscientious perfectionist there can be no doubt—but so were many of the great Victorians: it was a characteristic of the achievers of that era (including Freud!). Whether his obsessionality was bad enough to be called a disorder is doubtful – Colenso achieved too much to be “disordered”. But definitions of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder contain features that seem disturbingly familiar to anyone who has studied Colenso.<sup>2</sup>

He wrote freely about his physical illnesses, but he was a fit athlete who covered more ground on foot than any New Zealand explorer before him. He was susceptible to winter viruses (influenza – “la grippe” was epidemic annually), complicated by “bronchitis” (possibly bronchiectasis after his whooping cough in 1848), and (in 1891–2) by a weakness of his legs<sup>3</sup> that suggests Guillain-Barré syndrome (though one wonders if some of his weakness was self-induced by the hemlock in his remedies).<sup>4</sup> I discussed his *tic douloureux* in the July 2011 *eColenso*.

He complained repeatedly of “rheumatics” (an imprecise term for almost any musculoskeletal disorder) and lumbago,<sup>5</sup> possibly simply the painful osteoarthritic and degenerative conditions that reward a lifetime of long walks<sup>6</sup> and hard physical work, but more likely an inflammatory arthritis, for even at age 37 he complained of being “laid aside with severe Rheumatism for 3 weeks in Decr.”<sup>7</sup> In 1885 at Woodville he was so crippled he had to take a cab to and from church.<sup>8</sup> Again, in 1893 he wrote, “I am pretty well: much more free from Rheumatism – I do think, Infl. has lessened that but this,

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1. Updated from St George IM. *Colenso's collections*. NZ Native Orchid Group, Wellington 2008. Also the basis for a presentation for Book Week at Hedley's Bookshop in Masterton in 2012. All letters to Hooker referred to here are transcribed in *Colenso's collections*.

2. The DSM-IV-TR, a widely-used manual for diagnosing mental disorders, lists these attributes of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder: preoccupation with details, rules, lists, order, organization, or schedules ... showing perfectionism that interferes with task completion ... excessive devotion to work and productivity to the exclusion of leisure activities and friendships ... being overconscientious, scrupulous, and inflexible about matters of morality, ethics, or values ... inability to discard worn-out or worthless objects even when they have no sentimental value, reluctance to delegate tasks or to work with others unless they submit to exactly his or her way of doing things ... adopting a miserly spending style toward both self and others ... rigidity and stubbornness.

3. Letter to Hooker 17 May 1892.

4. Letter to Hooker 5 January 1856.

5. See 14 October 1885 letter to Hooker for his complaint and cure.

6. He rode a horse on his school inspections to Central Hawke's Bay.

7. Letter to Hooker 31 January 1848.

8. Letter to Hooker 24 January 1885. Was he overdosing with his hemlock concoction? see 5 January 1866 letter and footnote 236, *Colenso's collections*.

Infl., is at times very bad, especially in feet, soles & toes, so that sometimes I can scarcely walk at all – & very painful, but only while walking.”<sup>9</sup> suggesting an inflammatory arthritis involving the small joints of his feet rather than the effects of influenza.

He gives a strong indication of the cause in a letter to Hector, “I regret to say that my hand has been very much affected for more than a month—so that I could scarcely write my name! It is again better now— ‘took a turn’ towards good behaviour on Monday last, or I should not be able to scribble to you. When it is outrageously out of order it sadly affects my mind (spite of all my ‘Philosophy’!)—and then that reacts, you know how—I sometimes think it must be an anomalous phase of gout—to which my father was a long martyr!—and which I had regularly some 25 years ago. But whether or not it is an ugly Visitor, and sadly puts me out in all my writing.”<sup>10</sup>

I am sure he was right. The tendency to gout is indeed hereditary. Acute gout causes an extremely painful swelling of usually a single major joint; chronic gouty arthropathy affects several joints, classically the small joints of the hands and feet. Colenso may have suffered from both. His frequent attacks of diarrhoea may have been caused by colchicine, the standard treatment for gout, certainly since 1500 BC when the Ebers Papyrus mentions the use of autumn crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*) to treat rheumatism and swelling.

He often wrote of being unable to use his right thumb in 1863–5, but gave no explanation other than “For 2–3 months past I have had a peculiar affn. of right hand – scarcely write at times.” In 1866 either acute gout or septic arthritis (they can still be hard to distinguish) of his right forefinger was complicated by stiffening (ankylosis) of the joints, so that he had to relearn to write:

*“In Aug. /66 I was suddenly attacked with malignant Whitlow (or something worse) in bulbous part of forefinger right hand. For 6 days & nights I was nearly mad and eventually became delirious; I begged & prayed our surgeons day after day to lay it open – they would not, saying they could not see where to cut (it was red swollen & stiff throughout), but on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, when I was beside myself and the disorder up to my elbow, they did so – it gave immediate relief but I have lost the use of my finger! I was months poulticing, &c, &c, and I got very low & haggard; and now my finger is healed rigid (anhylosis). I think I must have informed you, that I had lost the writing & drawing use of my right thumb 4 years ago, and now my index finger has followed suit; so I had to learn to write with my mid. & ring fingers....”*<sup>11</sup>

The 1868 portrait (overleaf) shows his right hand in what appears to be a rather affected or religious posture, but actually shows his rigid forefinger. This was not, as Bagnall and Petersen suggest, “writer’s cramp”.

His accident near Woodville in 1897 at age 86 was serious: he was being driven in a gig when his “horse fell on side as if shot and I thrown high w. a somersault came down on right side, &c &c stunned”.<sup>12</sup> He lost blood, damaged his right arm, and was very weak

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9. Letter to Hooker 24 January 1893.

10. Letter to Hector 26 May 1870. Te Papa.

11. Letter to Hooker 14 November 1867.

12. Letter to Hooker 2 July 1897.



Colenso in 1868: his right forefinger is still stiff, but no longer swollen. The thumb appears wasted.

There is no evidence of "ulnar deviation" making chronic rheumatoid arthritis unlikely as a cause for his attacks of "rheumatism".



in the legs, slowly recovering during 63 days of care by his Woodville friends, and then at his Dannevirke hotel. (His wise doctor, no doubt noting the post-traumatic depression – he “had no heart! no desire to read!... w. other [feeling]s akin” – had suggested the move from Woodville to Dannevirke, where he would be less socially isolated). He lost his “strength – power in my legs for walking” because his “muscles seem to be so grossly degenerated – contracted, & all from the shock”.<sup>13</sup> The head injury probably exacerbated an already failing memory.<sup>14</sup>

In late life too, he suffered paroxysms of palpitations, as he wrote to Hooker in 1898, “my heart has lately (during 2-4 months) bumped away at a terrible rate – not fast but loud & strongly, regular in its rhythm! but kicking-up such a row as almost to stop my reading or writing, – or even to my hearing the rain or the rustling of the leaves of the trees outside; such lasts about an hour, or less, then it subsides – goes to sleep! Like that famous Geyser in Iceland, of which your honoured Father wrote so eloquently. Some folks, I fancy, would be frightened at such erratic & abnormal movements and visit a Doctor’s Surgery! May I ever be kept from that!”.<sup>15</sup> In January 1898 he noted oedema: “feet & ankles swelling much – painless – anasarca begun.”

His last illness in January 1899 may have been a transient cerebral ischaemic attack (“mini-stroke”), described by his servant John Anderson in a letter to Ethel Florence, “Sitting by Mr Colenso’s bedside, I write you a few lines to let you know he is unable to write, having been seriously ill, but he is now a little better, with hopes of amendment. He cannot write at present, nor indeed read. This is written to let you know that he has been so very unwell, and that is the reason why he did not write sooner, as he promised he would do, in his note to you from Waipukurau.”<sup>16</sup> A fortnight later “At 4 a.m. he called his housekeeper to procure him some refreshment, and when Mrs Anderson returned he seemed to be sleeping. Not wishing to disturb the sleeper, she did not wake him, but subsequently finding that he did not move, she went to his bedside and found him dead.”<sup>17</sup>

Despite dwelling often on his illnesses in his letters, Colenso only occasionally mentioned doctors, sometimes disdainfully: his early years as a dispenser taught him to make up his own medicines – for instance “anodyne pill (of my own) at night” (14 May 1883) and his recipe for it (14 October 1885) – and he wrote to Balfour, “I am pretty (or very) well again. A great change with me, for the better took place on Sunday last, & yesterday, electricity clinched the nail. I have for 50 years been a great believer in electricity, – & am of the opinion, that future ages will make wondrous uses of it, & also find it a great curative power.”<sup>18</sup>

A belief in black-box quackery was then (as again, recently), a symptom of fin-de-siècle madness.

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13. Letter to Hooker 13 August 1897.

14. Colenso complained of failing memory in letters to Hooker of 22 January 1883, 14 October 1885, 4 February 1894, 2 June 1896, 13 August 1897 and 25 May 1898.

15. Letter to Hooker 8 February 1894.

16. 27 January 1899. Puke Ariki, New Plymouth.

17. *Hawke’s Bay Herald* 11 February 1899

18. 30 November 1886. HBMAg.



## VERSES

These verses are written in Colenso's hand on pages that appear to have been torn from a notebook. The original is in the private collection of Colin Ashby and it is reproduced here with his permission. It is signed "W.C." with "Written at Sea, in the Atlantic, Aug. 11, 1834. Lat 3°. 46' S — Long: 16° 18' W. His diary of the voyage contains similar versifying, some apparently original, some by other passengers, some copied, all rather painfully similar.

You have to love those rhyming couplets at the end of each stanza....

I saw the lovely Hyacinth  
Unfold its vernal bud;  
I saw it ope its petals sweet  
Close by the gushing Flood;—  
And while I gazed on its beauteous bloom  
It shed around me a sweet perfume.

I saw the twittering Goldfinch weave  
Its nest of moss and hair;  
I saw it lay its pearly eggs  
With all a mother's care—  
And while I watched its brood come forth  
And their mother rejoiced at their infant  
mirth.

I saw the Lambkin skip and play  
Close by its parent's side;  
A saw it crop the tender blade  
And then—away twould stride;  
It was so frolicsome blithe and gay,  
While frisking about in the sunny ray.

I saw the smiling Infant's eye  
Of such a mellow blue;  
I saw it play the livelong day  
As to a boy he grew:—  
He seemed the creature of a day!—  
His time passed merrily away!

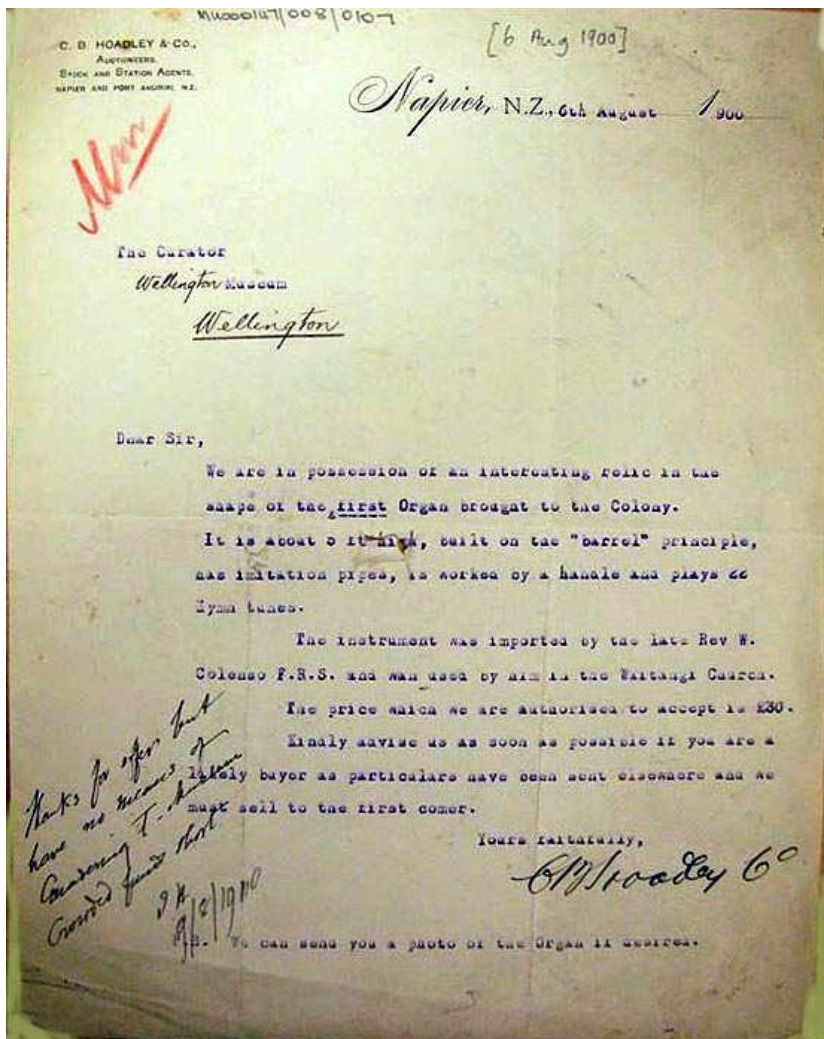
I saw the Hyacinth lie dead;  
The Goldfinch young had flown;  
The lamb was led to the Butcher's shed,  
The Child to a man was grown.  
And care had already blanched his brow  
As if to say,— "I'm weary now"!

I saw him laid in the silent tomb;  
I heard the solemn prayer;  
I started! the past seemed but a dream,  
While a voice said "Meet me here,"  
"All flesh is as grass, a shadow, a flower,  
That opens and blooms and dies in an  
hour."

I saw the Clouds roll from the Gates  
That lead to Paradise;  
I saw his spirit enter therein  
All tears wiped from his eyes:—  
A Harp of Gold was placed in his hand,  
And he joined with delight the holy Band.

Once more I looked:—I saw a Crown  
Of heavenly glory shine;  
And heard that holy angelic Band  
Sing,— "Mortal this is thine"!—  
"If thou art found faithful during thy life,  
In heaven, at last thou wilt be free from  
Strife.

# COLENZO'S ORGAN



This circular letter to museums, from Latimer Colenso's auctioneers, is that received on 6 August 1900 at the Dominion Museum (Te Papa ref. MU000147/008/0107). It did not gel with Sir James Hector's acquisitions policy and he annotated it, "Thanks for offer but have no means of considering it. Museum crowded, funds short. J.H. 9/8/1900".

The organ had been listed among the Colensos' household goods in an undated inventory, probably from the time of their shift from Paihia to Hawke's Bay. It was saved from the calamitous 1853 house fire at Waitangi: Colenso wrote in agony to the Church Missionary Society in London (31 January 1853), "what we saved is scarcely worthy of

mention in comparison with what has been destroyed. We only saved:—*from the dwelling house*,—Mrs. Colenso's workbox & desk, a barrel organ...."

He recollected the fire in the "autobiography" he wrote for his sons thirty years afterwards, in 1883: "...the large Mission Station house was burned down soon after (early in Jan'y. '53 ), and all that was in it save the organ a table and a few chairs."

The organ was valued at £10 in the probate inventory for Colenso's will. Hoadley suggested £30 at auction, but it was advertised as having no reserve, though was considered worthy of special mention by the *Herald*..

**Auctioneers**

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**C. B. HOADLEY & CO.'S SALES.**

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**ENGRAVINGS, ETCHINGS, &c**

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**BY AUCTION.**

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**WITHOUT RESERVE.**

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**FRIDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER, 1900,**  
At 2 p.m.

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**C. B. HOADLEY & CO.**

Have received instructions to sell at their  
Booms, Napier, on above date,

**70 ENGRAVINGS, ETCHINGS,**  
**&c.**

This is a Magnificent Collection, and are all the  
choicest subjects, after the best Masters.

The importation has only just arrived from  
England, and will be sold without the slightest  
reserve. Each Picture is framed in Oak and  
Gold, and all are now on View in the Auc-  
tioneers' Booms till date of sale.

Catalogues will shortly be issued.

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Also,

The Historical Barrel Organ (plays 22 hymn  
tunes) which was imported by the late  
Rev. W. Colenso. No reserve.

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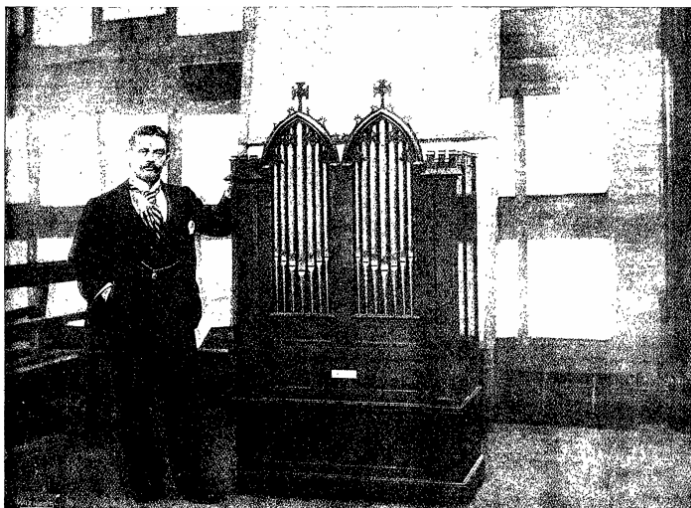
**C. B. HOADLEY & CO.,**  
Auctioneers.

Messrs C. B. Hoadley and Co. will offer by auction at their rooms, Emerson-street, next Friday, the 21<sup>st</sup> instant, a valuable consignment of engravings, etchings, &c., framed in oak and gold, which they have just received from Home. The collection, which has been carefully selected to suit all tastes, comprises land and sea scapes, sporting and domestic subjects. The pictures are now open for inspection at the auctioneers' rooms. The historical barrel organ imported by the late Rev. W. Colenso will be offered at the same time. The organ plays 22 hymn tunes, and as an interesting relic of early New Zealand should be keenly competed for.

◀ ▲ From the *Hawke's Bay Herald*,  
19 December 1900.

Interestingly, the *Otago Witness* had earlier picked up the story about the organ, wrongly attributing it to Colenso's cousin, the Bishop, or wrongly assuming they were one and the same. It published Samuel Carnell's photograph in the 17 May 1900 issue, with the caption, "FIRST ORGAN IN NEW ZEALAND—BROUGHT TO THE COLONY BY BISHOP COLENZO. The organ is at present exposed for sale in a Napier auction room. It is a barrel, worked by a handle at the back of the instrument. It plays 22 tunes, and is by T.C. Bates, Ludgate Hill, London."





—S. Carnell,  
photo.

“FIRST  
ORGAN IN  
NEW  
ZEALAND—  
BROUGHT TO  
THE COLONY  
BY BISHOP  
COLENZO.”

*Otago  
Witness*,  
17 May 1900.

Colenzo's organ

The organ in the Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery belonged to Colenzo, and is almost certainly the one auctioned by Hoadley in 1900. It is a barrel organ, manufactured by TC Bates c. 1834.

“Theodore Charles Bates of 6 Ludgate Hill, London was a pipe organ builder who ... specialised in barrel organs which played a number of psalm and hymn tunes from pinned cylinders—there were not many organists in the smaller English parishes in the early 19th Century.” ([http://tardis.dl.ac.uk/FreeReed/organ\\_book/](http://tardis.dl.ac.uk/FreeReed/organ_book/))—nor, for that matter, in Hawke's Bay. Did Colenzo bring a brand new organ to New Zealand in 1834? Or did he buy it later? I can find no earlier reference to it.

The Whanganui Museum claims of a similar organ: “First barrel organ in New Zealand, it was sent as a gift to Archdeacon Henry Williams and his brother William Williams, from their uncle in England, when they were stationed in the Bay of Islands, in 1829. The organ includes three barrels with ten hymns on each.” Maker A Buckingham c. 1828. That would predate the earliest Colenzo's organ could have got here by 5 years.

It has recently been restored and is played regularly at the Museum.



The Williams's organ



Colenso's organ at the Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery

—photographs by Peter Wells.



Greetings fellow Colenso enthusiasts,

It's my privilege and pleasure to introduce myself as a new member of The Colenso Project team. Bringing together such a rich collection of material online is both challenging and rewarding, and I'm enjoying contributing my enthusiasm and skills to the endeavour.

I bring to the group a professional background in rare and collectable books (Hard to Find Bookshops) and publishing (Otago University Press, McGraw-Hill), an academic background in English and Art History, and a passion for New Zealand cultural heritage.

In 2011 I completed an Honours degree at the University of Canterbury, which focused on enhancing access to cultural heritage collections. I was fortunate to spend part of the year at New College, University of Oxford, studying early printing and palaeography. At present I'm studying for a Master of Information Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, to better understand how New Zealand libraries, archives, museums and galleries are evolving in this digital age.

As a member of The Colenso Project team, I'm currently exploring how more Colenso enthusiasts around New Zealand and beyond might take part in the project. The Internet offers many new ways for us to interact and contribute, and for our history to be discovered and explored. I look forward to updating you with how we might share this exciting journey in the months ahead.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the project team for their warm welcome and support, and express how much I look forward to meeting other members of the Colenso Society in time.

Best wishes,  
Donelle McKinley

Transcribers are now at work on Colenso's journals, having almost completed the transcription of his known extant private letters. The next task will be "editing" to a uniform style before uploading to the website. Thanks for their considerable and valued (and continuing) assistance to Ann Collins, Gordon Sylvester, Tony Gates and (recently) Colenso great-great-grand-daughter Beverly Park.

We are grateful, too, to Francis McWhannell lately of Bethunes at Webbs auctioneers, for copies of Colenso manuscripts auctioned there in March. Some of these have already been transcribed.

Ian St George.



# TE RUAHINE ARA NEHO

## “THE RUAHINE TRAIL OF NEHO”

*A trampers’ guide to the modern day Department of Conservation track through the northern Ruahines, mostly following the original Ruahine Ara Noho, with emphases on historical and botanical interest.*

By Tony Gates. Images by Leatherwood.

During 2010 and 2011, *eColenso* printed a series of modern day tramping guides to Colenso country, principally the Ruahines. The January 2012 edition printed a brief overview, with map, of plans by the Department of Conservation to further publicise “Te Ruahine Ara Noho”, and to update some of their facilities there. Former NZ Forest Service and DoC facilities tend to last very well, with car parks, signs, tracks, huts, and bridges in Colenso country built many years ago all currently in good condition. NZTopo50 maps BK37 Tikokino and BK36 Taora Junction (and other maps of the Ruahines) should be consulted in conjunction with this guide. Some map sections are included for detail around camp sights that Colenso used.

This is an update to the previously printed trampers’ guides to Colenso country, with emphases on Te Ruahine Ara Noho “The Ruahine Trail of Colenso”. It is presented as if followed in an east to west direction. NB DoC have not yet officially named this trail, so the words used here may be changed in future.

### **Part One—east of the Ruahine divide, Makaroro River to Te Atu O Mahuru.**

#### **The Makaroro River**

The road from Hawke’s Bay towards the Ruahine mountains and “Te Ruahine Ara Noho” passes through extremely attractive farmland as it goes west up the Makaroro valley. At the intersection at the tiny settlement of Whakarara, North Block road heads south west to the Waipawa River, and to the track to the popular Sunrise Hut. Whakarara Road winds north and descends to the banks of the Makaroro River, where a dam and water storage lake are proposed. DoC have located their car park, public shelter, and information panels here, where a logging settlement once was. The Makaroro River is a wide open gravel river bed for most of its route from here up river to Colenso Spur and beyond. A reasonable off road vehicle could drive a long way up river, depending on the water level and gravel. Sturdy four wheel drives used to be able to drive well past the foot of Colenso Spur to Barlow hut, and it is usually not difficult to drive to the Makaroro–Gold Creek confluence. The most difficult river crossing for vehicles is often the first one, right at the Whakarara road end. Those on foot can easily avoid this, and usually splash their way up valley without problems. Gold Creek is a large tributary entering the Makaroro River from the south west at the edge of the farm land, where the track up to Sparrowhawk Biv and the Ruahine Range commences. In a pleasant grassy

clearing nearby is a substantial stone memorial plaque to Neville Verran, a young hunter who loved hunting the Makaroro valley.

Gold creek offers relatively easy foot access, at least initially, to the interior. The Makaroro Valley does too when the river allows (which is for much of the year), but any trapper needs to treat this river with caution. A few crossings might be knee deep with swift water and slippery rocks.

### Colenso Spur

*“Very fine specimens of the large leaved Fagus (F fusca var, = “Black Birch” of the colonists) were also here, common on both sides of the stream. We passed several fine symmetrical beeches of this species on the banks of this river, some were of a very large size, having straight, clean trunks, while their foliage etc looked charming. Another species, Fagus solandri, having small, entire leaves and smooth bark. This is the common tree of those forests, its trunk is literally covered with elegant Hepaticæ[liverworts] and beautiful foliaceous lichens, all charmingly healthy”.*

William Colenso 1845

*At 3 pm, we arrived at what appeared to be the immediate base of the upper mountain which rose steep before us. Here, two rivers met, each nearly of the same size, and coming from opposite directions. We tried both for a short distance, but found their beds so narrow and steep, and partly choked with dead trees and shrubs, and masses of stone, that we gave up all thoughts of going any further in that way, and so prepared with a good heart to climb the face of the narrow tongue of land which lay between the two streams.*

William Colenso 1845

Less than an hour's tramp up river from the farmland, the base of Colenso Spur should be obvious, where Colenso Creek joins the Makaroro river from the west, ie draining the Ruahine Range. Access from the river bed to the DoC track is actually quite difficult because of the massive erosion so prevalent in these mountains, and maybe isn't possible during a flood. Orange markers should be visible from the river bed, but you might not be able to follow these. There is a grassy flat about 50 metres upriver on the true right with really good campsites. Note this, and look carefully for a track from here that DoC have cut back to Colenso's memorial cairn. There is a typically steep ascent of Colenso Spur on a good DoC track. After maybe half an hour, the gradient eases at the track junction sign, where there is a similar track joining from Barlow Hut. Barlow Hut is an easy half and hour upriver from the base of Colenso spur.

### Te Wai O Kongenge “the Waters of Weariness”

There is a pleasant, flat section of the track past the sign at approximately the nine hundred metre contour. This is often surrounded by dense fern and windfall, and sometimes open forest. If you find a good water source close to the track here after a hot summers climb, then you wouldn't be the first person to do so. Close to the track, on the northern side, and clearly marked on the map, flows a small creek which the writer assumes is the one known by Colenso and his guides and porters as Te Wai O Kongenge, or “the Waters of Weariness”. Colenso camped somewhere here with his Maori guides on his first

journey during February 1845. He sent the two strongest, Paora and Mawhatau, over to the Patea village at Awarua (beside the Rangitikei river) while resting, holding Divine Service for his remaining Maori porters, botanising, and of course drinking beautiful Ruahine water from Te Wai o Kongenge.

There is a steep climb up the track above Te Wai O Kongene, and a few view points to show the tantalisingly close tussock tops. There are a couple of obvious scree close to the track just below the tussock, and one of these is likely to be the one mentioned by Colenso as a fearful place for the native guides. It still looks fearful. This is the location that the March 2012 *eColenso* mentioned as a good spot to shoot a Ruahine deer. The sweeping tussock basins and ridges of the Ruahine range lie above a short section of tupare (or tupari, otherwise known as kumarahou or Kumararanui). Most trampers will however know this sturdy specimen as the aptly named leatherwood, leatherleaf, or *Olearia colensoi*. Other species of note in the area include the various tussock grasses, North Island Eidelweiss/ *Leucogenes leontopodium*, Korikori/ *Ranunculus insignis*, and speargrass/ Spaniard/ *Aciphylla colensoi*. Flowers of the parasitic and now rare Red Mistletoe/ Pirirangi/ *Peraxilla colensoi* (Loranthus) may occasionally be visible during December, and their location obvious by the possum proof barriers that DoC install.

*“On many beeches, a fine Loranthus [Pirirangi/ red mistletoe] grew parasitically in dense bushes, bearing crimson flowers in profusion, so that, in some more open spots among the closely growing trees, the whole forest wore a red-dish glare”*

William Colenso 1845

*Imagine a living circle of five feet diameter (the size of the full grown plant) with all its many harsh spiny ray-like leaves radiating alike outward from 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 two feet in length. From the centre rises the strong flowering stem, an erect orange coloured spike or stalk 5–6 feet high, containing many hundreds of small flowers, gummy (or having a varnished appearance) and strong scented.*

William Colenso 1845

Above the tupare scrub, there is easy tussock terrain leading to the summit of Te Atu O Mahuru. Colenso was entranced with the botanical beauty of the area, collecting numerous specimens which were temporarily stored in his clothes. These he called “my darling specimens”, and many were eventually sent to Kew Gardens in London. When the guides Paora and Mawhatau returned empty handed two days later—a remarkable feat of endurance—they all tramped back down to the Makaroro River, then home to the Waitangi mission base at Hawkes Bay. Colenso had found blue bottle flies—and maggots—at his camp, noted some interesting native birds, and of course the numerous native plants.



## **Part Two—west of the Ruahine divide, Te Atu O Mahuru to the Maropea River and the Mokai Patea Range.**

At the very summit of Colenso Spur is the prominent peak of Te Atu O Mahuru, 1534 metres. This can be loosely translated to “The opposite of comfort”. Maori sometimes called this peak Te Taumata a Neho “The summit, or pass of Neho” (or Koreneho).

Considerable easy terrain surrounds this area, but as Colenso found, also some treacherous razorback ridges, difficult vegetation, and often, poor weather. Modern day trampers should feel at least a little about how Colenso felt here as they become exposed to both the elements and the views. Perhaps more importantly for a tired trumper having ascended Colenso Spur, the contours ease and the summit is in sight. However, after decades of introduced animal browse, modern day trampers are unlikely to experience what Colenso did.

*“such a profusion of Flora’s stores. In one word, I was overwhelmed with astonishment, and stood looking with all my eyes, greedily devouring and drinking in the enchanting scene before me”*

William Colenso 1845

Luckily, some native alpine flora remain in places, with obvious flowers visible at the right time and place. The beautiful *Ranunculus* still grows well here where it is out of reach of deer.

### **The Ruahines**

The Ruahines are part of the mountainous backbone of the North Island. If looking from the south, about three quarters of the way up the range is the place where Colenso crossed several times during the 1840s, between southern Hawke’s Bay and Rangitikei. This is almost the widest point of the range. It was (and still is) typically wild country of forests and tussock grasslands cut by deep valleys.

### **Te Papakia Kuutaa “Barrier of the Defender God of the Interior”**

There are impressive views all around from the main Ruahine Range at Te Atu O Mahuru. Remutopo peak towers close by in the west, on the aptly named ridge of Te Papakia Kuutaa “Barrier of the Defender God of the Interior”. After passing the peak several times, Colenso was attracted to this feature on his final Ruahine journey during 1852. He tramped there to satisfy his curiosity, becoming extremely thirsty on the tussock ridges. Modern day trampers would normally carry a water bottle in such places, Colenso’s only water source was from a muddy tarn that first his dog had splashed in. He squeezed the foul mix through his hankerchief for a “filtered” drink! North and south from Te Atu O Mahuru, sweeping tussock ridges drop into steep, eroded tupari and beech clad tributaries of the Makaroro, Mangatera (Remutupo Creek), and Maropea rivers. The tussock ridges of the Ruahine range generally offer easy tramping here. Te Ruahine Ara Noho initially follows the Ruahine Range south west for half an hour or so to Maroparea peak, past a series of sheltered tarns. This would be an ideal location to camp in sheltered conditions. Surprisingly, Colenso failed to mention these tarns, despite his obvious obsession with water. They may not have existed in 1850, been hidden in the mist, or could have been snow covered during some of his journeys. There are intermittent DoC markers along parts of this ridge, and possibly some prominent deer trails.

*“Taking my dog with me, I went on. It was a gloriously fine day, the sun was melting, ’ere long the course without trees or high shrubs was more difficult than I expected owing to the snow drifts in the earth and the boulders, and when, after several hours toil, I got to the spur and mounted on it, to my great astonishment I found that all the upper part of the earth rampart was wholly composed of loose rocks and stones, without any earth or clay between! It was a singular spot, no living thing was there, save a few common small lizards (Mocoa) basking on the black rocks in the sun, which (unlike Darwin’s at the Galapagos) scuttled off pretty fast on seeing me—though they, in all probability, had never before seen a man”.*

William Colenso 1852

*“By and by I proceeded, but before I got onto the open and clear table land of the top, the sun went down and it soon became near dark. Still, the travelling was pretty good there on those flat tops, only now and then stumbling, through haste and hunger, over low tussocks and mounds and boulder stones. It grew still darker, and the place was fast becoming enveloped in night clouds, when suddenly, a dark form appeared just before me, and my dog barked and stood. It was my trusty native, who, having become alarmed at my non appearance and long absence, had left the encampment in quest of me”.*

William Colenso 1852

*“A peculiar looking peak, or spur, running in a northerly direction, called Te Papakiakuutaa. On every journey of mine to and from Patea, I have always been desirous of visiting that strange looking outlying spur, and one year, probably 1850, I managed to do so”.*

*I staid there a while, musing;  
“How divine  
the liberty, for frail, for mortal man  
To roam at large among unpeopled glens  
And mountainous retirements  
Regions consecrate  
To oldest time! And, reckless of the storm  
Be as a presence or a motion there”<sup>1</sup>*

William Colenso 1852

*There is a quiet spirit in these woods  
That dwells where ’er the gentle land wind blows  
And here, amid  
The silent majesty of these deep woods  
Its presence shall uplift  
Thy thoughts from earth  
As to the sunshine and pure, bright air  
Their tops of the green trees lift.<sup>2</sup>*

William Colenso 1845

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1. Wordsworth. 2. Longfellow

In mist or darkness, Maroparea peak would be easy to miss. The gentle tussock slopes would offer you little in the way of definite locations, so a trumper has to think like Colenso and use a compass wisely. Or a GPS. Te Papakia Kuutaa ridge descends gently north west from Maroparea. Te Ruahine Ara Noho descends this ridge north west to the first saddle, then sidles along the side ridge that leads south west to point 1450. There may be rock cairns placed in strategic locations. I recall several well worn deer trails through the tussock here, and once again, potentially confusing navigation.

### Point 1450

Point 1450 has a flattish top with tall tussock and low scrub. Colenso's original route descends west a short distance to the forest, to the now mythical (though very real during the late 1840s and early 1850s) camp site of Ngaroto. This was an obvious camp sight on the ridge, with Colenso's stone lined well and good firewood supply. He records finding a handsome greenstone near Ngaroto—but he left it there! He also saw a kiwi and a weka near here. The ridge between point 1450 and Puketaramea takes several directional changes, so would be difficult to follow, particularly without a DoC track. Colenso followed this ridge, but the NZ Forest Service preferred to make tracks to more strategically located huts near water. The DoC track from point 1450 to Maropea Forks hut therefore descends steadily from the well marked bush edge, through park-like *Not-hofagus* forest to the delightful upper reaches of the Maropea River. Once at the river, wide open grassy river flats lead easily downriver for less than ten minutes to Maropea Forks Hut.

*"We rose this morning from our uncomfortable beds—or lairs without any dressing! And stiff and hungry, we started from our bivouac with a tolerably good will before 6 O'Clock. This morning, however, was intolerably cold, and the fog very heavy—a true Scottish mist this time!—settling on the thickly leaved shrubs, through which we had to force our way, and so wetting us to the skin. Do what we could, we could not get warm, as we could not get along fast enough, and the sun was still on the other side of the range. Onwards and upwards we toiled in silence for four hours, until we reached our well known E. Peak on the summit—Te Atu O Mahuru".*

William Colenso 1847

*"At this time, we were very much entangled among the sides of the deep and thick scrub in the low Fagus forests, on the precipitous western mountain, sinking deep at almost every step among what seemed to be layers (stratum super stratum) of ancient fallen trees, which were all more or less rotten and lying across each other, and hidden under the long Astelia and 'cutting grass' foliage, so that, sometimes, my natives as well as myself should sink down so far—crashing through the fallen, rotten timber, and yet, without touching the earth!—that we could not extricate ourselves without assistance. Language fails me properly to depict the toilsomeness and entanglement of this day, especially that towards night, in that never-to-be-forgotten Fagus forest".*

William Colenso 1847

## Maropea Forks Hut

Maropea Forks Hut is a sturdy ex NZ Forest Service bush residence dating from the mid 1960s that has been tastefully tidied up by DoC. Their staff installed a skylight, porch, and log burner during the 1990s. Unfortunately, the Maropea river gravels have been building up outside the hut, so its existence could be threatened by a large flood. In the valley to the north, Remutupo Creek destroyed Remutupo Hut during the 1970s in this way. Good DoC tracks radiate out from Maropea Forks Hut, and there are several routes relying on river bed tramping as Colenso was used to. Hunting and fishing are now popular in the Maropea catchment, and it has always been a good place to observe Whio.

## Puketaramea

Puketaramea, or Maunga Taramea “The peak of speargrass” is a key location in the vast Maropea–Whakarekou basin. At times, there are water seepages on an otherwise dry ridge, and the rocky crags and tussock clearings offer relief from the forest. In good weather, a person has clear views of the surrounding ridges and valleys, so could plot their route over the range from Puketaramea. The ancient Maori trail that Colenso followed crossed Puketaramea, and it was no accident that he continued several times on this route. Modern day Department of Conservation tramping tracks around Puketaramea avoid difficult sections of the Maropea river, and allow good foot access to their excellent huts.

From Maropea Forks hut, the track crosses the north branch then climbs steeply for four hundred metres to point 1293, located on the ridge between Puketaramea and Ngaroto, where Colenso’s stone lined well and camp was located. It is then a gentle climb on the well cut track to the signposted track junction at the bush edge. The track to the Unknown Campsight, then Lake Colenso, descends gently to the north west from this junction. The track to Otukota and Iron Bark huts climbs a very short distance from the junction to the rocky crags of Puketaramea itself, then descends gently in an almost parallel direction. The track passes through some pleasant tussock and clay pan clearings where you may find water, then enters the bush on its gentle descent. At about this point, and most likely completely invisible on the smooth and easy contours, another ridge descends almost parallel to the two tracks, but a little to the south. It is this ridge that I believe Colenso and his guides followed, because as mentioned in my previous guide, an old NZ Forest Service Deer Culler who knew the area like the back of his hand figured it out. Also, Colenso states that the ridge he followed joined the Maropea River an hour’s tramp up river from its confluence with the Waikamaka River. Colenso tramped down river a little further (past where the NZ Forest Service built Otukota Hut in 1966) until he found a suitable ridge to clamber out from the Maropea and so onto the expansive Mokai Patea Range. Colenso must have used his compass here, as the river takes several twists and turns.

*“On one journey back from Patea to Hawkes Bay, I happened to see Kiwi (Apteryx) in an open place in these woods- the only time I saw one wild and free. It ran much faster than I supposed it would do, and its striding gait strongly reminded me of a hen running after a moth or winged insect”.*

William Colenso 1847



## Maori Hill and Maori Clearing

Back on the DoC track down from Puketaramea to Iron Bark Hut, there are a number of bumps in the ridge to cross, the most significant being an obvious hill known as Maori Hill (and Maori clearing). This forces a frustrating ten minute climb on an otherwise gentle descent back to the Maropea River. Maori Clearing was probably created with a burn off, and now is covered with mature Manuka scrub. There are views from here out over the Maropea River to the Mokai Patea Range. The track descends steeply west to the track junction and sign, continuing west to Otukota Hut. From the track junction at Maori Clearing, the track swings north on its gradual descent to the Maropea River, and the two new swingbridges near Iron Bark hut. One bridge crosses the Unknown Stream, so allowing dry foot access to Lake Colenso (three or four hours east), and the other crosses the Maropea River, and so to Iron Bark Hut. Maropea Forks Hut to Iron Bark Hut should take an average tramping four or five hours.

## Iron Bark Hut

Iron Bark Hut is another tidy riverside six bunk ex NZ Forest Service hut which DoC have tastefully added to. There is a skylight, porch, log burner, and the hut is fully lined. Good camp sites are easy to find on the grassy flats here. This is understandably a popular fishing, hunting and tramping area. DoC constructed two new swingbridges here during early 2012—one over the Maropea river, and the other over the Unknown stream. These allow safe dry foot access to the popular Lake Colenso hut, which is also very tidy.

William Colenso came to know these Ruahine hills and valleys well. He also knew of and relied on wild foods available, including the sweet, mealy, starchy Huperei/potato orchid/ *Gastrodia* tubers, cabbage trees (Ti Kouka/ *Cordyline australis*) and the highly regarded Toi/ *Cordyline indivisa*, and Snowberry/ Tawiniwini/ *Gaultheria antipoda*.

*“After a while, we arose from our fern couch, hunger impelled, and having broken off the tops of the branches of the large and many headed cabbage trees (Cordyline australis) which grew close by, and which the light of the moon revealed, we made a fire and roasted the stalks of the young leaves, which, though both tough and bitter, served to allay our pangs”.*

William Colenso 1847

The potatoe orchid, or Huperei

*“Its root, a tolerably large cylindrical tuber, is perennial. Its single scaly and spotted flower stem is 2 feet and more high, stout, erect, and bears several pretty large and peculiar bizarre flowers. The root was eaten by the old Maoris, together with the tubers of other congenerous terrestrial Orchids; Pterostylis, Thelymitra, Orthoceras, etc”.*

William Colenso 1847

### Part three—The Mokai Patea Range

*“Matuku village [near Mokai Station and Awarua pa] is picturesquely situated on the ridge, in the midst of these immense, primeval forests which surround it for miles on every side. The view from this place was very extensive solemn, and grand, overlooking miles of forests, with the eternal mountains up rearing their heads and peaks around. On the E and S was the great Ruahine Range, with the many isolated spurs and ridges of its W flank, here rising abruptly like a formidable barrier to our progress that way!”*

William Colenso 1847.

The Mokai Patea Range is a sprawling series of tussock plateaux with steep, forested sides. Its distinctive flat profile is often clearly visible from State Highway 1 near Taihape. On Te Ruahine Ara Noho, the sustained ascent of the Mokai Patea Range starts right behind Iron Bark Hut, leading through pleasant mixed forest that has been well eaten out by deer. The track gradient eases a little before the bush edge at the saddle, where the track enters the Mokai Station over a fence. DoC have recently arranged a new legal access route over station farm land, with markers and signs leading to their car park close to the station homestead. In darkness, or the sort of mist that Colenso writes of, navigation here may be difficult. There is reliable water beside the track at the saddle, but often also cattle. Wide open grassy slopes lead south and up onto the Mokai Patea Range proper. The new poled DoC route sidles west through easy hill country farmland around the foot of the steep tussock slopes above. The farmland descent to the car park is steep.

*“One abrupt and isolated stoney hill, or young mountain which we had to cross, was called Mokai Patea. For the last three hours of our journey, we were occupied with scrambling and crawling on all fours up a nasty narrow stoney and steep mountain watercourse full of obstructions—uprooted trees and shrubs lying across it brought down by winter torrents, slippery stones, deep pools, etc etc. Indeed, in some spots it was impossible to pass, when we had to try the banks, which were just as bad. The chief however had assured us that it was the only practicable way! One thing we agreed to, not to try that watercourse again.”*

William Colenso 1847

*We had much difficulty in surmounting the long outlying spur of the mountain, but we succeeded, and then the fog came in so densely that we could hardly see a yard before us! So, after wandering about for some time, and fearing that some of our party might go astray (which one did!), we halted to breakfast, and to await the clearing of the fog. On two or three rare occasions while travelling in the mountains, I have met with this species of dense, dry fog, so widely different from the fogs of the low lands. Such is not merely (as the poet has it)*

*“W’reath’d around, in deeper circles still  
successive closing sits the general fog  
unbounded o’er the world, and mingling thick  
a formless grey confusion covers all”<sup>3</sup>*

William Colenso 1847

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3. Thomson.



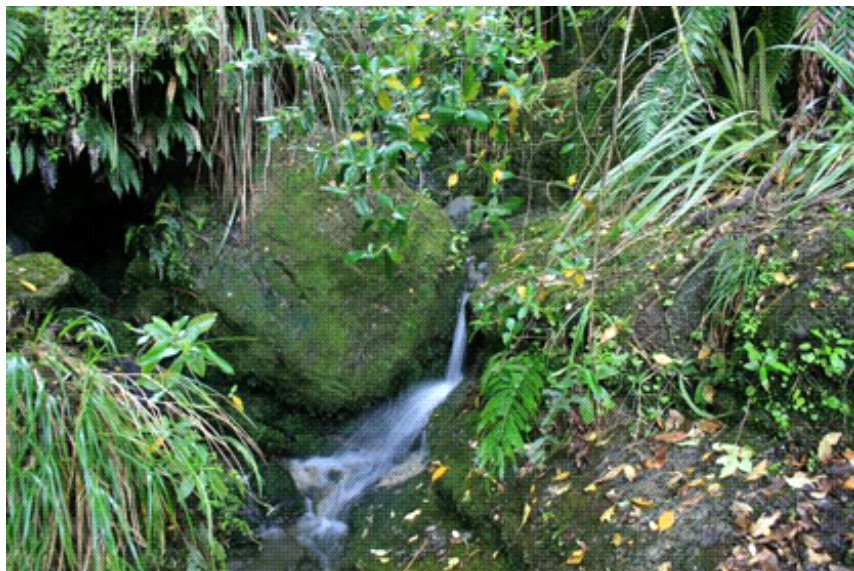
Makaroro Nothofagus.





Makaroro river and Nothofagus at Colenso Spur.





Above: The water of weariness  
Below: Colenso Spur track







Above: Kawhatau Astelia & Nothofagus.

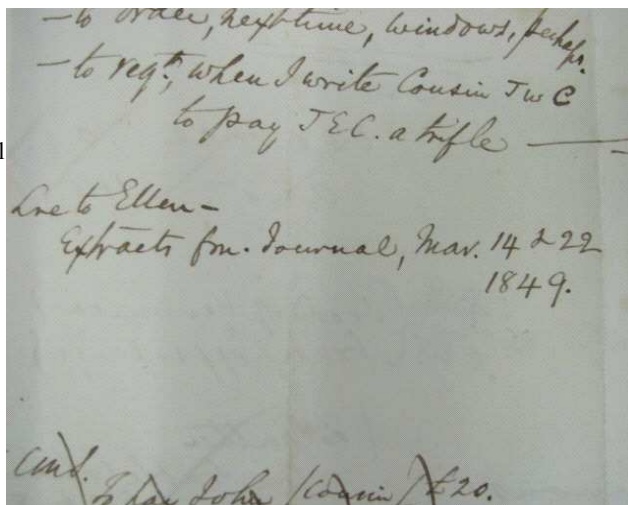
Below: Kawhatau River just the other side of the Mokai Patea Range.



## NOTES

On the relationship between William and John William Colenso, Ann Collins emailed, “One other connection (between the two cousins) is that JWC’s son Frank (BA 1874) and Latty (BA 1876) both matriculated at Cambridge in 1870. Both were students at St John’s College. Also George Grey’s aide-de-camp was Louis Knollys, who had been engaged to JWC’s daughter Fanny.”

Furthermore, Peter Wells sent this image of a piece of Colenso ephemera in the Australian National Library at Canberra. It is an 1850 list of “things to do”, including “to request, when I write Cousin JWC to pay JEC (his sister Jane Emily) a trifle”; and “CMS to pay John (Cousin) £20.” It all suggests, Peter writes, “a casual intimacy” between the cousins.



And further still, a “List of Goods” in Colenso’s hand, in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, almost certainly from 1844, contains an item, “JWC’s 2 vols to E.” Now if JW Colenso—the man who was to become the famous Bishop of Natal, but in 1844 a tutor at St John’s, Cambridge—had sent two volumes of his own works, they were mathematical texts (*Arithmetic* first published in 1841, and *Algebra*, in 1843), perhaps to help Elizabeth Colenso with her pupils.



*eColenso* is a free email Newsletter published irregularly by the Colenso Society.

Please forward to anyone interested. Back issues are at [http://](http://www.colensostudy.id.au/)

[www.colensostudy.id.au/](http://www.colensostudy.id.au/).

The editor invites contributions on any matter relating to the life and work of the Rev. William Colenso FLS FRS, emailed to Ian St George ([istge@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:istge@yahoo.co.nz)).

The cover is based on the February 1899 cover of *Cocorico* by Alphonse Mucha.

