



The Colenso Society
32 Hawkestone Street
Thorndon Wellington 6011

August 2014
Volume 5 No. 8
ISSN 1179-8351

eColenso

Teachers born, not made: trans-Tasman Links from Colenso to Maiden

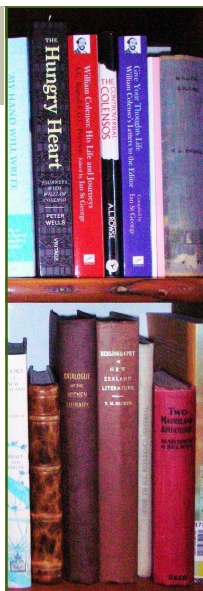
By Janet Heywood*

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One small book in the library of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, a biography of Allan Cunningham once owned by William Colenso, is the catalyst for an intriguing exploration of trans-Tasman horto-botanical biographical links.



* Janet Heywood has worked on the online cataloguing project at the Daniel Solander Library of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney with a focus on its rare book collection.



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eColenso is a free email publication which might be forwarded to interested others. Contributions on William Colenso should be emailed to the editor, Ian St George, istge@yahoo.co.nz.

In the final year of the nineteenth-century two related events took place, events that offer a curious glimpse into two men, their botanical worlds, and beyond. Both men were dedicated collectors; one prodigious, the other assiduous. One was a missionary and publisher, self-opinionated and volatile; the other, a dedicated scientist, museum curator, and academic. Both born in England they lived in two outposts of the British Empire; one in New Zealand, the other in Australia.

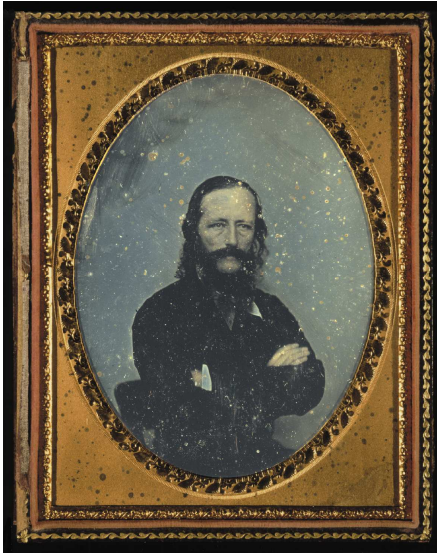
How they are linked is the impetus for this article, as they never met in reality although they may well have been aware of each other's work. In the ongoing quest to unlock the world's floras, happenstance partnerships between navigator-explorers, botanist-scientists, plant collectors and horticulturists, mentors and patrons were not so unusual. What are less usual here is how these connections were made—not only with each other and with their part in the global botanical continuum—but what this reveals about trans-Tasman botanical exchange and how this was interpreted in the public domain.

By the early nineteenth century, close links between Australia—especially New South Wales—and New Zealand were increasing through trans-Tasman sea voyages along established trade routes. The distance between Sydney and New Zealand ports was, for example, far shorter than from Sydney to the Swan River Colony. Floristically, the two countries shared many similarities but significant differences and on each side of the Tasman and well beyond these plants were valued by lovers of science and art.

In February 1899, William Colenso died in Napier, New Zealand, aged 88 years. He had arrived in 1834 to establish a printing works to publish Maori translations of the New Testament and other religious tracts on behalf of the Church Missionary Society. In the process, he developed close connections with Maori communities and a lifelong love of New Zealand plants. 'I am well aware that I know very little indeed (save from books) of the Botany of any Country except N.Z.' write Colenso to Joseph Hooker in August 1854, 'still, I fancy, I know the specific differences of many N.Z. plants'. At the time of his death he had amassed a substantial personal library of two thousand volumes and botanical collection. His estate included several properties, a wealth of correspondences (including with Hooker), Maori oral histories, artifacts, various specimens, and a shell collection.

Colenso's entire estate was put up for auction and all other assets liquidated. The principal beneficiary was his legitimate son. And within a short time the personal archive of his father was circulating on the international market. Fortuitously, as it happened, for another nascent collection with a committed collector on the other side of the Tasman.

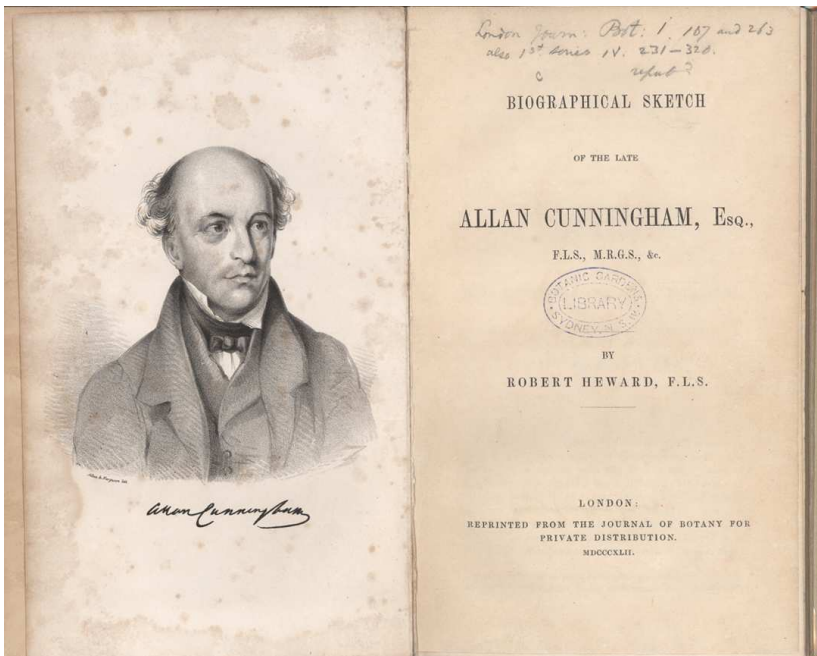
In December 1899, a slim, inconspicuous, cloth-bound book was accessioned into the Library of Sydney Botanic Gardens, listed under 'publications acquired by purchase' in the 1900 annual report. Director Joseph Henry Maiden had been appointed three years earlier, and now aged 40 was well into developing a National



Left: William Colenso, c. 1881, a daguerreotype portrait at the time Colenso was entering politics. Photograph: John Crombie (1827–1878). Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawharo Tā-ā-rangi, m66/53.

Right: portrait of Joseph Henry Maiden, director of Sydney Botanic Gardens 1896–1924. Daniel Solander Library, RBG Sydney.

Below: Portrait and title page of Robert Heward's book, *A biographical sketch of the late Allan Cunningham* (1842). Daniel Solander Library, RBG Sydney.



Herbarium, Museum, and Botanical Library (opened March 1901)—‘I am collecting material for an Australian catalogue of botanical literature’ he noted. Not only was the Federation of Australia approaching (1901) but also celebrations for the Centenary of the Sydney Botanic Gardens (1916). Maiden was determined to secure museum exhibits, botanical specimens, books, and other material relevant to Australian national identity, botanical history, and the scientific pursuits of the Sydney Botanic Gardens.

Working in London, Robert Heward, the author of Maiden’s slim new acquisition, *A Biographical Sketch of the Late Allan Cunningham* (1842), had written in December 1841 to William Colenso in New Zealand:

Sir, / ... I have written a sketch of the labours of our late friend which if you will inform me how I can forward to you shall be transmitted. I shall also describe the new plants found by Cunningham in his visit of 1838 which shall be forwarded at the same time ... / Yrs very faithfully Robt. Heward.

And when the book arrived in New Zealand, it came inscribed: ‘To William Colenso Esq. / with R. Heward’s / kind regards’. This volume is now one of the treasures of the library at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and its little-known association is strikingly demonstrative of Cunningham’s links with New Zealand.

Allan Cunningham’s botanical career had begun in 1808 as a clerk in the Kew herbarium, where he was spotted by the eminent botanist Robert Brown and introduced to Joseph Banks who recruited him to collect plants on behalf of the Royal Gardens at Kew. He subsequently botanised in Australia, New Zealand, and Norfolk Island as the King’s Botanist. In 1831 Cunningham returned to Britain to organise his collection and prepare papers for publication on his Antipodean botanising: ‘Brief view of the progress of interior discovery in New South Wales’ in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* (1832) and ‘Florae Insularum Novae Zelandiae’ in *Annals of Natural History* (1838–39).

When the position of Colonial Botanist and Superintendent in New South Wales became available due to an unfortunate set of circumstances, he reluctantly accepted the appointment and arrived back in Sydney in 1837. He resigned several months later in protest. He was not prepared to oversee vegetable cultivation of the ‘Government Cabbage Garden’ for the personal use of the Governor. In April 1838 he sailed for New Zealand where he met William Colenso at Paihia, the missionary station on the east coast in the Bay of Islands area.

Allan Cunningham had been a major influence in the botanical life of William Colenso as mentor, teacher, fellow explorer, and plant collector. Writing in March 1839—only months before Cunningham’s death in Sydney—Colenso painted a vivid picture of life in New Zealand for his friend:

my dear Friend ... The Bishop’s visit so ‘topsy-turvied’ us – that I have been confined to the printg. office, in consequence since – however I send you a few dried Specimens some paltry, - some old acquaintances to A.C. – some – may

be new ... ‘Aha! I hope so,’ say you, and so say I. However there they are, - where? Why, in order that they might go dry and flat, I have packed them in a Case of Books ... Don’t call me a teaser. How shall I act otherwise, when I have no Books no Teacher?

By the time of his death Allan Cunningham was universally regarded as an ‘excellent botanist’. A commemorative obelisk to him was erected in the Sydney Botanic Gardens in 1844. And it was J.H. Maiden (born 20 years after Cunningham’s death) who instigated the return and interment of his ashes (in 1901) to this site, where they remain today.

William Colenso was contemporary with several New South Wales colonial botanists and botanic gardens directors apart from Cunningham (and his brother Richard, director at Sydney from 1833–35) including Charles Moore and his successor J.H. Maiden, and in Melbourne, Ferdinand von Mueller and his successor (as director) William Guilfoyle.

As director of Sydney Botanic Gardens (1896–1924) Maiden was not only interested in planting New Zealand species but, as a botanist, widely interested in the flora of the Dominion and its neighbouring islands. However, his special scientific interest was in Australian eucalypts and acacias and in the broader Pacific region. He held copies of several works (ex-libris William Guilfoyle) such as J.D. Hooker’s *Handbook of the New Zealand Flora* (London, 1867) and J. Bowie Wilson’s *Report on the Present State and Future Prospects of Lord Howe Island* (Sydney, 1882) amongst a rich collection.

In an earlier article (see *AGH*, 24 (1), 2012), this small but fascinating collection is detailed, held (for the most part) since 1908 from the library of Maiden’s colleague William Guilfoyle—‘this Sydney group provides a representative insight into Guilfoyle’s interests: natural history, botany, sub-tropical plants, landscape design, and a special interest in New Zealand plants’.

Another of Guilfoyle’s book held by Maiden—and potentially most intriguing for trans-Tasman garden history studies—is a small volume by Richard Taylor, *Maori and English Dictionary*, published in Auckland around 1870. In it many botanical names are included and it was perhaps this volume that Guilfoyle used when in the descriptive guide to the Melbourne Botanic Gardens (1908) he wrote of his recently developed New Zealand section, adding ‘The Maori names may prove interesting to Visitors’.

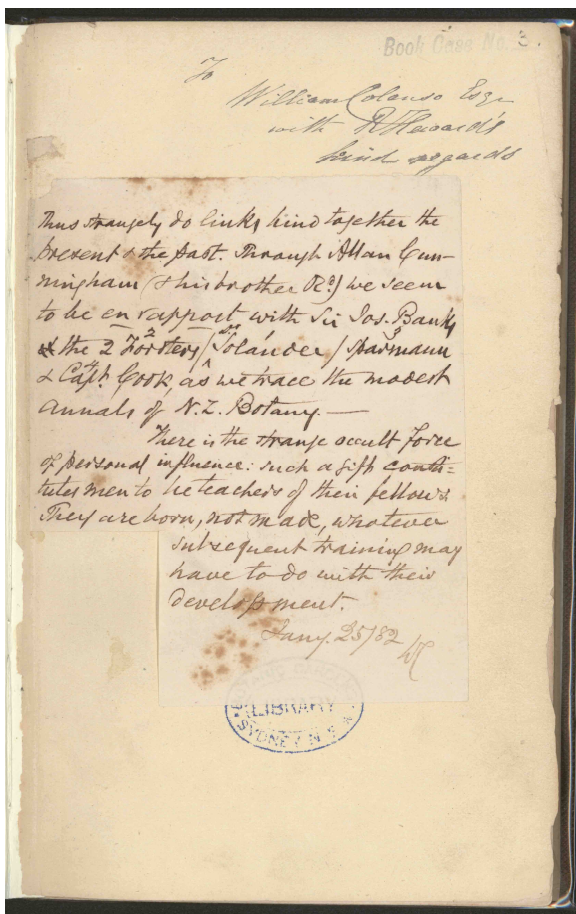
Garden use of New Zealand plants in Australia was popular but their widespread use in New Zealand gardens appears to have pre-dated similar use of indigenous plants in Australian gardens. The reasons for this require explanation elsewhere, but suffice to say that Guilfoyle and Maiden were two Australian enthusiasts for the New Zealand flora. Within New Zealand, their contemporary, Leonard Cockayne (1855–1934), formed a closely equivalent figure to Maiden, combining strong botanical and horticultural interests. Although foremost a botanist and scientist, Cockayne’s writings, culminating in his book *The Cultivation of New Zea-*

land Plants (1923), demonstrate his strong love of gardening and horticulture.

Mueller and Guilfoyle had earlier shown an appreciation of New Zealand plants in Melbourne Botanic Garden, especially their applicability to a prevailing subtropical style of planting, one of Guilfoyle's signature planting themes in the decade after his appointment in 1873. Indeed, William Guilfoyle represented the midpoint in the tradition of botanist-horticulturists between Maiden and Moore, and it is but a short journey then to the earlier history of Sydney Botanic Gardens and the close links with botanist-explorers such as Richard and Allan Cunningham, Daniel Solander, the brothers Forster, Anders Sparrman, and of course Banks—'The father of Australia' according to Maiden's 1909 book on his hero.

In his early seventies William Colenso was living alone in Napier, without any family and in spartan circumstances. After all the trials and tribulations of his recent years he was perhaps in a reflective mood. Surrounded by his books, collections, and memorabilia and unable to interest local authorities in establishing a museum to house them, his thoughts journeyed back in time, to those he had never met but who were all involved in 'the darling pursuit.' On a scrap Colenso penned this note on 25 January 1882:

Thus strangely do links bind together the present & the past. Through Allan Cunningham (and his brother Rd.) we seem to be en rapport with Sir



Jos. Banks, the 2 Forsters /Dr. Solander / Sparrman & Capt. Cook as we trace the modest Annals of N.Z. Botany.

There is the strange occult force of personal influence: such a gift constitutes men to be teachers of their fellows. They are born not made, whatever subsequent training may have to do with their future development.

But was this note affixed to the Heward volume by Colenso? Perhaps another hand may have been involved, such as Maiden who was also a bibliophile, and a meticulous and committed historian of science. Many volumes from his personal botanical library are now held in the library of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney all either with bookplate, nameplate, and or signature, and some do contain tipped-in material, characteristic of Maiden's scientific practice and teaching. Reading it today 130 years later the note shocks with an immediacy and uncanny relevance: as the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney approaches its bicentenary in 2016 'strangely do links' resound despite the 'occult force' at work to disclaim scientific enquiry!

After his resignation as Colonial Botanist, Allan Cunningham walked in the Botanic Garden with Sir George Gipps, the newly appointed governor of New South Wales. He later wrote (as Heward recorded):

He asked me many questions regarding it, and expressed himself desirous of improving, provided the cost would be sanctioned by the Council. I pointed out in what way a botanic garden could be established in the colony, to be the depository of every species of useful and ornamental tree and shrub of the numerous islands around us in these seas, that within might be grown (or at least the attempt at acclimatization), the numerous fruits of India and South America, of the coasts of Africa, of Madagascar, &c., &c., but that the Director Superintendent (call him what you like), should be a sound, practical working botanist, who had industry to maintain a correspondence with all those places, and authority and discretionary liberty given to him to present individuals resident in those places such plants or seeds of his garden as would induce them to correspond with him, and send him of their particular riches, and thus by such interchanges, a reciprocal advantage would be effected ...

Sydney's copy of the Heward *Biographical Sketch* stretches through time. Homage to an excellent botanist. Unexpected record of an owner's private thoughts. Essay on the antecedents of natural history explorers. A working source for at least one botanic garden director. A provenance that cannot be equalled. Right now, a treasure in the oldest botanical library in Australia. And finally, a testimonial.

But wait, what's this ... a leaf? Take one, open the book, and turn the page.

* see page 8—Ed.

Comment....

The January 1882 pasted-in page in Colenso's handwriting is a carefully crafted piece of prose and the numbers above the names suggest it is a draft for a publication. I cannot, however, find any such publication.

In January 1882 Colenso wrote to James Hector saying he was about to prepare his annual report for the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute (HBPI), so it may be in the 1882 report, of which, apparently, no copy survives.

It is I think more likely to be an extract from a paper Colenso read at the 4th meeting for 1879 of the HBPI, reported in *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 1879; 12: 459,

The Honorary Secretary gave "an outline memoir of the two brothers Allan and Richard Cunningham, who were both early botanists and discoverers in New Zealand, and whose names are intimately bound up with the Flora of this Colony, as well as with that of the neighbouring Australian Colonies. This narration was supplemented by extracts from Mr. Allan Cunningham's letters to Mr. Colenso, and by a few prominent characteristic passages concerning the two brothers, from botanical and other works little known in New Zealand, and also by portraits of the two unfortunate brothers, who may truly be said to have been martyrs to their favourite science—botany."

From among the many reasons which prevailed with Mr. Colenso to bring this subject before the meeting, the following (mentioned by him) may be particularly noticed:—(1.) The two Cunninghams forming a connecting scientific link in the New Zealand field with those scientific men who accompanied Cook hither on his expeditions; both the Cunninghams having been well-known to Sir Joseph Banks, through whom they also individually received their respective appointments as Government Botanists to New South Wales. (2.) Mr. Colenso's personal knowledge of, and intimate friendship with, the lamented Allan Cunningham. And (3.) Their many striking discoveries in New Zealand at an early date, which deserve being duly remembered.

It seems Colenso had intended to publish this paper in the embryonic *New Zealand Journal of Science* (GM Thomson, editor), but was so incensed by Thomson's sinking of some of his new ferns, that he wrote to Thomson (6 March 1882),

On the whole, and only after much consideration, I have deemed it best *not*... to write for it a Memoir of A. Cunningham as intended. We seem so diametrically opposed in our Botanical views, &c, that I think I had better keep out of your arena altogether... & I have no desire to be either tacitly passing by or always correcting of error.

Instead, at the HBPI's 4th meeting in 1883, Colenso read another paper, "On the Men of Science who preceded us in these Seas and Lands, with particular reference to their labours, adventures, and tragical ends' (illustrated with portraits of Sydney Parkinson, La Perouse, David Douglas, the two brothers Richard and Allan Cunningham, Dr. Darwin, Sir J. D. Hooker, and Wm. Swainson; and, also, with some striking views and scenes from La Perouse's Voyage, and Sir J. Ross's Antarctic Expedition)."

Neither the 1879 nor the 1883 papers appeared in print, and neither has been found in manuscript.

Ian St George

What *did* happen to Allan Cunningham?

Cunningham had recurrent hepatitis and tuberculosis and he was already ill when he arrived in the Bay of Islands in April 1838. There are almost no records of his time with Colenso, though the latter did mention to Hooker “the dense Kaitaia forest where he caught his ‘death-cold’”, and Hooker wrote in the introduction to the *Handbook* that Cunningham’s “...arduous exertions in the (NZ) islands led to his untimely death.”

Bagnall & Petersen mention, enigmatically, “a constitutional dysentery, a relic of his benightment in the Kaitaia bush.”

With his chronic illnesses, any hardship he had to endure in Northland might have hastened his death, but I had until recently been unable to find an account of any incident: certainly there is no mention in Colenso’s writing of what happened to Cunningham at Kaitaia.

However, Rev. Richard Taylor’s introduction to his *Te Ika a Maui* (1855) has this (he is writing about the skills of Māori)...

Such general knowledge makes the native at home wherever he may be. I have often had opportunities of admiring this; when encamped with my little party in pouring rain, I have been surprised at the short time it took, to erect a comfortable shed impervious to the rain, to produce fire by friction, to find fuel and ignite it, to seek out food and sit down comfortably to enjoy it, and this before an European would have made up his mind what to do. An instance of this kind occurred some years ago, when the late Allan Cunningham, the well-known botanist of Australia and New Zealand, was accompanied by one of our missionaries on a journey through a New Zealand forest: whilst busily employed in examining its varied productions, they allowed their natives to push on to a spot where they usually encamped, and carried away by their love of nature, they did not perceive the lapse of time, until they were suddenly overtaken by the shades of night; to make their uncomfortable position worse, it set in rainy; to overtake their companions was impossible, for such is the gloom of New Zealand forests, and the over-grown ill-defined tracks through them, that it is quite impossible to find the way along them in the dark; but, instead of trying to erect a shed, or light a fire in the native style, what did they do? Just what most Europeans would in similar circumstances — they did nothing at all; they felt themselves perfectly helpless — they stood under a tree the whole of the night, without fire, without food, and without shelter. The effects of that night proved fatal to poor Cunningham; he caught a violent cold, which settled on his lungs, and in a few months brought him to his grave.

“*One of our missionaries*”? Taylor, in 1855, three years after Colenso’s downfall, could not bring himself to name his old colleague.

Mind you, much later Colenso would write to Haast (13 July 1871),

And as to Taylor, he is *no* authority (w. me), his Book (mainly compiled by *others*, whose brains, eyes, & hands, he used, &c.) is a wretched *olla podrida*: the most faulty I know of on N.Z., especially on every thing connected with the N.Z. language. *Taylor never knew Maori.*

OLD WELL AS CLUE TO RIDDLE

The discovery of an artesian well among the rushes and swampy ground near the Waitangi wash-out by members of the historical affairs committee of the Hawke's Bay Museum, is believed to have solved a riddle which has remained unsolved by students of local history. It concerns the site of the mission station established by William Colenso in 1844 and destroyed by fire in 1853.

The belief is held that the last traces of the mission station—even the land itself—disappeared in the great 1897 flood which caused the washout at Waitangi. The diversion of the Tutaekuri river from the outflow through the channel at Ahuriri to the present mouth at the washout, combined with erosion and flooding, complicated the problem of ascertaining the site of the old station.

REPORT INVESTIGATED

However, the historical affairs committee of the Hawke's Bay Museum set out to investigate reports which appeared to be worth following. An expert on wells, when working in the Clive area for the Heretaunga Underground Water Authority with the object of locating old wells with water running to waste, discovered a well between the

Waitangi and the washout. Inquiries among old identities of Clive revealed that the well used to be known as "Colenso's well".

One old Clive resident remembered playing as a child among the foundations of the mission house which he correctly referred to as "a Maori house".

Flag lilies, originally at the mission station, have been, and perhaps still can be found there.

Mr J. H. Gordine, of Clive, who had known the area all his life, but who had not visited it for many years, led a party from the museum unhesitatingly to a place where, among the rushes on swampy ground, the well was found. The well was still flowing and the water palatable. No proof has been offered that this well or spring was tapped by Colenso, but in his 1844 diary he complained that he had to pay 1s per barrel for the cartage of water to the mission. He was a clever and resourceful man and is unlikely to have left uninvestigated any sign of a spring.

DESCRIBED AS DELTA

Colenso described the site of the mission station as being on a delta or tongue of land. It appears like that on an 1897 map, and is little changed today.

It is considered that no traces of the mission could have survived both the 1897 flood and the removal of masses of earth to build high and wide stop-banks between the site of the well and the main highway of today. An official report of 1862 gives the distance from the Awapuni bridge (Waitangi) to Clive as 1 mile 77 chains.

Further authentic information in the subject is being eagerly sought by the museum authorities.

HBH 23 August 1958

Can you tell us
anything about this?
Where was the well?

Journey to a hanging

If you haven't yet read Peter Wells' new book you really should. It is written with his usual wit, empathic insight and intellectual rigour, and is genuinely bicultural with his questioning of the revisionist tide of historical fashion. But best of all he has spun a breathtaking story of suspense and climax... and odious politicians and chiefs and judges and bishops.

EXECUTION OF EDWARDS

The condemned felon R. H. Edwards, the particulars of whose crime are too fresh in the memory of our readers to require any recapitulation on our part, suffered the extreme penalty of the law this morning. We learned that he slept well last night, and ate a hearty breakfast this morning. The scaffold was erected in a private part of the gaol immediately under the lighthouse. Two or three minutes before 8 o'clock the convict, attended by the Revs. De Berdt Hovell and Parkinson and Mr Colenso, ascended the scaffold with a firm step. He seemed to be perfectly indifferent to his fate, and without a change on his countenance or a tremor in his limbs he placed himself on the drop. He never spoke a word from the time he left his cell. Precisely at 8 o'clock the lever was drawn, the drop fell, and the unhappy man was launched into eternity. Death must have been instantaneous; as the rope did not even vibrate. The execution was witnessed by the warders and policemen, several of the medical profession, the representatives of the Press, and eight or ten gentlemen whose morbid curiosity had led them to obtain tickets of admission to the gaol. Although the authorities did everything that could possibly be done to render the execution private, owing to the peculiar position of the gaol, surrounded as it is by residences and grounds which overlook it, numerous unauthorised persons obtained a view of the spectacle. A number of boys were perched up in the trees on the Bishop's property, while other persons were all along the grounds at the rear of the lighthouse. An inquest was to have been held this afternoon before Captain Preece.

Colenso and his masterpiece *Fiat Justitia* attract deserved and detailed attention.

Colenso did not attend the hanging of Kereopa Te Rau, but he had attended one in Sydney, and would attend another in 1884, this time the execution of an unfortunate man who had killed his wife and three children.

He found it a trial but saw it as his duty; he wrote to JD Hooker, "had a trial, 2 days ago, to go w. dying man, on to scaffold!"

We live, I trust, in a more humane age. Edwards was ill, clearly delusional, probably acutely and paranoily schizophrenic.

Like Kereopa, but for entirely different reasons, he should never have been executed and would not have been today.

Miss Helena Leech and her Fern Book awaken a colossus

by Clem Earp

By 1875, William Colenso had spent ten years since his last botanical publication,¹ and many more since his last taxonomic paper, engaged in more mundane pursuits both political and aimed at gainful employment. But beginning in the late 1870s, he began that great series of scientific and historical papers which were to make his reputation. What brought about this change?

Colenso's earliest botanical papers had been on ferns, and they seemed to have held a special interest for him. Ferns were an exotic element in the New Zealand flora which excited interest in the United Kingdom, and books of pressed ferns were a common gift from colonists to those who remained behind in Britain, where the fern flora is impoverished both as to number of species and to their luxuriance.

Although technical references such as J.D. Hooker's *Flora Novae-Zelandiae* and *Handbook of the New Zealand Flora* had laid the scientific groundwork, these were not works suitable for the general public. In 1861 a booklet, *Handbook to the Ferns of New Zealand*, had appeared as a money-raiser for a church building fund. This was the first botanical work produced in New Zealand that gave a comprehensive view of any division of the flora. It was written by Emma Jones, of whom there is a brief biography by Godley.²

In 1875 appeared another booklet: *Ferns which grow in New Zealand and the adjacent islands: plainly described*. The author signed herself H.E.S.L. and gave her address as St. Georges Bay, but was known to be a "young lady",³ which is to say, an unmarried woman. In fact, the unique set of initials allow her identification as Helena Elizabeth Susanna Leech, eldest daughter of George William Leech and his wife Catherine, née Chambré, who did indeed reside in St. George's Bay Road, Parnell.

Helena Leech was born in 1849,⁴ probably at Rathkeale, County Limerick, where her mother's family had aristocratic connections documented in *Burke's Landed Gentry*. At some unknown time the family moved to Auckland, where George Leech died in 1878. Helena married Lorimer Corbett on 17th November 1880;⁵ they lived in Remuera and had three sons. The Corbetts moved to Britain some time in the early years of the twentieth century and settled at Westminster, where Helena died on 21 December 1911.⁶

In her introduction to the book, Helena Leech described how difficult it was to find any information on New Zealand ferns (a section in Leech's introductory essay is headed "Want of a popular Hand-book"). The well-known botanical artist, Georgi-

na Hetley, grew a large collection of the living plants, and lent her a copy of Emma Jones' book, which apparently had by that time become very rare. More help and advice was given by the Auckland Institute's botanist, Thomas Cheeseman, and she consulted the Institute's herbarium.

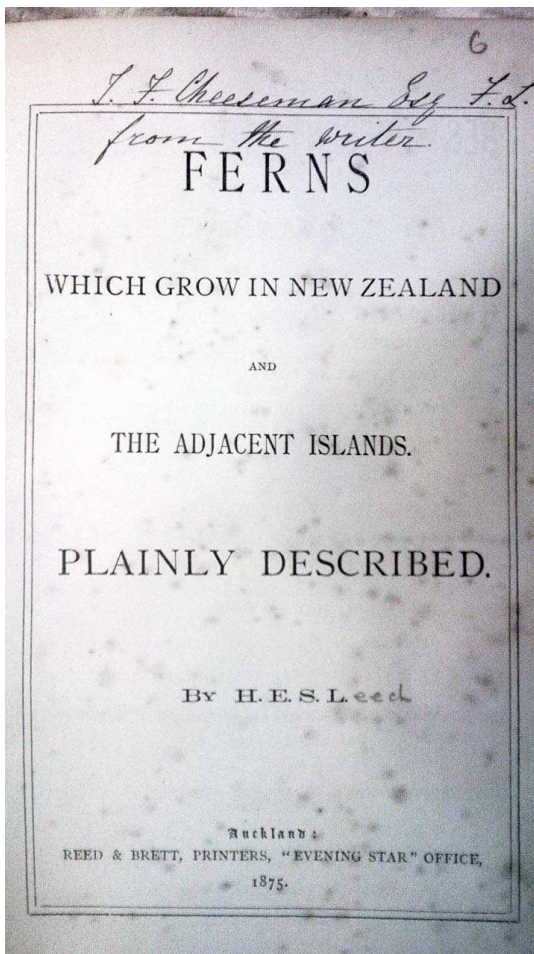
The resulting publication was widely disseminated (although of course it is now rare also), a positive review even appearing in the prestigious *Journal of Botany*.⁷ A later reviewer was much less generous.⁸

The 1861 book had based its nomenclature on J.D. Hooker's *Flora Novae-Zelandiae* as updated by his father in the *Species Filicum*. In the intervening period, Hooker had produced his *Handbook* and there had been a further update from Kew in the form of the second edition of *Synopsis Filicum*.

Leech's book treats the latter as the authority, but also mentions any names from Hooker's *Handbook* that differed. In fact, it is highly likely her book followed a list of such alterations which had been recently published by the Colonial Museum, Wellington.⁹ A giveaway is the erroneous spelling of the specific name *comans* as *comaus* in both the list and the book.

To head off any criticism, Leech wrote in her introduction:

From the critical, if any such should look at my little book, I ask fair play. Sportsmen in pursuit of large game do not, I believe, care to waste powder and shot on sandpipers... no one can be more convinced than myself of my many shortcomings.



Leech sent a complimentary copy of her book to Colenso soon after publication. Colenso was surprised at the number of alterations to species he had discovered that had occurred since the *Handbook*: in some cases pleasantly (e.g. *Lindsaea viridis* restored to a distinct species¹⁰), in some cases not (e.g. *Polystichum sylvaticum* reduced to synonymy under *Aspidium*¹¹). He had, of course, received a copy of the *Handbook* from Hooker himself, but had allowed his subscriptions to botanical journals to lapse in 1865.¹² How to bring himself up to date so that he could knowledgeably comment on the work?

Leech's book mentioned Cheeseman, and so Colenso wrote to him:¹³

I have some recollection of having some time ago received a very kind note from you—which emboldened me to trouble you w. this. I have lately received from a person of Auckland (a *Mrs.* or *Miss* Leech, I presume,) a small book compiled by her of the ferns of N.Z.

After detailing which name changes he was requesting information on, Colenso apologised for being so out of date: “For many years I have had no time for botany,—now however, it may be different.” He ended: “I shall not reply to Mrs (or Miss)—tell me which until I hear from you.”

Colenso's last lines and signature from his letter to Cheeseman
20 Nov. 1875. MS 58, Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tamaki Paenga Hira

Cheeseman's reply is partially available in what is obviously a discarded draft preserved with his Colenso letters. He began:¹⁴

The authoress of the pamphlet on our ferns is a *Miss* Leech, of Parnell, but my acquaintance with her is of the slightest. I dare say that you would notice some of the errors that crowd its pages. It is a pity that persons altogether ignorant of N.Z. botany should attempt to write on the subject.

After a discussion of the specific points of nomenclature raised by Colenso, the draft suddenly degenerates into an almost illegible scrawl approaching shorthand, which appears to be repeated attempts by Cheeseman to word an appropriate way of reaching out to the old botanist. The first two attempts are along the lines of: “Should you again take up [2nd attempt: resume active work in] N.Z. botany, as you hint may be the case [2nd attempt: , and as I hope you will do] I should be

glad [2nd attempt: happy] to forward [rest illegible].”

Colenso was overjoyed. He replied on Christmas Day 1875. After first wishing Cheeseman the compliments of the seasons (i.e. Christmas and New Year) and many happy returns, he went on:¹⁵

Your letter and its contents quite stirred me up! but, unfortunately, I have had such very little time since its arrival—my hands (and head too!) being full; with inspecting our public schools, (Xmas being near, & my late illness having thrown me back,)—and now the election!—which, happily, will *end* next week. This day is always with me a kind of solitary one, when I am very much alone,—my servants, too, having holidays and absent,—and so I endeavour to use it to the best advantage, in reducing the high increasing pile of unanswered letters on my table.—Yours, however, I cannot answer as fully as I wish.

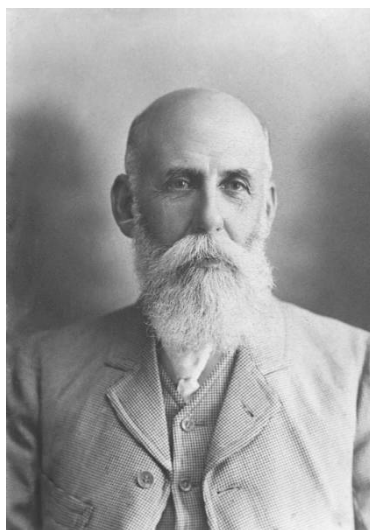
After remarks on various ferns, Colenso ended: “I have lately written to Miss Leech,—as I could not put it off any longer,—although I had not found time to closely examine her little work,—which needs extensive correction, &c.”

The ice broken, Colenso and Cheeseman continued scientific correspondence for many years. They did not always agree on delimitation of species, leading Colenso at one time to object rather patronisingly:¹⁶

I have more than once thought that you were not fully conversant with some of our flora, especially the Crypt[ogam]s. Probably you lack the opportunities of observing them in their habitats & of getting them, and of time for that purpose, (and such *does* require *much time*,) seeing your ever-growing official duties must be both heavy and constant.

But such disagreements did not result in any cessation of friendship, as it had done in other cases.¹⁷

It has been argued, on rather slender but still plausible grounds, that Emma Jones’ booklet influenced the title of Hooker’s *Hand-book*.¹⁸ There is rather more evidence that Helena Leech’s booklet awakened Colenso’s long dormant interest in botany, both in bringing his attention to recent taxonomic work, and in restarting correspondence with the scientific community.¹⁹ She is therefore arguably responsible for initiating the most fruitful period of Colenso’s life as regards scientific publications.



T.F. Cheeseman, undated photo
PH-NEG-C21329,
Auckland War Memorial Museum -
Tamaki Paenga Hira

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1. Colenso, W.C., 1865. On the botany, geographic and æconomic, of the North Island of the New Zealand Group. New Zealand Exhibition essay, Dunedin, 53 pp.
2. Godley, E.J., 2005. Biographical Notes (59): Emma Jones (born Buchanan c. 1835). NZ Botanical Society Newsletter no. 81, 20-23.
3. NZ Herald, 4th November 1875, p. 2.
4. According to her death register entry, listed on www.findmypast.co.uk. I assume, from the birth date being reasonably close to her parents' marriage in 1846, that they still lived at the family property at Rathkeale.
5. NZ Herald, 18th November 1880, p. 4, which gives her name in full.
6. Dominion, 2nd February 1912, p. 9.
7. Trimen, H. [attrib.], 1876. Botanical news. Journal of Botany, British and Foreign vol. 14, 64.
8. Field, H.C., 1890. The ferns of New Zealand and its immediate dependencies, p. 3. He preferred Emma Jones' book.
9. Anon., 1870. Corrected list of New Zealand ferns, Transactions of the NZ Institute vol. 3, irregularly numbered errata pages at end of volume, apparently because the original list (cf. Ents, J.D., On recent changes in the nomenclature of New Zealand ferns, p. 213 of the same volume) had so many errors it was suppressed.
10. Baker, J.G., 1875. On *Lindsaya viridis* of Colenso: an undescribed New Zealand fern. Journal of Botany, British and Foreign vol. 13, 108-110. Leech mentions that Cheeseman brought this paper to her attention; he lent a copy of the journal to Colenso, remarking 'I was glad to find your old name restored: for myself I never had any doubt of its distinctiveness'.
11. Hooker, W.J. & Baker, J.G., 1874. Synopsis Filicum. *Aspidium aculeatum* syn. *Polystichum sylvaticum*, p. 252.
12. Bagnall, A.C. & Petersen, G.C., William Colenso: his life and journeys, p. 397 of the 2012 edition (hereafter abbreviated B&P). Colenso appears not to have noticed the list of name changes (mentioned above) in the Transactions; had he given up reading even that journal?
13. Colenso to Cheeseman, 20th November 1875. This and all other letters quoted are from Cheeseman's correspondence: MS 58, Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tamaki Paenga Hira (by permission).
14. Cheeseman to Colenso, 29th November 1875.
15. Colenso to Cheeseman, 25th December 1875. The first sentence was quoted by B&P, p. 397 of the 2012 edition.
16. Colenso to Cheeseman 17th October 1884. An extract from this letter, but which omits these words, was quoted by B&P, p. 409 of the 2012 edition.
17. B&P, p. 409 of the 2012 edition.
18. Godley, loc. cit.
19. B&P, p. 397 of the 2012 edition.

Of Waikaremoana and other maps

In the Alexander Turnbull Library there is a bound volume containing an original manuscript (Ref 80-038-01), called “Notes of a Journey, etc, etc” which details Colenso’s 1841–1842 journey home from Gisborne through the Urewera country, Bay of Plenty, Waikato, down river to the Heads, to Kaipara and so back to Paihia.



We have mentioned maps by Colenso of Hawke’s Bay, Sydney and the Urewera country, and this volume contains seven small pencil sketch-maps: Waikaremoana, Te Urewera, Whakatane, two of Otawao (Te Awamutu), Waikato Heads and Manukau Hds.

That of Waikaremoana is remarkably accurate for a man who approached from Wairoa, waited a few days near the outlet for a storm to subside, then crossed by canoe to depart for Whakatane pretty much by the route we use today. The paddlers seem to have stuck to the safety of the southern shore, crossing at The Narrows (the map shows only the entrance to the western Waiopoua Inlet).



Colenso wrote in his bush journal (29 December 1841, long before today’s possum plague),

we paddled to the extremity of the Lake, now calm & lovely; water deep, banks, bold, rocky, & covered with Trees & shrubs, on many of wh. the scarlet blodd. Loranthus was now in gorgeous display.

Loranthus colensoi,
detail from Georgina Hetley



Colenso connections in Ontario, Canada?

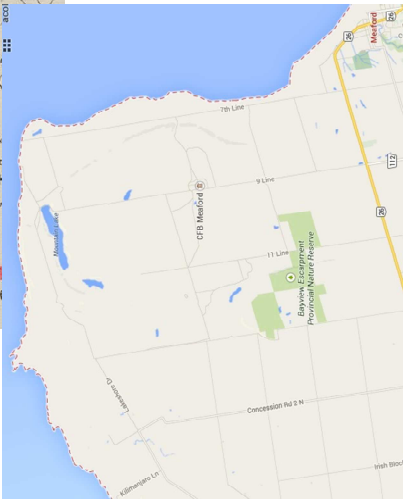
By Ann Collins

On 1 November 1879 a Post Office, called Colenso, was opened in the Electoral District of Grey, within St Vincent Township. It remained open until 1915. There were four postmasters, who were all described in the corresponding census returns as farmers, living in St Vincent, Grey South.

Postmaster	Term	Cause of vacancy	Census Description
George Bishop	1 Nov 1879 to 1 Feb 1896	Resigned	1881 & 1891 a farmer
William Flood	1 Apr 1896 to 9 Nov 1907	Resigned	1901 a farmer, but also in 1891 census
Hector Kingston	1 Jan 1908 to 30 Dec 1908	Resigned	
William McCrae	15 Feb 1909 to 1915	Closed	



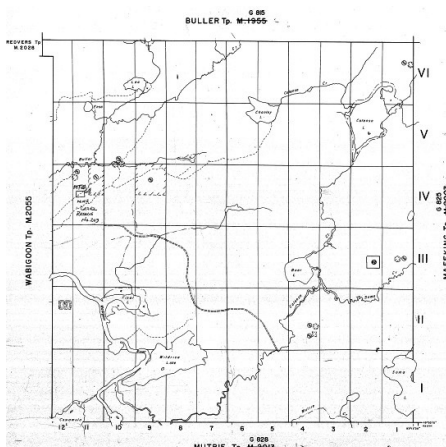
The Electoral Atlas of 1895 shows the settlement between Cape Rich and Balaclava. Looking at the current map for the area, it looks like the Canadian Force Base (CFB) at Meaford is located on the spot.



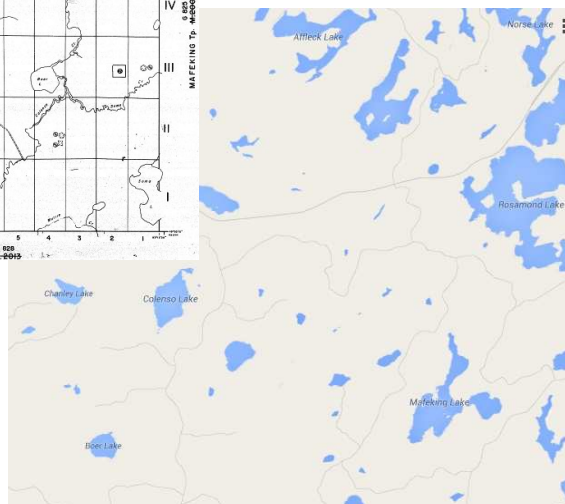
Why was it given this name? I can think of a number of theories, but can prove none.

1. William Colenso's maternal cousin Charles Julyan settled in Sarawak County, on the other side of Owen Sound around 1863. One of his sisters who had died as a child in 1829 has been named Frances Colenso Julyan indicating that the connection had been valued.
2. William's brother Samuel, then a widower, married a widow Eleanor Brock in Guelph in 1856. In her will dated 1877 she describes herself as "*Eleanor Colenso of the Town of Guelph County of Wellington, Ontario, formerly the wife of Samuel Colenso who has been absent without any intelligence being had of him for nearly twenty years.*" One of Samuel's daughters married in Ontario in 1856 and another married around 1859 and settled in Ohio. Was Samuel associated with the area?
3. John William Colenso, William's cousin, had become known as a controversial Bishop of Natal in the 1860s. He died in 1883, but maybe someone wanted to honour his actions and views.

The last theory leads into the other Colenso connection with Ontario. A 1915 mine claim series of maps were drawn for the township of Colenso, in the county of Kenora. The map shows Colenso Lake and Colenso Creek which still retain these names. The township is bordered by Mafeking and Buller townships and another lake is called Boer Lake. This combination of features can only be attributed to the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902, when during the Black Week of December 1899, the British forces suffered three losses culminating in a major defeat at Colenso of an army commanded by Sir Redvers Buller. This Natal town was named after the Bishop of Natal.



Canada sent troops to participate in this war, including a native of Ontario, John McCrea (1872–1918) born in Guelph, who later wrote the poem "In Flanders Field" while serving as army doctor in France.



Oh my aching back!

According to an Australian case-crossover study published online on 10 July 2014 in *Arthritis Care & Research*, “weather factors such as temperature, relative humidity, air pressure, and precipitation did not increase the risk for a low back pain episode, and higher wind and wind gust speed had a minimal effect”.

Mr Colenso would respectfully disagree; he began every entry in his 1890s diaries with observations on the weather, often immediately followed by comments on his health.

There are also frequent references to the relationship between weather and musculoskeletal pain in his letters. Here are a few examples,

... a little extra daily rheumatism with... earache & toothache, brought on by the strong Southerly with frost at nights....

The weather has tried me a good deal, given me daily extra rheumatism, more perhaps, from damp than anything else....

This wet weather, w. the wind from the sea, constant, does not agree w me. More Rheumatism of late, & today, than for a long time before....

On the 15th weather changed to a Sy “buster,” cold with rain, thermr. 43° in parlour w fire. I was seized with Lumbago—a severe attack, and so a prisoner 8–10 days, and a sad time.

The sudden inclement change of weather... brought on (or increased) severe attack of Rheumm.—

... this day, mg. especially, extra Rheumatism, which may be attributed to change of weather—from dry & warm to wet.

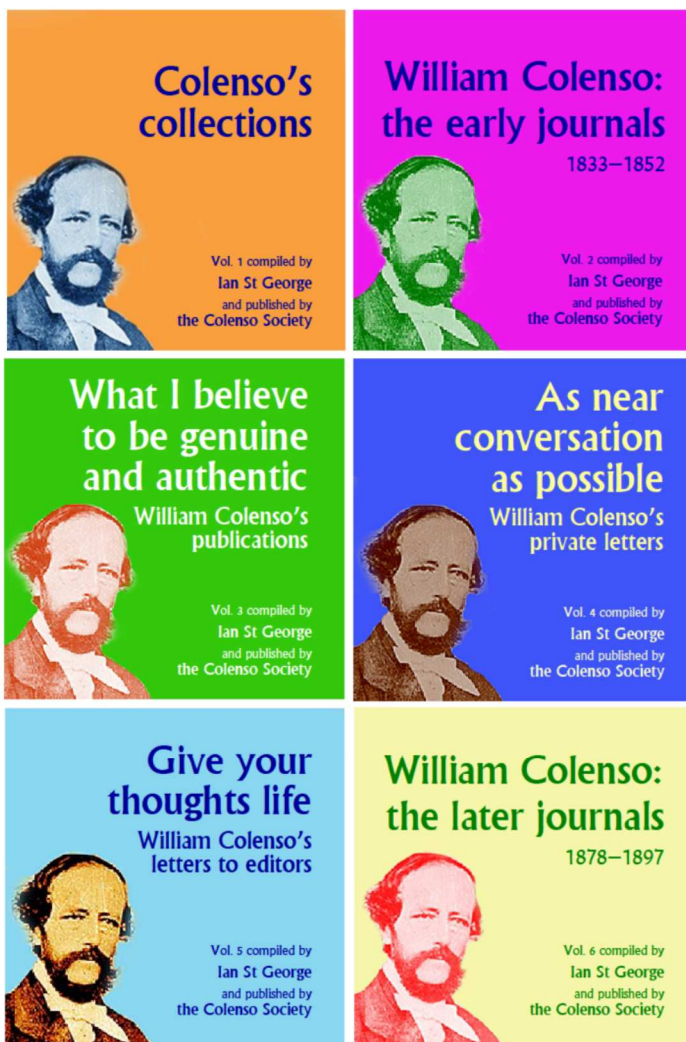
I was taken rather suddenly the night of date of my last (19th)—owing in part to sudden change of weather, wet windy & very cold, from S. Friday & Saty. were sad days with me—

... today suffering from semi-lumbago, caused, no doubt, by the sudden change, again! in the weather—cold rain this mg.

One defect in the Australian study is that it examined only sudden episodes of acute back pain, severe enough for the sufferer to consult their doctor. Another is that it didn't examine *change* in weather (which sufferers often mention).

The statement by one of the authors, “Our findings refute previously held beliefs that certain common weather conditions increase risk of lower back pain,” should therefore be said neither of all back pain nor of all weather conditions.

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