

COLSENSO

The e-organ of the Colenso Society Inc., 32 Hawkestone St, Thorndon, Wellington 6011; dedicated to making known the life and work of the Reverend William Colenso and thereby forming a peppercorn biography.



ESTABLISHED 1879.

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BOOTS.

AFTER completion of Improved Alterations to my premises, I purpose celebrating the occasion by holding a

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NOTE THE ADDRESS—

W. M. MEBAN,

727

PORT NAPIER.

Pan, pain, pen, bun, **pungapunga,** cumbungi, bao, bua, pua...

Deus dedit dentes; Deus dabit panem.
(God gave teeth; God will give bread).

Colenso's journal entry for 24 January 1838 reads, "...about 1 p.m. we made Uawa, a pretty large village, built on both sides of a small river navigable for Canoes, having a bar-harbour.... Here, for the first time, I saw a substance which reminded me of London Gingerbread! in substance, colour, and taste. The Natives make it as follows: they procure a quantity of pollen-granules from the male flowers of the Raupo, (and 'tis astonishing to observe what a deal a single head will yield, when beaten,) and this they simply knead with water to a proper consistency—sometimes bake it, and eat; it as food. I saw a large lump, nearly as big as a Dutch cheese." [1]

He sent specimens to Kew in 1850:

3937. A small loaf! Made of the Pollen of Typha – It is not a good one, the season being too far advanced. They are considered choice morsels by the Natives; when fresh, (i.e. newly baked) it has a very nice smell, resembling gingerbread! – I feel assured, that this Typha is not T. angustifolia, – at least, it does not accord with your descriptn. (B. Flora), nor with that of Kunth (En. plant., iii) – It is now a long while since I suspected as much, even from A. Cunningham's last visit. I have specimens drying for you, which I shall soon send. – It is 10-12 feet high, leaves vaginant below, quite over-lapping, spike very large, with several small membranaceous bracteas, &c – roots edible. T. utilis, W.C. [2]

He was telling Hooker this was a different species from the British one, and suggesting Hooker should call it *Typha utilis* - but the Czech botanist Carl Borivoj Presl named it *T. orientalis* in 1851. Colenso sent some pollen in 1853, among specimens saved from his tragic house fire....

6153. a bottle of Pollen of Typha utilis, with which the Natives make a kind of bread; vide, No. 3937, outer. [3]

They say you can keep a Big Mac for weeks and it won't deteriorate, it contains so much preservative. Colenso's loaf still survives at Kew. He kept on about this bread, clearly quite taken with the whole process....



Kennedy MJ, Webby RF, Markham KR 2000. Pollen cakes of *Typha* spp. (Typhaceae) “lost” and living food. *Economic Botany* 54(3) pp. 254-255.

Raupo (Typha angustifolia) ... pollen was made into cakes like gingerbread and baked. [4]

The pollen also of the flowers of the large Bulrush (Typha angustifolia), was extensively collected in its season by the Southern tribes, and made into large gingerbread like cakes, called Pungapunga. [5]

Ahika Kai: Ngai Tahu foods is a website which suggests it was the downy seed that was gathered for making bread (pua), [5] but Colenso was clear that “... *the downy pappus ... from the fruiting heads of the large Bulrush, (Typha angustifolia,) (was used) for beds, bolsters and pillows;* [6]

... in the summer season, parties went among the Raupo specially to gather the dense heads of flowers for the purpose of collecting their pollen, when only a smaller quantity could be obtained from the over-long plants, owing to their extra height above and to the greater depth of water below, etc., though attended with much more labour. This pollen, in its raw state, closely resembled our ground table-mustard; it was made into a light kind of yellow cake, and baked. It was sweetish to the taste, and not wholly unlike London gingerbread. Thirty years ago, specimens of it, both raw and baked, were sent to the Museum, at Kew. I have seen it collected in buckets-full. [7]

Another highly curious article of vegetable food was the *pungapunga*, the yellow pollen of the *raupo* flowers—the common bulrush, or cat's-reed mace (*Typha angustifolia*). This was collected in the summer season, when the plant is in full flower, in the wet swamps and sides of lagoons, streams, and lakes. I have been astonished at the large quantities of pollen then obtained. On one occasion, more than thirty years ago, I had several buckets full brought me by the present chief, Tareha, in his canoe, some of which I sent both raw and cooked to the Kew Museum. In appearance in its raw state it exactly resembles the ground yellow mustard of commerce, and when put up into bottles would be mistaken for it. It is obtained by gently beating it out of the dense flowering spikes. To use it as food it is mixed up with water into cakes and baked. It is sweetish and light, and reminds one strongly of London gingerbread. Dr. Sir. J.D. Hooker informed me that when he was in India he found the natives of Scinde making a precisely similar use of it. [8]

Bread seems to be one of those very basic words that is similar in many languages: *pungapunga* in Maori, *cumbungi* in one of the Australian dialects. Bao are Chinese steamed buns with a wide variety of fillings, both savoury and sweet. In Samoa bao are always filled with meat, usually pork and are called *pua'a*. Pua is a traditional Bihari (and probably Rajasthani also) dessert. It can be eaten alone or with aloo-baigan bhujiya or kalegi fry. It is a popular food during Dussehra, Holi and Basant Panchami. In Māori pua is a flower (or is it flour?). *Pua aloalo* is the state flower of Hawai'i. Bua is a flower in Fiji.

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

Please forward to anyone who may be interested.

The editor invites contributions on Rev. William Colenso FLS FRS.

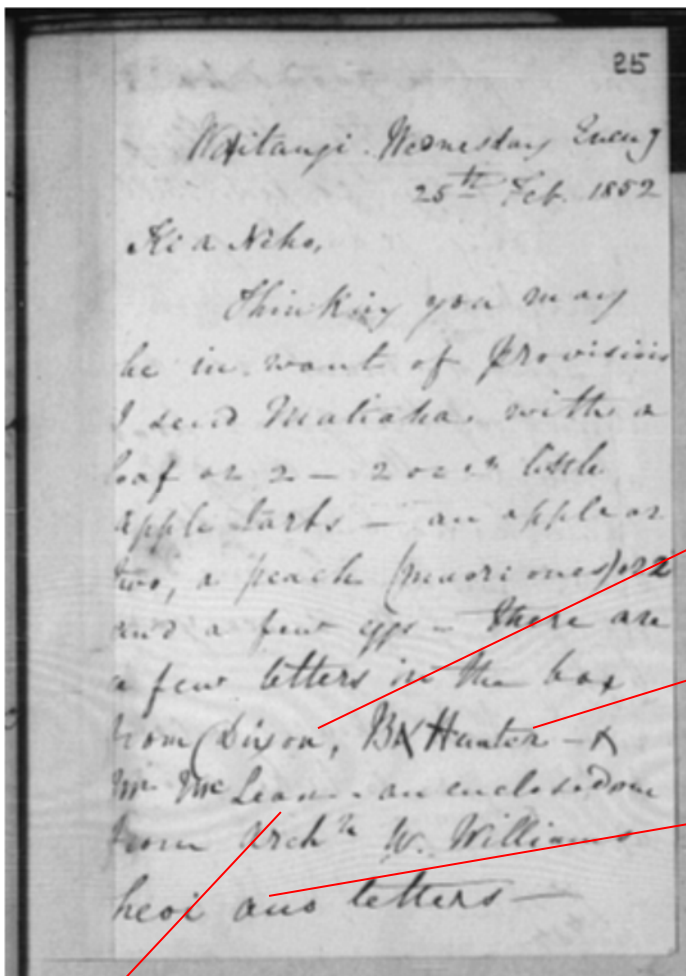
Such contributions should be emailed to Ian St George, istge@yahoo.co.nz.

The cover of this issue is based on an advertisement in the *Hawke's Bay Herald*.



Dear Neho

There is a letter among the Colenso papers in the Mitchell Library in Sydney, from Elizabeth to William...



On 25 February 1852 Colenso was coming home from a Ruahine crossing (he arrived home on 29th). The food would have reached him as he came off the hill.

They ordered their household stores from Dixon & Co in London.

Bethune & Hunter were Wellington Booksellers.

“heoi ano” here probably means “that’s all” (of the letters). They spoke Māori at home.

Colenso replied to McLean’s letter from Wairarapa on 3 April, ending with “Mrs. Colenso was well when I left—ditto, the children who often speak of you...”—as if all was well.

The chief Tareha had told Colenso (*re* Waitangi), “No one ever dwelt here on this spot before you; it has always been only the dwelling-place of eels.” Colenso often wrote of eating eel on his travels, but this is the only mention of their eating eels at home.

“Samuel & Rebecca” are Hamuera and Ripeka (Wiremu’s mother). Tuingara is just south of Blackhead point on the SE coast.

26

The English goods have arrived & the Wellington ones safely as per Bill of lading 18 packages (8 English)

I send no meat on account of the great heat of the weather and I have none but salt provisions. We having lived upon eels principally since you left —

Sam^l & Reb. I hear are gone to Tuingara to take goods upon trust —

Ngaio Akitio
1857

The letter is either incomplete or unsigned (the words “Ngaio” and “Akitio” are in William’s writing). Wiremu was born in May 1851 and by the date of this letter was known to be Colenso’s child—yet this is a tender and caring communication, apparently from a woman concerned for her husband’s welfare and comfort.

No hint of coldness yet, nor of an abusive relationship.



The seat of government

A letter in the Mitchell Library recalls Colenso's relationship with Ronald Campbell Gunn...

Napier,
Augt. 10 1864

R.C. Gunn Esq
&c &c
My dear Sir

Here am I, already following you with a note: I seized the first steamer—as I know not how long you may be in Wellington, or, indeed, the Straits.

I enclose a portion of the "N. Zealander" paper, containing the marrow of what I said on that occasion: you will smile at some part of it—i.e. the reference to the Moa—which was, you will recollect, published under your kind auspices at Hobarton.

*I am so busy I can hardly find time to write. In the glens about Wellington (going in the direction, over the hills, behind the R.C. Schools &c) the rare fern *Trichomanes humile* is to be found; and on the hills near the lighthouse (about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in, from sea,) *Lindsaea linearis* var.—having lower pinnules deeply cleft &c. The only habitats known to me of these Ferns, S. of the E. Cape.*

*Hoping you will thoroughly enjoy your visit. I am
My dear Sir
Yours truly
W. Colenso.*

Colenso had written to Gunn in Tasmania in 1841 (at the suggestion of Lady Jane Franklin, who met Colenso when she visited Paihia 1–14 May 1841). Gunn published four Colenso papers in the *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science* between 1842 and 1846. Two were also published as monographs by the *Launceston Examiner*. Gunn was very much Colenso's Tasmanian equivalent, botanist, collector for Kew, politician. There is a long manuscript in the Mitchell library, catalogued as NZ plants by Colenso, but in fact a list of Tasmanian plants, including their ethnobotany, by Gunn. Its presence among the Colenso papers suggests he must have sent it to Colenso, but I can find no record of their communicating after the 1840s until this 1864 letter.

In 1864 Gunn was appointed a commissioner for selecting the seat of government in New Zealand, and it is in that capacity that Colenso wrote to him in Wellington, sending the pages of the *New Zealander* of 24 November 1863, reporting the debate on the removal of the seat of Government. Mr Domett had moved, "That it has become necessary that the Seat of Government of the Colony of New Zealand should be transferred to some suitable locality in Cook's Straits." Colenso responded...

Mr COLENSO said he rose early in the debate to speak to the motion, from his believing that the large provinces, being immediately interested, could not possibly act impartially on this matter, and, therefore, the small provinces, which were not immediately nor greatly interested, should do so. The one thing which he deplored above all others, as being the greatest possible evil which could happen in the colony, was separation. He wished to see the seat of government as centrally situated as to keep the colony one and undivided. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for the city of Nelson (Mr. Domett) had stated in his notice of motion on the order paper, "That it has become necessary that the Seat of Government of the Colony of New Zealand should be transferred to some suitable locality in Cook's Straits," but he had not shown it to be "necessary." Why was it "become necessary?" He still hoped some hon. member, who intended to support the motion, would be able to show this. At the same time, he hoped no hon. member would any longer attempt to show the necessity of the removal of the seat of government from the mere fact of its not being at present geographically central; for that argument (such as it was) had been completely set aside last year, when in session at Wellington. On that occasion he had gone over the maps in the library, to refurbish up his memory, and had found that seven-tenths, or even eight-tenths of the chief towns of the nations of the earth, were not geographically central. (Hear, hear.) He therefore looked on the necessity of the seat of government being geographically central as a mere fiction. He had listened with attention and delight to what the hon. member for the city of Nelson had said respecting the states of ancient Greece, of Italy, and of the Germanic Confederation; but he drew the



Statue of Ronald Campbell Gunn.
Launceston City Park, Tasmania

very opposite inference from the real historical facts. From the session of last year to the present time he had often thought on the subject—the removal of the seat of government to Cook's Straits, —knowing it would again be brought before the House,—and the only conclusion he could arrive at was this, that such a step would both cause and hasten separation. (Hear.) In his so speaking, he hoped that no hon. member would charge him with partiality for Auckland; for, it so happened, he had neither friends, nor relatives, nor interests in Auckland. What they really wanted for the seat of government was, not a centre geographically, but a real, preponderating, influential centre—a centre of gravity—if he might so speak—for the colony. (Hear, hear.) And this, he believed, they already had in Auckland. At all events it could not be denied, that at present there were but two great foci—Otago and Auckland—

one of which must be the seat of government. (Hear.) Of course, other foci might hereafter be found. Upwards of 15 years ago, when he first found, in his wanderings through the Northern Island, two bones of the moa, a femur and a tibia, he recollected what Cuvier had written on the cassowary, and he came also to the conclusion that the moa must be wingless. The great French zoologist had said no power in nature could give wings to such a heavy-bodied bird, as to enable it to fly. Here, however, the contrary was the case—the immense wings, or rather the pinions, would prove to be vastly too heavy to be of any service to such a light body. (Hear, and laughter.) And what would be the sure, the inevitable result of this motion being carried? Nothing less than a double separation, than three seats of government (Hear, hear.) He implored hon. members to consider this. They well knew, and had admitted, that government was already far too costly; but, if this motion should be carried out, they would find it to be very much more costly. For, supposing the seat of government removed to Cook's Straits, could any hon. member ... believe that the ... and large province of Otago would long be content with any such arrangement—especially if she continues to go a head as she has done for the last two years,—and could Auckland be supposed to be long content, rapidly growing as she is, if the seat of government were removed from her to Cook's Straits—to Wellington? (Hear.) No: let once the seat of government be removed to Cook's Straits, and then the two great and rapidly-increasing provinces of the colony, being dissatisfied, would be sure to seek separation. He thought it should not be entirely forgotten that the first seat of government was at Russell, in the Bay of Islands, and when it was removed thence, the coast of New Zealand was well known, and the site on the Waitemata, in the Thames, was deliberately chosen; and when he looked at that site, and considered its great advantages—with its noble harbour, or harbours, in the Frith, on the East coast, and its harbour of Manukau, on the West, commanding both oceans,—so that if ever it should be blockaded by a hostile fleet on the one side, it was open on the other,—he could not but conclude that the site for the seat of government was judiciously chosen, and that there was not its equal in the whole colony. (Hear.) Seeing, then, that no real necessity had been shown, and ever, as a plain, practical Englishman, hating change, unless such change was beneficial, he should vote against the motion, and hoped the House would not affirm it. The hon. member for Cheviot had said the present seat of government was at “the northern extremity of the islands,” (and this assertion he had also heard on former occasions from other members), but surely they were not speaking seriously? Such was contrary to fact. There was nearly one-third (longitudinally) of the Northern Island, lying north of Auckland—(hear)—out of which one, if not two, provinces might hereafter be made—a large tract of country abounding in excellent harbours. There was the Bay of Islands, only waiting for population; there was Mongonui, rapidly developing. And he could also state, from what he personally knew of the geography of the North, that, if gold existed in the northern part of Auckland Province, he believed it did so in the neighbourhood of the North Cape. There was a word, or phrase, which he had sometimes heard used; a word which he did not like, nevertheless, he could not help thinking that Auckland might, in this case, very

properly use it;—it was “vested rights.” Certainly, Auckland had no slight, no common claim to make use of this word. Some hon. members might recollect something published in the *Gazette* of the colony, some 30 years ago—an old Imperial proclamation—to the effect that Her Majesty the Queen had selected, or approved of, the town of Auckland being the capital of the colony. (Hear, hear.) That was an historical fact. That early raised the price of lands, &c., at Auckland; that caused money to be invested to a large extent, relying on its integrity. The motion of the hon. member for the city of Nelson also spoke of the exact locality in Cook’s Straits for a seat of government being left to an “impartial tribunal,” but he would like to know where such an impartial tribunal, fit and able to decide on such a question as this, was to be found? He did not believe any such existed. Certainly not in this Colony, nor in the Australian Colonies, nor in the southern hemisphere. (Hear.) He had indeed heard, out of doors, that the Governors of three of the Australian Colonies were to be applied to fix the spot; but he felt certain that they could not do it rightly or impartially. They knew nothing, really and practically, of the question. And then, while the governor, through friends at Nelson, might favour Nelson, another, through friends at Wellington, might favour Wellington, another Picton, and so on. Nothing would be gained by such a scheme, but much dissatisfaction. (Hear.) No doubt, they all remembered Canada, and her (at least) two rival cities for the seat of government;—in that case it was left to Her Majesty the Queen of England, who selected Ottawa, but, of course, failed to please. Should this motion be now unfortunately carried, he knew of no other impartial tribunal to which to refer it but the Crown—the

Queen of England. After all, he could not help thinking, that hon. members, in bringing the subject forward every session—(“spasmodically,” he might say, to borrow a phrase)—did so without much consideration; for the facts were these, which could not be denied—that steam (increasing rapidly every day on all our coasts) and the electric telegraph, (for which a heavy amount of money was now about to be voted), would bring the seat of government, wherever it may be, into close and immediate connexion with all the provinces and outlying districts of the colony; and, therefore, there could not be any necessity for removing the seat of government from Auckland, its present site, already chosen by the Queen, and made known by Imperial proclamation. (Hear.) In short, it was his opinion, nay his firm belief, that if the House affirmed this motion, and the seat of government should be removed to Cook’s Straits, it would invariably prove to be the insertion of the thin end of the wedge, which would certainly cause separation. (Hear, hear.)

More speeches were made, the matter adjourned, resumed, and then late in the debate Mr. John Williamson was about to propose an amendment, but the Speaker informed him that it was too late. Mr. Stafford rose and said that after so unfair a proceeding he would not remain in the House; he then left the House, and was followed by several other members. Major Richardson called the attention of the Speaker to the language used by the hon. member, as disrespectful and unparliamentary—and the words were “taken down”.

Among those walking out was, one must assume, Mr. Colenso, for Mr. Domett’s motion was then put and carried without a dissenting voice.

Foxfire

in the Forty Mile Bush

Colenso noted, in the far north on 27 February 1841,

We proceeded; on entering the wood it was the very acme of darkness, we could neither see each other, nor the trees, nor the little path, nor our own persons! I had never been in a wood by night before: here and there the luminosity occasioned by the decaying timber was most intense and beautiful, shining with such a peculiar silent lustre, (if I may so speak) in the depths of the forest.

foxfire – n. 1. The phosphorescent light emitted by decaying timber.
The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed.

On 24 August 1898 Colenso wrote to the *Hawke's Bay Herald* on "Phosphorescent wood".

Sir,—In your two papers of yesterday and to-day (22nd and 23rd inst.) your country correspondents have told us of a piece of decaying wood which is singularly phosphorescent, and much seems to be made of it—as if such was a very remarkable or rare production. Whereas such luminous substances are by no means uncommon, and to be met with all over the globe, both on land, in the ocean, and in the several kingdoms of Nature—zoological, vegetable, and mineral; also, in both living and dead states in the animal kingdom, and very common: Witness, the glow worms living, and mackerel and the sea jellies (Medusa sps.) dead in our own native land in the summer season. Indeed, "fish abiding in the dark," in a certain incipient state of decomposition is well known.

And, as I have not infrequently met with such luminous vegetable substances (decaying woods) in my former travelling days and sojournings in our New Zealand forests, it seems strange that old settlers living in the Bush (or interior) should not have often noticed them, especially in certain seasons when the low forests are damp after rains. At such times and in such places I have seen some curious, strange, and weird-like appearances; one in particular, though seen 50 years ago, I shall never forget.

We were travelling from Ngaawapurua, a village on the Manawatu River, towards Wairarapa; the weather had been wet and hindered us, and we started late in the day for the village of Te Hawera, situate in the dense and long forest; I wishing to get there, if possible, that night, as the next day was Sunday, and I knew the isolated

the deep gloom of the forest. I had travelled through those forests before, but there was no proper or continuous track. We had taken with us junks of a dry large woody creeper which burnt steadily and slowly when ignited, to serve as a kind of lantern; as the night advanced the darkness of the ancient and close virgin forest became almost palpable and "Egyptian," when we got into a broken mass of phosphorescence, arising from decaying wood and large fungi, which spread out on all sides and extended many chains! The luminosity was grand, clearly showing the trunks and stems and leaves of trees and ferns, and the dead unshapely prostrate rotting logs. But the peculiar pale colors of various hues of that strange light, together with the coldness of those gleams, and the deep silence, and the Stygian blackness surrounding—altogether caused an unpleasant unearthly kind of thought and feeling—almost causing one's flesh to creep! We (or I) could fancy all manner of strange outrageous and mocking spectral or demon faces, more suited for the revelry of Faust's Walpurgis night, with Mephistopheles and the witches on the Brocken, than for a small and quiet party plodding our way through a low-lying New Zealand forest. My travelling party of Maoris had never before witnessed any such a scene, and often in after years related it. Our travelling slow march, with its red light and sparks, was paled and lost before that grand phosphorescent show. Sometimes streaks and small patches of luminous slime would adhere for a while to my clothing in passing through the forest. Only on one other occasion did I ever witness a similar large display of natural cold and pale light, or sheets of lambent flames, issuing from the earth, and that too, was by night, at the time of the great earthquake in the 60s, through which I could see the trunks of trees, &c. This, however, was of a very different nature. I am, &c.,

W. Colenso.

Te Hawera was near present day Eketahuna. Foxfire comes from bioluminescent fungi, usually on rotting bark. Several species of fungi emit light, but *Armillaria mellea* appears to be the most common source worldwide: it emits a bluish-green glow. A substance called luciferin reacts with an enzyme, luciferase, causing the luciferin to oxidise, emitting light.

Observations date from Aristotle. Renaissance philosophers wrote of "Fungus igneus, which shines like stars with a bluish light." In folklore, "Fairy sparks" in decaying wood indicated the place where fairies held their nightly revels.

People have found uses for these natural lanterns. The Swedish historian Olaus Magnus wrote in 1652 that people in the far north of Scandinavia would place pieces of rotten oak bark at intervals when venturing into the forest. They could then find their way back by following the light.

Mark Twain had Huckleberry Finn say: "... Tom said we got to have SOME light to see how to dig by, and a lantern makes too much, and might get us into trouble; what we must have was a lot of them rotten chunks that's called fox-fire, and just makes a soft kind of a glow when you lay them in a dark place."

In New Zealand...

Recent remarks online include: “I recently had an enquiry from someone who noticed during the middle of the night that their pile of split firewood was emitting a faint glow. What could cause this?!” (Te Papa blog).

Leon Perrie (Te Papa Blog, posted on 13 July 2012) replied, “Apparently there are fungi that grow in rotting wood that can emit light through luminescence. The phenomenon is sometimes called “foxfire”. I’ve never noticed this myself, but a colleague who is a mycologist (expert on fungi) assures me it does occur in New Zealand. Apparently the light is very faint, and your eyes have to be well-adjusted to the dark.”

A “Nature Watch” correspondent wrote, “It was a dark moonless night and the forest was glowing. We could clearly make out the skirts of the tree ferns in the forest by the glow. It was weird.... Does anyone know what causes this? Fungi? One species or many?”

Another responded, “There are two common genera of fungi which are bioluminescent, both are wood/litter decay fungi, and both the fruitbodies and hyphae can produce the green glow.

1) Species in the genus *Armillaria* (honey fungus) are known to have luminescent 'bootlaces', i.e. the dark aggregations of hyphal ropes that the fungus produces to spread across the ground to the next food source.

2) Species in the genus *Mycena* (bonnet fungi). Relatives of the common blue *Mycena interrupta* are luminescent, and although I've not seen reports of luminescence for this species in NZ, it wouldn't surprise me if it was. Wood ramified by the hyphae will glow, often enough to read a newspaper by.”

Read more at <http://warnell.forestry.uga.edu/service/library/index.php3?docID=173>



This fungus, *Panellus stipticus*, is displaying the type of bioluminescence known as foxfire.

Parliamentary photographs, 1861

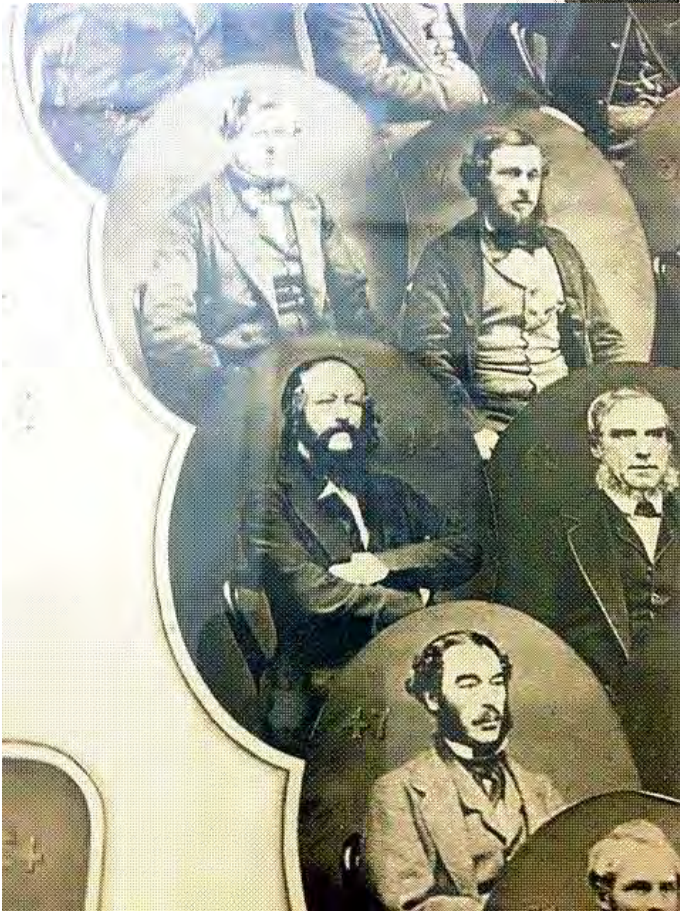
Peter Wells emailed these from Wellington, saying, “I saw a copy of this reproduced in a Christchurch newspaper but with the WC piece ripped out. There are two copies in Parliament, one the original and sharp and one a copy and slightly softer.

I was hoping for a new sympathetic portrait but it is WC at his most conceited really. I suppose when
Interestingly c
demeanour an
flowing locks



SEE NEXT P.





A rebus

This, from a Cornish publication dated 1796, was perhaps written by WC's uncle, William Colenso, who would later become a fish merchant and a brewer. He also became a lay Wesleyan preacher and published at least two sermons.

Readers are invited to submit their solution, which, if better than the editor's (the editor has solved it), will be rewarded with a copy of *Doctor Colenso, I presume?*

Thanks to Sarah Carter for sending it.

A REBUS, by W. Colenso, a Pupil at Mr. Fennell's School at Penzance.

YE learned scribblers, wits of fame,
If you'll my first explain,
An animal be pleas'd to name;
A bird you'll next obtain;
A name of Bacchus for my next
You will be pleas'd to tell;
And now an animal find out,
In England known full well;
A number next; a tool that you
In barbers' shops may see;
And now, ye gents, you must define,
A well-known English tree;
A Spartan now find out who in
The Theban war was slain;
And then a King of Thessaly,
Kind Sirs, you must explain;
A coin, kind youths, you'll now point out;
Lastly a fish expound:
And then my whole will shew a root,
That's in the garden found.

William Pascoe Crook: printed St Luke in Tahitian in 1818

Dr David Crook, a friend from Green Island, wrote in mild indignation, pointing out that his ancestor William Pascoe Crook and colleagues had been the first to print part of the New Testament in a Polynesian language—not Colenso. When he was young, an old aunt told them that Crook translated the Bible into Polynesian.

Actually Colenso was not the first in Māori either: Bagnall and Petersen mention “The laboriously written texts of the missionaries and the fragments of Scripture in Maori which had been printed in Sydney between 1827 and 1833,” and Colenso’s printing of William Williams’s translation of the whole of the New Testament into Māori (5000 copies) was not completed till the end of 1837.

Bagnall and Petersen wrote, “The demand by the natives for copies of the work and of any other printed book was insatiable. From Te Reinga to Port Nicholson they journeyed or sent messengers, often at considerable hazard, to Paihia to obtain Testaments. ‘E mate ana matou i te pukapuka kore’ (we are sick from lack of books) they told Wade when he visited the Waikato.”

WP Crook, his descendent told me, “was actually a fascinating bloke.”

He had started in the Marquesas in 1797—at the beginning of his sojourn there a chief of Nukuhiva exclaimed, “How can Mr. Crook claim to know God, when he cannot even tell one tree from another?” Good question. But he went on to write a scholarly botanical-ethnological account of his two years there, now republished in English and French (WP Crook. *An account of the Marquesas Islands 1797–1799*. Haere Po [Ed.], Tahiti, 2007).

He and his family sailed to Tahiti in 1816 after he had apprenticed himself in Sydney to a doctor and a printer. He helped to translate the Gospel of St Luke into Tahitian and the job (3000 copies) was completed in early 1818. A half-bound copy in red Morocco leather was presented to King Pomare, and “From then on, popular demand for the books was met as Islanders in their hundreds arrived by canoe at the beach adjacent to the press to secure the great work.”

William Pascoe Crook has a solid claim to be the first to print a Gospel in a Polynesian language.



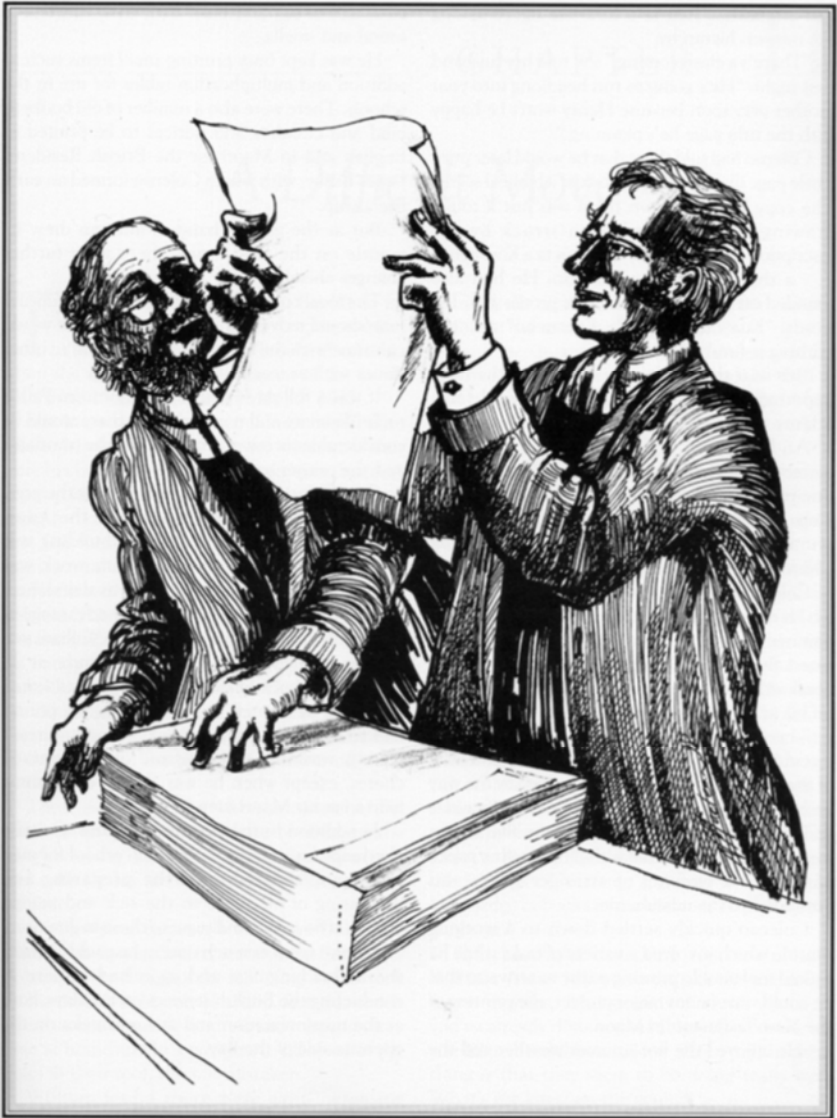
Of pink blotting paper...

Colenso wrote, in 1888, about the printing equipment that had been omitted when the CMS sent him out from England in 1834: "...and, worst of all, actually *no printing paper*!! Moreover, in those days, as things then were, none of these missing articles could be obtained from England in a less time than eighteen months!...."

"THE PRINTING OF THE FIRST BOOK.

"As all parties both European (Missionaries) and Maori were very desirous of seeing something printed, it was arranged, (1) that the Missionaries at Paihia should supply some writing-paper for that purpose from their small private stores: (2) that the *first* sheet from the Press should be a portion of the New Testament and printed in book form: (3) that as it must necessarily be, under all the circumstances, some small book, it should be the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Philippians, which the Rev. W. Williams (afterwards, Archdeacon, and also Bishop of Waiapu, and one of the founders of this auxiliary branch of the New Zealand Institute,) had lately finished translating into Maori; so, on the 17th of February, 1835, I pulled proofs of the first book printed in New Zealand; the Printing-office being filled with spectators to witness the performance. And on the 21st of the month, twenty-five corrected copies were printed and stitched and cut round for the Missionaries; their wives kindly furnishing a few sheets of pink blotting-paper from their desks wherewith to form coloured paper covers for these tracts; which, of course had first to be pasted on to stronger paper. This little book was in post 8vo., Long-Primer type, and consisted of 16 pages in double columns. For leads I was driven to the miserable substitute of pasting paper together, and drying and cutting it up! not being able to obtain any card or cardboard. My good Joiner (always willing to assist) tried his hand at making reglet, but was obliged to give it up. And not being able to manufacture a roller, from want of the proper materials, I was obliged to do my best with a small make-shift "ball" of my own contriving. I may add, that of this little first pamphlet, 2000 copies were ultimately printed, some folio post writing-paper having been found at the large Central Mission Store at the Kerikeri Station."

—Colenso W 1888. *Fifty years ago in New Zealand; a commemoration; a Jubilee paper; a retrospect; a plain and true story*. Napier, RC Harding, pp 8, 9.



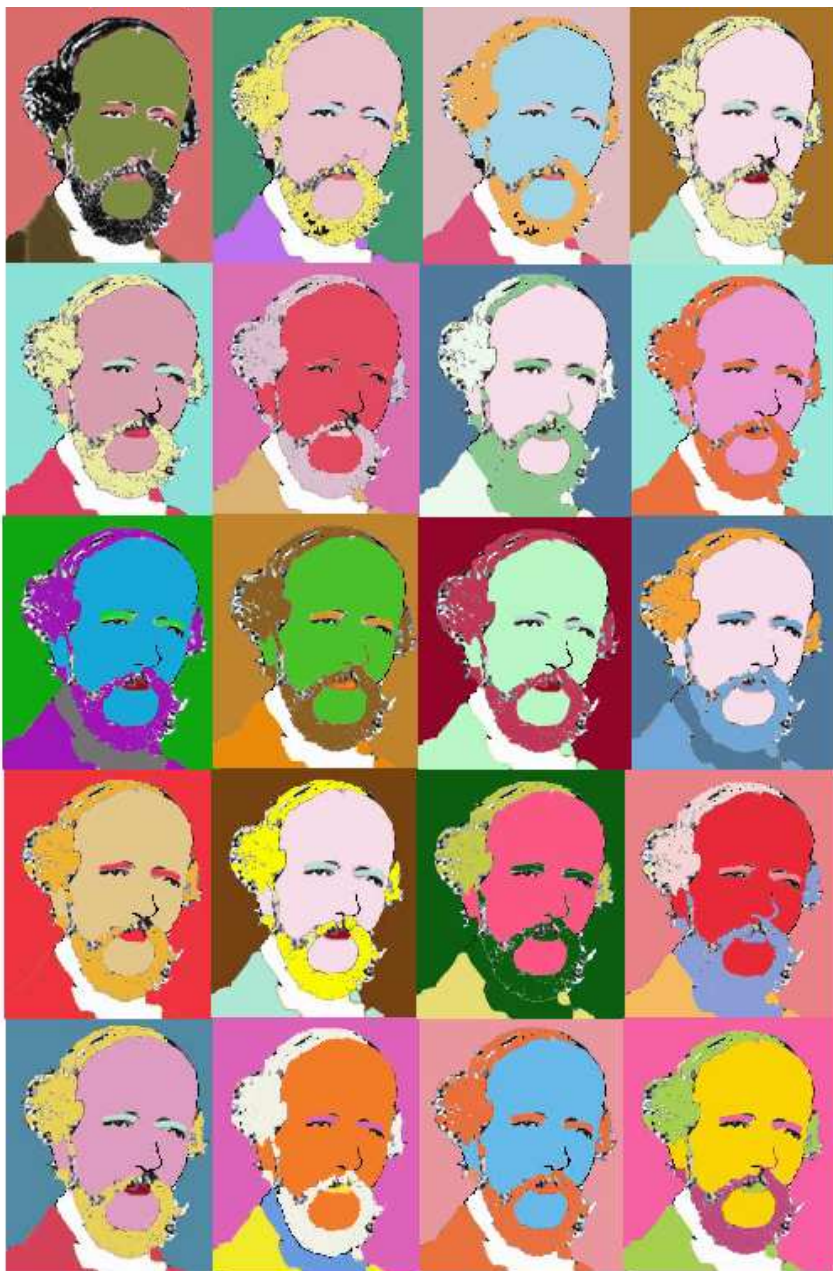
William Williams and William Colenso at the Mission press, Paihia.
Drawing by Norman Maclean, from Gillies I & J.
East Coast pioneers: a Williams family portrait. Gisborne Herald.
Reproduced with permission.



Colenso's pocketbook for collecting
plant specimens,

Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery.

Are the pages offcuts of pink blotting
paper from the first book published in
New Zealand?



The Warholification of William Colenso