

PRIVATE LIVES IN THE TE AROHA DISTRICT,
MOSTLY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Abstract: *This paper is based mostly on gossip – deliberately so, for gossip can reveal details of the private lives of people who are otherwise lost to history. Usually, it is not possible to identify them, but even if this is not possible a great deal of the social life of the community (mostly of its younger members) can be uncovered. No startling revelations are made, for residents (and visitors) behaved in predictable ways.*

After covering, thematically, the ways in which people interacted, the gossip mostly dealing with flirting and marriage, some examples of private lives (or rather, portions of these lives) are reconstructed.

GOSSIP, ITS USES AND LIMITATIONS

While some newspapers occasionally retailed details of the private lives of residents, in its first decades the *Observer* weekly journal, published in Auckland from 1880 onwards, made gossip a feature of each edition. Unfortunately for social historians there are large gaps in what has survived; in the nineteenth century, for instance, none of the 1884 issues have survived, and in other years there were no columns about Te Aroha, presumably because one O.M. (*Observer* Man - or sometimes Woman?) had left and another had not been appointed (self-appointed?). Different people filled this role over the years, which created discontinuities. For example, attempting to trace the flirtations of M.S. beyond 1889 is impossible because gossip columns from 1890 to late 1892 largely ceased to use initials to identify people, and indeed for a time were less fixated on the mating rituals of the young. Although people with similar initials are sometimes noted below, it is not certain whether they were the same people – or in some snippets whether they were of the same sex. These gaps limit the information that can be obtained from these gossip columns and render the significance of some of it impenetrable, but by combining these snippets with other information about identifiable people much of the texture of private lives can be discovered.

In general, the gossip was about the younger members of the community and rarely about the local elite, who tried to keep the O.M. from their festivities and themselves out of the limelight. The O.M. usually refrained from providing the full facts of sexual improprieties. ‘Ladykillers’,

meaning ‘male flirts’,¹ and their female prey (all relationships recorded were of heterosexual couples) were identified in disguised ways, though when initials were used residents cannot have had too much difficulty in working out who was in the latest gossip column.

Although much of the gossip recorded may seem trivial compared with the great issues of the day, these relationships were crucial to the happiness of those concerned, and were neither undertaken nor broken off frivolously, however jocularly the gossip writer and other observers may have viewed them. Upon the right choice of partner determined couples’ futures, as matrimony usually meant many children, the first often born within the first year. It can be argued that the personal affairs of relatives, friends, enemies, acquaintances or just neighbours or fellow residents were of far more interest and important to townsfolk than affairs of state. It is also likely that women were especially interested in the gossip, as indicated by their checking each issue of the journal to see who was included, as noted below. And when trying to write ‘history from below’, investigating the lives of ‘insignificant’ people such as waitresses, barmaids or shop assistants, gossip often provides the only information about them.

Although the identities of most of those mentioned by the OM cannot now be determined, where identities can be discovered these snippets can be combined with evidence from other sources to provide fuller pictures of private lives. Even when identities cannot be determined, the activities noted provide insights into daily life, especially of the young. Those gossiped about were often described as ‘boys’ and ‘young ladies’, for it seems that most were teenagers, which explains why many cannot be traced by using electoral rolls. For instance, in 1894 the O.M. recorded that ‘while I was wending my way out to see the volunteer match last Saturday, I met one of the “three little maids from school” returning from the game to bring out her C. to witness the struggle. Oh, C.!’² They would have been schoolgirls because girls left school by about 14 or at most 15;³ was C. being reproved for ‘cradle-snatching’? In the following year, ‘The two little girls in blue’ who

¹ Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 661.

² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 September 1894, p. 21.

³ For those leaving at these ages (many left when younger), see Te Aroha School, Admissions Register No. 2 (1889-1897), nos. 58, 617, 681, Primary School Archives, Te Aroha.

at a dance ‘seemed to have H.H. all to themselves’⁴ probably were both little and young. ‘L.M. should not go to dances if she doesn’t care about swinging corners; but she is young yet’;⁵ again, this should be taken literally, and in due course she would learn more dancing skills.

Despite its universality, gossiping was disapproved of in polite society at least. For instance, in 1883 the gossipy Te Aroha *Observer* Man had the gall to criticize female gossips (of mature years):

A lot of women assemble here weekly for what they call a Bee, the principal part of their occupation is picking holes in other women’s characters and chawing [a vulgar variant of ‘chewing’]⁶ one another into jelly. They would find much more profitable employment in looking after their little ones and repairing their husband’s unmentionables [undergarments].⁷

WHO WAS THE OBSERVER MAN?

In May 1887 ‘the fair maidens’ reportedly wanted to know the identity of the OBSERVER man.⁸ One month later, ‘E.L. was overheard to say what she would do if she only had a rope round the OBSERVER man’s neck’.⁹ The O.M. delighted in the frustrations of those seeking to know his identity, as illustrated in March 1890:

The topic of conversation here at present is the OBSERVER; and there is great speculation as to the identity of the O.M. Several persons are anxious about the state of his health. We are very happy to inform them that he is quite well, and the “muscles of his brawny arms” would bear comparison with John L. Sullivan,¹⁰

a famous American boxer. In March 1891 the O.M. had ‘pleasure in certifying’ that a particular item of gossip was not contributed by a man he named.¹¹ Clearly at this time he was assumed to be male, as again

⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 26 October 1895, p. 21.

⁶ *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 5 ed. (Oxford, 1964), p. 203.

⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 September 1883, p. 16.

⁸ ‘Te Aroha Twinkles’, *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁹ ‘Te Aroha Tips’, *Observer*, 18 June 1887, p. 18.

¹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 March 1890, p. 14.

¹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 March 1891, p. 18.

illustrated by a comment recorded at Waiorongomai in September: 'Willie would like to know who the O.M. is. The bootmaker thinks it is either the station manager or the little grocer'.¹² One year later, 'Baker Willie thinks no small amount of himself since he rode the chestnut home in the recent race. He says he will shout for the O.M. when he meets him'.¹³ Was he the same Willie quoted in the previous issue lamenting that 'the ladies are not patronising him so much since the O.M. has been on the job'? At that time there was 'great excitement in Te Aroha as to who is the O.M. Joe is in fighting trim and only wants to meet him'. (It appears that Joe was a woman, for at the end of this column the O.M. wrote that 'by all appearances "Joe" is leading most of the Te Aroha boys as she likes, for I notice that Rocket is now collared'.) One man seems to have worked out his identity: 'The O.M.'s life has been in danger for the last month, and now Long Bob can't let him alone', pressing details of his love life upon him.¹⁴ At a fancy dress ball in September 1893, one man came dressed as the O.M.'¹⁵ In the following May, the 'great excitement now is to find out who the O.M. is and wouldn't some of those young females of Whitaker-street like to know'.¹⁶ Four months later, at an entertainment 'Madame Heller, while in a trance state, in reply to the question "Who writes to the OBSERVER," gave the initials and description of "the one," as far as she knew, but she was a long way out of it'.¹⁷ In August 1895, 'H.T. was trying to find out the O.M., but failed. Try again, H.' And 'J.R. says if he finds out the O.M., he will show him his boots'.¹⁸

In 1898, 'there was great excitement in Te Aroha when the OBSERVER arrived, and many were the guesses made as to whom the O.M. was'.¹⁹ When 'the bon-tons [upper crust] held a successful hop' he 'was enthusiastically invited to be conspicuous by his absence. He lives in hopes of gaining admission to the next'.²⁰ The following year, 'the O.M. received an invite to stay away from the creamery picnic, but he was there in disguise'

¹² 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 26 September 1891, p. 21.

¹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

¹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

¹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

¹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

¹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

¹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

¹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

²⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 July 1898, p. 22.

and described the behaviour of two men attending it.²¹ Four months later, bricks were ‘in great demand for the laying out of the OBSERVER fiend. Worry round, boys; you’ll find him’.²² But nobody ever did.

BEING SPIED ON

The *Observer* Man liked to stress his (or her, sometimes?) all-seeing gaze, which no doubt like that of other residents particularly focused on flirting couples: watching and overhearing the flirtatious and minding everyone else’s business was a regular feature of daily life. Reports were irregular, possibly because of the O.M. leaving the district or being replaced. In July 1887, he announced the return of his gossip column: ‘What, Ho! The OBSERVER man on the warpath again, has his eyes on the young couples and they don’t know it’.²³ In 1891, the O.M. explained that ‘the reason why I have not been writing of late is that the doctor said I must not go out so much at night’.²⁴ Three years later, ‘Look out, the O.M. has returned from his holidays’.²⁵

As examples of how people’s private lives were observed or overheard, in 1885 W. was told that he ‘should not speak so loud next time he is courting Milly in the dining room’,²⁶ presumably a hotel dining room. Later that year, ‘W. looked very nice carrying the umbrella for Miss G. on Saturday night’.²⁷ The following year ‘the seat under the willows seems to be a fancy place for W. and Miss B. Beware, you had better keep your eye on T.’²⁸ In 1893, ‘M. looked nice passing through the gorge the other Sunday with C. You did not think the O.M. was so near’.²⁹ ‘The Ironmonger should not leave his buggy on the roadside when he goes to see his Sunday girl’.³⁰ ‘The girl at the Hot Springs Hotel looked well on Sunday with R.F. Don’t

²¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 March 1899, p. 22.

²² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

²³ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

²⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 March 1891, p. 18.

²⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

²⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 February 1885, p. 10.

²⁷ ‘Te Aroha Teachings’, *Observer*, 6 June 1885, p. 16.

²⁸ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 16.

²⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 January 1893, p. 15.

³⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 March 1893, p. 17.

make so much noise next time for the O.M. had his eye on you'.³¹ 'The man from Waihou and E.W. were piling it on [saying too much]³² the other evening. Do not speak so loud or passers will hear you'.³³ In the following year, 'G.H. and the dusky beauty [a Maori] should not speak so loud when discussing their beaus. Porches have ears'.³⁴ Four months later, 'who are the two young men that go over the river so often? The O.M. has got his eye on them'.³⁵ At the end of the following month, 'A.H. and S.N. appeared very happy on Sunday night last. But they might subdue their voices, when indulging in love passages. How long before you cage your pretty bird S?'³⁶

In May 1895, at a dance, 'F.R., of Waihou, was piling it on very much with L.W. You should not speak so loud, F.'.³⁷ Two months later, 'M.B. says that with all H.T.'s faults she loves him dearly; so I should think, judging by the time they spend at the back gate'.³⁸ Two months later, at a ball 'the O.M. observed V.P. and L.P. piling it on very heavy.... W.G. was casting loving glances at the little Fishwife.... J.W. and the Flower Girl were doing a great mash'.³⁹

Prurient spying was illustrated by two reports in December 1882. At Te Aroha: 'If kissing goes by favor, what a favored individual G.B. was on Thursday night'.⁴⁰ At Waiorongomai: 'Who were the two nymphs that took a dip in the creek in a perfect state of beauty unadorned, etc'.⁴¹ In the following year, 'W. should pull down the blinds when next he receives lady visitors at the "Office" '. And 'what was John doing at the cottage by the creek on last Monday night at 12 p.m. Was it a mission of money or a labour of love?'⁴²

EMBARRASSMENT

³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

³² *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*.

³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

³⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

³⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 May 1895, p. 21.

³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 December 1882, p. 218.

⁴¹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 September 1883, p. 15.

Having one's private life mentioned in a gossip column was not to everyone's taste. In 1883, the O.M. had a recommendation: 'Kate don't so audibly express a horror of being put in the OBSERVER. As long as you conduct yourself properly, and do not Devey (ate) from the paths of propriety, you have nothing to fear'.⁴³ This was a reference to Caroline Ida Devey, daughter of George, a carpenter and cabinetmaker;⁴⁴ she did not deviate from the paths of propriety marrying a respectable bookkeeper, John McLeod Murray, the following April.⁴⁵ Four years later, F.M.L. said that 'she was never in the OBSERVER until she came to Te Aroha',⁴⁶ without revealing whether or not she enjoyed the publicity.

In 1893, 'T.K. was greatly annoyed at the O.M. making game of his coat'.⁴⁷ In the following year, 'on Thursday afternoons there is quite a flutter at our post-office on the arrival of your paper with the pink cover. Up and down the streets may be seen little knots of individuals anxiously scanning the contents to see if the O.M. has "spotted" them lately'.⁴⁸ In July 1895, the O.M. asked: 'Who is the young lady that supplies all the young men at the [roller-skating] rink with button holes? What would pa say, L.?'⁴⁹ A month later, 'L.M. has given up carrying bouquets to the rink for the young men since she saw her name in the OBSERVER'.⁵⁰

ENJOYING SEEING THEMSELVES, OR OTHERS, BEING REPORTED

Probably more people than would publicly admit it liked having themselves or their friends mentioned. In 1891, 'those young ladies (especially the dressmaker) seemed greatly interested in the OBSERVER during the Band of Hope performance on Tuesday evening. Was Carrie trying to find her own name there?'⁵¹ 'Our young ladies take great interest

⁴³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 December 1883, p. 16.

⁴⁴ See paper on George Devey and his family

⁴⁵ Marriage Certificate of Caroline Ida Devey, 16 April 1884, 1884/912, BDM.

⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 September 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

⁵¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 June 1891, p. 18.

in the OBSERVER, as they walk up the street in Indian file with an OBSERVER each in their hand'.⁵² At Waiorongomai, 'Where was Ettie taking the OBSERVER to on Sunday afternoon?'⁵³ At Te Aroha in 1895, 'There was quite a flutter here last Thursday on the arrival of the O. Some seemed quite disappointed because they weren't in it'.⁵⁴ And in the following year, 'Great excitement here on arrival of the OBSERVER. Every copy sold out at once'.⁵⁵

After amateurish sketches of unnamed 'Te Aroha Faces: By a Lady Artist', were published in 1895,⁵⁶ F. would not visit the Octagon 'at any price, and the other F. is constantly seen admiring himself'. Although the 'Waihou boy says the shape of his nose is exaggerated but on the whole they are all well pleased with themselves'.⁵⁷

MALICIOUS GOSSIP

Gossip could be accurate, inaccurate, exaggerated, kindly, or malicious, and it is almost impossible to determine which was which. As an example of malice, in September 1893 an account of the 'pretty boys' ball' at Te Aroha included details of their fancy dress costumes. Some, such as Indian Princess or Policeman, seem typical for the period, but others seem odd. Women mentioned included 'Miss Rogers, Blue-tail Fly', 'Miss Faes, Romp', 'Miss McLean, Grandpa's Darling', 'Mrs Cornes, Given up toys and taken to boys; Mrs Roberts, Flirt', 'Miss B. Miller, Tit Tat Too; Miss A. Allen, Queen of Ti-tree', and three cases of cross-dressing: Jockey, Jack Tar, and Bugler. Two men were cross-dressers: 'Mr McLean, Nancy Lee', and 'Mr F. Whitten, Irish Molly Oh', while other men had odd costumes: 'Mr Davis, Bogie man', 'Mr Page, Dummy', 'Mr B. Cornes, Tattler', and 'Mr Macnicol, Ghost in the Garden'.⁵⁸

There were also implied relationships, some of which were genuine. 'Miss Fugill, Queen of Flax', could logically be linked with 'Mr Davis, Flax King'. In the previous September, 'A.D. looked quite fatherly in the domain

⁵² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

⁵³ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 26 September 1891, p. 21.

⁵⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 2 March 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 January 1896, p. 21.

⁵⁶ 'Te Aroha Faces: By a Lady Artist', *Observer*, 21 December 1895, p. 7.

⁵⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 January 1896, p. 21.

⁵⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

on a recent Sunday. Getting your hand in, Albert?'.⁵⁹ Another two weeks later, 'A.D. might be a little more careful when carrying a young lady across the brook and not let her fall in. Is the water wet, Kittie?'⁶⁰ She was Katherine, originally Catherine, Fugill, who, when aged 18, married Albert Davies, a 24-year-old labourer, on 13 September 1893, shortly before this gossip was published.⁶¹ There was clearly a link between 'Miss T. Whitten', Jack Tar', with 'Mr McLean, Nancy Lee'; and William James McLean, a baker, married Elizabeth Whitten in the following year.⁶²

Other alleged liaisons, even if genuine, did not lead to marriages. 'Miss Johnson, Negro', could be a close friend of 'Mr A. Everett, Nigger'; 'Miss Dillon, Chinawoman', could be linked to 'Mr W. Maingay, Chinaman'; 'Miss Wild, Bugler', clearly could have had something in common with 'Mr Collins, Bugler'; and Miss E. Everitt, Fish Girl', may have had links with 'Mr T. McQuarters, Fish Boy' that went beyond fishing.⁶³ But if there were flirtations between these four couples, they did not lead to marriage.⁶⁴

No doubt those 'in the know' would have made other connections. The libelous implication that 'Mrs Cornes, Given up toys and taken to boys' had an extra-marital relationship with 'Mr Devey, Baby Boy' was quite wrong.⁶⁵

That these names were not randomly chosen is illustrated by Mrs Matthews being labelled as Judy while her husband was Punch. John

⁵⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

⁶⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 September 1892, p. 17.

⁶¹ Birth Certificate of Catherine Fugill, 1876/14463; Marriage Certificate of Katherine Fugill, 13 September 1893, 1893/2559, BDM; Notices of Intentions to Marry 1893, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/38, folio 901, no. 11, ANZ-W; Waiorongomai Sunday School, Admission Book 1884-1889, entry for 7 September 1885, 3050/888, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁶² Birth Certificate of William James McLean, 8 December 1871, 1872/13250; Marriage Certificate of William James McLean, 1894/251, BDM; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Rent Register 1881-1900, folio 128, BBAV 11501/1a, ANZ-A; *Wise's New Zealand Directory, 1894*, p. 620, *1896*, p. 644; *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 20 December 1894, p. 594.

⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

⁶⁴ Marriage Indexes, BDM.

⁶⁵ See papers on the Cornes and Devey families.

Matthews, a labourer who later became a farmer,⁶⁶ had married Clara Agatha Cornes in the previous December, when he was 25 and she was 18.⁶⁷ Their marriage was both childless and unhappy (Punch literally beat Judy?), and by October 1893, after less than one year of marriage, he had left the district.⁶⁸ Although he returned, by February 1896 he was ‘working away from home’,⁶⁹ and late in January 1898 committed adultery, deserted Clara, and in leaving the district failed to provide any means for her support.⁷⁰ Unwilling to admit to these circumstances, when seeking work Clara told people he was unable to support her because of an accident.⁷¹ Fourteen months after obtaining her divorce, she remarried, using her maiden name on the marriage certificate.⁷²

In the subsequent issue of the *Observer*, the editor replied to a letter from a Te Aroha resident about printing a ‘fictitious and offensive account of a supposed fancy dress ball’ by stating that the matter had been placed in the hands of the police.⁷³ Presumably someone other than the usual O.M. had sent in this report; no legal action eventuated to clarify the circumstances.

MEANINGLESS GOSSIP UNLESS ‘IN THE KNOW’

Because of the disguised identities most of this published gossip is now unintelligible, although much probably made sense to contemporaries. For

⁶⁶ Te Aroha Rifles, Nominal Roll to 31 December 1892, Army Department, ARM 41, 1911/66o; Nominal Roll to 29 February 1896, Army Department, ARM 41, 1911/66r, ANZ-W.

⁶⁷ Marriage Certificate of John Matthews, 25 December 1892, 1892/3688, BDM.

⁶⁸ Te Aroha Rifles, Parade Register 1892-1903, no. 38, MS 2000/69, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

⁶⁹ Te Aroha Rifles, Nominal Roll to 29 February 1896, Army Department, ARM 41, 1911/66r, ANZ-W.

⁷⁰ Petition of Clara Agatha Matthews, 3 July 1900, Supreme Court, Divorces, Matthews v. Matthews, BBAE 4984, D128/1900, ANZ-A; Supreme Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 18 September 1900, p. 3.

⁷¹ *Te Aroha News*, 3 February 1898, p. 2; J.M. Hickson to R.S. Bush, 4 April 1898, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Letterbook 1883-1900, p. 464, BBAV 11534/1a, ANZ-A.

⁷² Supreme Court, Divorces, Matthews v. Matthews, BBAE4984, D128/1900, ANZ-A; Marriage Certificate of Clara Agatha Cornes, 14 November 1901, 1901/4315, BDM.

⁷³ ‘Reply to Correspondents’, *Observer*, 7 October 1893, p. 18.

instance, what can be made of the 'Te Aroha blow up' in which two favourite sons of Tauranga were reportedly blown to bits in 1882, the residents of the latter place hoping that they would soon recover from the 'fell explosion'?⁷⁴ This explosion was metaphorical, for no accident involving explosives had occurred. Also in 1883, one E. denied 'that she used cayenne pepper to drive the ladies out of the room',⁷⁵ another drama lost to history. 'Who is the attraction at the hall on Sunday nights for a certain gay young spark?',⁷⁶ a question posed in 1894, cannot now be answered, but was clearly a young woman. Another question, asked in that year: 'Who is the young man that implored H.L. to cut his hair?',⁷⁷ means nothing to historians, even if they could discover the identity of H.L. This young man was referred to on other occasions, sometimes equally cryptically, as in the following year: 'Rather hard on H.L. not to be recognised by the Sydney young lady without his bath towel. Better luck next time, old chappie'.⁷⁸ Also in 1894, 'S. on concrete foundations' was 'the latest subject under discussion at the street corners': quite possibly, but what can it mean? Is he the same S. referred to in the same column as flirting with A.H. and in another entry being urged to 'ring the bell(e)' to 'give the boys a show on their kerosene tins',⁷⁹ a reference to the 'rough music' performed at wedding festivities.

In November 1883, some Te Aroha personalities who cannot easily be identified were described:

The most noble animal we possess here is the Burkshire Boar, large body and head. The Bantam Cock comes next; he is constantly crowing on the back of a horse, and his perch at night is a billiard cue. We have a grand specimen of a cockatoo, well feathered. If anyone would like a change of eggs in the fowl tribe, we have a pure white Pullet. To cap all we have a whispering Jenny, but she is anything but a favourite, more especially with the C.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ 'Tauranga Jottings', *Observer*, 26 August 1882, p. 382.

⁷⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1882, p. 313.

⁷⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 September 1894, p. 22.

⁷⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 November 1883, p. 16.

The first man mentioned may have been a bookkeeper and later butcher who was active in social and sporting events: George Manny Burke. Aged 25 in 1883, he had been born in London to a 'gentleman', according to his marriage certificate.⁸¹ As an example of the multitude of initials that were used, an extract from 1889:

J.L. says he wished his father was going away so that he could go to the Thames to see him off. Sly dog, J. Won't wash.... By Jove didn't J.P. do a pile on with A.R. at the Ball, could not let her out of his sight.... I see C.M.G. is coming to the front as a ladies' man.... H.M. seems to have a lot of strings to his bow now, between the two townships [Te Aroha and Waiorongomai].⁸²

Despite the inability to discover the identities of most of those identified solely by initials, as some people were referred to on several occasions it is possible to trace them, and examples are given near the end of this paper. While these people may not be 'typical' members of the community, their behaviour does provide useful examples of social interaction.

SMART CLOTHING AND GENTEEL BEHAVIOUR

At the November 1882 house-warming party given by a storekeeper, restaurant owner, and boardinghouse keeper, Moses Hotchin,⁸³ 'Miss H.', his eldest daughter Elizabeth Ellen, and 'Miss J.H.' (presumably his daughter Mary Jane, who was to marry Joseph Bailiff Heathcote, a carpenter, six months later),⁸⁴ 'bore off the palm for graceful dressing'.⁸⁵ At Waiorongomai one week later, 'the fair tobacconist' looked 'too-utterly

⁸¹ Marriage Certificate of George Manny Burke, 25 June 1884, 1884/2485, BDM; *Waikato Times*, 1 March 1883, p. 3, Te Aroha Correspondent, 2 October 1886, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 15 December 1883, p. 2, 26 January 1884, p. 2, 22 August 1885, p. 2, 29 August 1885, p. 2.

⁸² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 February 1889, p. 17.

⁸³ See *Te Aroha News*, 16 June 1883, p. 3, 12 March 1887, pp. 2, 3, 19 September 1888, p. 2, 16 January 1895, p. 2, 6 March 1895, p. 2, 3 March 1898, p. 2; Te Aroha Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 23 March 1906, p. 7.

⁸⁴ Marriage Certificate of Mary Jane Hotchin, 24 January 1883, 1883/1773, BDM.

⁸⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 170.

indescribable behind the counter'.⁸⁶ A typical report of a dance, held in 1891, recorded that 'the ladies were all very nicely dressed. Miss Rae looked particularly nice in a pretty maroon dress trimmed with striped silk'.⁸⁷ A 'short description' of dresses worn at a ball held three years later noted that the belle's dress was 'charming', while others 'looked very pleasing in pale blue', 'very nice', 'very stylish' (twice), 'bewitching', 'very pretty', 'very neat', and 'very becoming'.⁸⁸

Rarely was male attire and concern for appearance commented on, and then often mockingly. In Te Aroha in June 1882: 'Was it that young surveyor who started the fashion of wearing cloth hats with the rims turned down?'⁸⁹ In Waiorongomai in December that year: 'E. had better get a grey bell-topper if he wants to heal the sick round here'. And 'young Charlie F. has determined to sport his figure at the next ball. There will be a flutter in the ballroom when he appears. Borrow a set of ears, Charlie, or there will be trouble'.⁹⁰ In 1892, 'H. and C.'s assistant is beginning to grow sideboards. It makes you look ancient, Fred'.⁹¹ Even how horses were ridden was worthy of comment: 'The Waiorongomai storekeeper rides a big horse for a little man; he is all whip and spurs.... The tailor looks quite a dude on Sunday afternoons when he is mounted on horseback'.⁹² In January 1893, 'W. looks well in the glasses. The O.M. is about to get a pair'.⁹³ In August that year, 'who was the young man that nearly cut his throat with the stand up collar when his horse fell, going to Paeroa? Poor W.'. ⁹⁴ These collars (and probably the same man) were referred to again one month later: 'W.M. is calling tenders for padding stand-up collars, as they cut his neck'.⁹⁵ In 1896, 'Why has H.L. taken to white shoes? Is it to please Miss C.?'⁹⁶ 'Why did

⁸⁶ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

⁸⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 August 1891, p. 18.

⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 June 1882, p. 201.

⁹⁰ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

⁹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 October 1892, p. 17.

⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 January 1893, p. 20.

⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 September 1893, p. 21.

⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

C.W., of the battery, take his beard off? Was it to please Miss R., or is it not fashionable enough?’⁹⁷

The O.M. proffered unsolicited advice on etiquette, in so doing exposing some residents to ridicule. A nickname disguised one Te Aroha offender in 1882 at: ‘Porangi [‘mad; in a hurry’],⁹⁸ when you next conduct ladies from church, it would be advisable to keep them out of the many water holes on the way home’.⁹⁹ At Waiorongomai, in 1885, ‘The next time Mrs S. sends the young mother a valentine she should learn how to spell’.¹⁰⁰ At the same settlement in the following year, ‘J.S. should not spoon [flirt] so much before folks’.¹⁰¹ And ‘who was the gentleman who took a young lady to the dance on Thursday night and was ashamed to go in with her?’¹⁰² In the following year, in Te Aroha, ‘who was the young masher that escorted two young ladies to a distant land in a buggy to see the sports! They arrived at the Hotel all well and had dinner, but when it came to the money part of the business the young lady had to pay’.¹⁰³ In 1889, ‘A.S. thought he was doing it grand walking through the flax paddock with Miss B. the other Sunday. I think he ought to go home again and learn on which side of a young lady he ought to walk’.¹⁰⁴ In the following year, ‘who was the unmannerly dude that the boys were abusing for keeping his hat on at the concert?’¹⁰⁵ And in 1892,

How nicely the pretty girl told certain young men at the ball that it would suit them better if they used Miss to the young ladies, instead of being so familiar.

Well done, pretty Camelia! You are the only one that can put them in their place.¹⁰⁶

In the following year, ‘a certain young lady ought to learn to behave herself before she goes to church again’.¹⁰⁷ Two years later, ‘what made

⁹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

⁹⁸ P.M. Ryan, *The New Dictionary of Modern Maori* (Auckland, 1973), p. 34.

⁹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 170.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 21 March 1885, p. 10.

¹⁰¹ ‘Waiorongomai Wirings’, *Observer*, 13 February 1886, p. 16.

¹⁰² ‘Waiorongomai Wrinkles’, *Observer*, 20 March 1886, p. 23.

¹⁰³ ‘Te Aroha Twinkles’, *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 August 1889, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 July 1890, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 July 1892, p. 18.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

L.W. beat time in church the other night? Oh, L.W.!'¹⁰⁸ Five months later, 'Who are the young men who enjoy dancing, but are too mean to take a ticket for a concert, but roll up to the dance in great style?'¹⁰⁹ And 'Who was the young man that took his intended bride to a ball and imbibed too freely?'¹¹⁰

Undue familiarity either experienced or feared seems to have been the reason for two questions: 'Why does that girl keep her hat on at the dance? Is it to keep the boys from leaning their faces against hers?'¹¹¹

FLIRTING, AND MORE SERIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

In 1896, the O.M. claimed that Te Aroha was 'generally acknowledged to be a capital place for spoony couples. Once under the shadow of the Mount of Love, they appear to yield to its influence'.¹¹² Many examples can be given, but in many cases the stories behind references to flirting (otherwise courting, spooning, and mashing) has to be left to the imagination, as exemplified by 'Leave that girl alone, Charlie!'¹¹³ And 'what was D.C. doing up the hill at Waiorongomai last Monday?'¹¹⁴ What, indeed? Residents would have recognized the person and the meaning of the jibe.

Love was always in the air, as in 1892: 'The miller and his maid are doing it very heavy. How fond Dave must be of his girl when he left Waitoa and came in to Te Aroha to live, so that he might be nearer to his little darling, as he is pleased to call her'.¹¹⁵ Two years later, 'W.M., the youth of classic profile, is casting sheep's eyes at J.R.'¹¹⁶ There was much loving (and rivalry) at Waiorongomai in early 1895. 'I see the Waiorongomai Sergeant, fearful and wonderful, is making himself at home at the half-way house'.

Is it the Victorian or honey he's after? Both seem agreeable to his taste.... Who is E.J. after, E.C. or K.C.? ... What is the attraction

¹⁰⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 March 1895, p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

¹¹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

¹¹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

¹¹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

¹¹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 June 1882, p. 201.

¹¹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

¹¹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 July 1892, p. 19.

¹¹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

for T.Y. at J.'s every evening. Is there a split between H.S. and A.B.? ... A welcome sound to J.P.H. when he makes his call and hears the joyful sound Cum(m)in(g).¹¹⁷

(Miss Cumming did not marry J.P.H.)¹¹⁸ Five months later, 'J.S. is in love, and becoming quite thin'.¹¹⁹

Lonely people without partners: A Waiorongomai comment of 1886 that 'it looks bad of the young storeman to be standing about the Hall door at every dance'¹²⁰ suggests a lonely man who could not attract a partner. The point of the observation that it was 'hard times when Miss S. has to take her little brother up the street for company' was clear.¹²¹ There were always young, and not so young, people competing for love; and competition was inevitable because of the sex ratio. The 1891 census revealed '11,268 people in the goldfield counties of Thames, Coromandel, Piako, and Ohinemuri and the males exceed the females by nearly 2,000'.¹²² That did not mean that the women, who by this statistic had the greatest choice, were happy with what was on offer. A pretend advertisement in 1889: 'Wanted, for Te Aroha, a shipment of marriageable young men for our wallflowers on the hooks'.¹²³ In the following year, 'the violinist came to Te Aroha in search of a husband. Poor deluded mortal'.¹²⁴ In 1891, reportedly 'mashers seem very scarce in Te Aroha, as two waitresses cannot even raise one between them'.¹²⁵ And 'Gus says the reason he left Te Aroha for Waihi was because he could not get a young lady to suit. He still comes up very often, though'.¹²⁶ Two years later, 'G.T. is on the look out for a young lady. I hope that you will soon get her. G. says there are too many single-handed

¹¹⁷ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ Index to Marriages, 1895-1920, BDM.

¹¹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

¹²⁰ 'Waiorongomai Wrinkles', *Observer*, 20 March 1886, p. 23.

¹²¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 February 1885, p. 10.

¹²² 'Census Returns', *Observer*, 30 May 1891, p. 15.

¹²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 September 1889, p. 18.

¹²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15.

¹²⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 17.

¹²⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 January 1891, p. 18.

Johnnies here just now'.¹²⁷ In 1894, 'F.S. says that if she can't get a masher in Te Aroha she will have to go back to the Thames and bring one up'.¹²⁸

In 1890, 'who were the young ladies dancing outside of the Public Hall on Wednesday night? Can't they raise a masher each?'¹²⁹ (A masher was defined as 'ladykillers, dandies, lovers').¹³⁰ Late the following year, 'mashers seem very scarce in Te Aroha, as two waitresses cannot even raise one between them'.¹³¹ In 1894, 'why don't our boys take pity on M.G. as she looks so forlorn out by herself'.¹³² Two weeks later: 'Wanted a masher for M.G. Must be respectable'.¹³³ Two years later, 'two young ladies of the drapery establishment looked lonely at the volunteer parade on Sunday'.¹³⁴ In 1898, at the celebrations for the opening of the Cadman bathhouse, 'Miss C.G.G. looked very lonely walking round by herself'.¹³⁵ One week later, 'cannot either of the Misses M get a masher, and they *are* so beautiful? ... The lovely maidens near the bridge are also masherless. The pity of it'.¹³⁶

Seeking marriage partners, not just flirtations: In 1885, 'the baker would like to receive a photo from a young lady with views of marriage'.¹³⁷ 'The two sisters say that if Jack and Joe do not pop the question soon, they will be old maids. Don't forget that this is leap year', the O.M. helpfully reminded them in 1891.¹³⁸ In the following year, 'our tailor has returned from town, looking much better from his trip. He says he is tired of being a bachelor'.¹³⁹ In 1898, 'Mr O. looked quite the family man on Sunday in the Domain. Getting your hand in, O?'¹⁴⁰ Later that year, 'has M.M. received the proposal yet that was predicted at a recent concert? Who

¹²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

¹²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

¹²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

¹³⁰ Partridge, p. 725.

¹³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 17.

¹³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

¹³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

¹³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

¹³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 June 1898, p. 21.

¹³⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

¹³⁷ 'Te Aroha Teachings', *Observer*, 6 June 1885, p. 16.

¹³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 July 1891, p. 20.

¹³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

¹⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

can it be?’¹⁴¹ Two months later, ‘T.P. is anxious to find a nice life partner. Cheer up T.; lots of time.... L.M. says “the way is long when walked alone” ’.¹⁴²

Often those without partners were handicapped by their shyness. In 1892, ‘the little French dressmaker says that she likes Te Aroha very well; but that the young gents are too slow’.¹⁴³ She continued to be frustrated: six months later she had ‘left off going to the class, because the boys are too slow’.¹⁴⁴ In April 1893, ‘who was the young man that passed A. in Whitaker-street on Sunday night, and said good night, when she was wishing he would say good evening and stop and yarn?’¹⁴⁵ Two months later, H.K. had ‘been in Te Aroha four years, and has not caught a young lady yet. H. says it will never do all his life going like this’.¹⁴⁶ A month later, the O.M. reported that ‘H.K. will have soon to go to the shelf for the ladies say that he is too slow’.¹⁴⁷ Also in that month: ‘Hard times, D., when you can’t raise a girl. Try at the next dance and you might have a show with the fair ones.... F.T. says that he can’t pick up a young lady to keep company with. F. says that he will have to give up thinking of the girls now’.¹⁴⁸

Social events were held to bring people of marriageable age together. For instance, at the Bachelors’ Ball held at Waiorongomai in August 1886 the word ‘Welcome’ in large gold letters on a black background was placed over the stage. Underneath there were ‘two hearts closely united and surrounded by the words “Our Hearty Union” ’. Underneath was a message ‘From the Bachelors’:

With greetings to you ladies,
We bid you all to-night,
To join with you both heart and hand
It is our chief delight.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

¹⁴² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 August 1899, p. 21.

¹⁴³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 23 July 1892, p. 20.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 December 1892, p. 24.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 April 1893, p. 17.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

¹⁴⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 21 August 1886, p. 3.

On Easter Monday in 1893 a ‘bachelors’ picnic’ at Te Aroha was ‘a great success. The day’s fun was wound up with a dance in the schoolroom’.¹⁵⁰ The following year, it was predicted that the bachelors’ ball was ‘likely to be a great success as the management is in good hands. It is to be hoped that the maids will give one in return’.¹⁵¹

In 1886, the Waiorongomai O.M. noted ‘Quite an addition to the Sunday evenings singing class at a local grocer’s store.... Tom the popular grocer has started “batching;” here’s a chance for some of the young ladies who are tired of single life’.¹⁵² Four years later, the Waiorongomai schoolmaster was ‘all there with the teachers; his choice being the tall, “slim sunflower” ’.¹⁵³ A Te Aroha tailor had ‘returned from town, looking much better for his trip. He says he is tired of being a bachelor’.¹⁵⁴ Three years later, ‘our barber talks of following the example of our ironmonger. Find the bird first, H’.¹⁵⁵

In November 1883 the O.M. claimed it was ‘amusing to see all the old bachelors and maidens (for we have both in Te Aroha and Waiorongomai)’, and claimed that he, along with the bellman, James Gerrish,¹⁵⁶ had been ‘requested by the local clergy to try and do our best to stimulate those growing old people to join in the holy bonds of matrimony’. For his part, the O.M. decided ‘it would be a very good plan to circulate the names of these long-promising but non-performing individuals’ in the *Observer*, and did so in his usual obscure manner: ‘It would be fair that Mr H. and A.B. should wind up their old yarns in the wash-house; J.O.S. and the barmaid going to join the ranks of the employed’.¹⁵⁷ J.O.S. may have been the miner John O’Shea¹⁵⁸ (a full stop instead of an apostrophe was used immediately afterwards for Michael O’Keeffe), but O’Shea did not marry until June 1888, to Nora Keohane, a Thames girl who would have been 17 in 1883.¹⁵⁹ The

¹⁵⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 April 1893, p. 17.

¹⁵¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

¹⁵² ‘Waiorongomai Wirings’, *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 16.

¹⁵³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

¹⁵⁵ Te Aroha, *Observer*, 19 October 1895, p. 21.

¹⁵⁶ See paper on his life.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 November 1883, p. 16.

¹⁵⁸ See recollections of John O’Shea, *New Zealand Herald*, 28 November 1930, p. 8, and *Te Aroha News*, 28 November 1940, p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Marriage Certificate of John O’Shea, 20 June 1888, 1888/1117, BDM.

O.M. also noted that ‘Tommy and Maggie are hard at it’, a reference to a prominent miner, Thomas Gavin,¹⁶⁰ flirting with Margaret Murphy. They would indeed marry in the following April.¹⁶¹ This column ended by cryptically stating that ‘Alphabet O.K., a Knight of the Hammer, and Gad are going to meet the cook on the convincing ground at Christmas, whose acceptance of the (matri) money will not let all be premature’.¹⁶² The first of these three men was Michael Dineen William O’Keeffe,¹⁶³ who would not marry Margaret O’Leary until October the following year, when she recorded her occupation as a domestic servant, not a cook.¹⁶⁴ The most likely ‘Knight of the Hammer’, meaning an auctioneer, was James Craig,¹⁶⁵ who would not marry for another 12 years, and then in Melbourne.¹⁶⁶ ‘Gad’, presumably a carpenter, may have been Charles Tonge, who in 1887 would marry an Auckland girl.¹⁶⁷

In November 1882, the O.M. at Waiorongomai recorded that ‘the young blacksmith’ was ‘thinking of getting a [long?]-haired striker’.¹⁶⁸ This was a reference to William Jackson Ellis, the pioneer blacksmith there,¹⁶⁹ who would not marry until 1889 and not to a local girl but to a Paeroa one.¹⁷⁰ In December, he was quoted as saying that ‘if he knew your correspondent he’d take a rise out of him. God bless his extreme youth, he could not take a rise out of a kangaroo cat’.¹⁷¹ (Ellis was 25).¹⁷² A report in 1884 that ‘Fred drinks nothing else but lemonade, and promises to make M. happy after

¹⁶⁰ See paper on his life.

¹⁶¹ Marriage Certificate of Thomas Gavin, 22 April 1884, 1884/911, BDM.

¹⁶² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 November 1883, p. 16.

¹⁶³ See paper on his life.

¹⁶⁴ Marriage Certificate of Michael [Dineen] O’Keeffe [recorded as O’Keefe], 2 November 1884, 1884/1749, BDM.

¹⁶⁵ See *New Zealand Herald*, 11 November 1895, p. 5.

¹⁶⁶ Death Certificate of James Craig, 10 November 1895, 1895/5565, BDM.

¹⁶⁷ Marriage Certificate of Charles Tonge, 10 February 1887, 1887/2464, BDM.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 18 November 1882, p. 153 [this issue was damaged].

¹⁶⁹ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 847; *Hauraki Plains Gazette*, 13 April 1932, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ Marriage Certificate of William Jackson Ellis, 28 January 1889, 1889/53, BDM; *Thames Advertiser*, 5 February 1889, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

¹⁷² *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 847; Death Certificate of William Jackson Ellis, 12 April 1932, 1932/4689, BDM.

Christmas' clearly anticipated a marriage, as did the rumour that 'T. and the charming Miss T., of Keri Keri, will shortly be made one'. That 'the butcher seems to enjoy the laundry work at the creek' hinted at a tryst.¹⁷³

In May 1887, J.J. was reported to be 'about to settle down in married life. Nearly time'. Later in the same column: 'J.J. and M.K. have met once more, and M. seems to be happy'.¹⁷⁴ James Johnson, a bricklayer,¹⁷⁵ did marry Margaret Jane Keith in the following January.¹⁷⁶ In 1893, the O.M.'s comment implied that one man might not be in for a life of marital bliss: 'I hear that Miss T. and G.S. are soon to tie the fatal knot. Plucky boy, G.'¹⁷⁷

At a Band of Hope temperance meeting at Waiorongomai in 1884, a Miss Mills 'fairly brought down the house, her recitation relating to a sale of bachelors having been held, when the old maids present carried their purchases shoulder-high'.¹⁷⁸ James Mills, later the first mayor of Te Aroha,¹⁷⁹ had two daughters, both of whom would marry. Ellen, the elder, married 16 months after this meeting, but died of pneumonia after nine years of marriage, leaving behind four sons aged seven, six, four, and two: two other boys had earlier died, one aged four months and the other, who died four months before his mother, three months.¹⁸⁰ The other daughter, Mary Alice, born in 1867, married in 1888; her marriage in Greymouth to a former butcher and mining investor in Waiorongomai (in a very small way) lasted until the accidental death of her husband in 1931.¹⁸¹

Flirting with several, either simultaneously or sequentially: In 1888, the O.M. noted 'W.B. coming sailing down the street with a fair wind

¹⁷³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1883, p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

¹⁷⁵ See *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1887*, p. 13; *Te Aroha News*, 3 October 1940, p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ Marriage Certificate of James Johnson, 4 January 1888, 1888/405, BDM.

¹⁷⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 November 1893, p. 21.

¹⁷⁸ *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 November 1884, p. 18.

¹⁷⁹ See paper on his life.

¹⁸⁰ Marriage Certificate of Ellen Mills, 30 March 1886, 1886/358; Death Certificates of Gerald Cribb, 5 June 1891, 1891/2332; George William Cribb, 1 January 1895, 1895/81; Ellen Cribb, 27 April 1895, 1895/2775, BDM; *Te Aroha News*, 3 April 1886, p. 2, 1 May 1895, p. 2; Waihou Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 May 1895, p. 19.

¹⁸¹ Marriage Certificates of Mary Alice Mills, 1888/1407; Death Certificate of Thomas David Tierney, 30 December 1931, 1931/12683, BDM; *New Zealand Gazette*, 18 October 1883, p. 1518; *Te Aroha News*, 22 September 1883, p. 4, 8 December 1883, p. 3, 15 December 1883, p. 8, 15 November 1884, p. 2, 20 September 1943, p. 3.

and one on each side. Not greedy, old man, but you like a lot'.¹⁸² He also considered that 'C.G. had better watch his p's and q's; he can't always have three on a string'.¹⁸³ In the following year, 'C.G. looked a masher of the first water walking down the street last Sunday evening - stick under one arm, M.H. on the other, and smoking a cigar. Bai, Jove!'¹⁸⁴ C.G. may have been one of the following:

Teamster [a carter?], Hanker,¹⁸⁵ Doughboy [a baker?], Gingerpop [a soda water manufacturer?] and Drillboy [a miner skilled in the use of rock drills?] may be seen doing slow work in the morning for the forthcoming event, the Maiden Steeplechase for M.H., which is to be run on Tuesday. When the race is run and won, I think the winner's name will be Doughboy.¹⁸⁶

C.G. lost, and five weeks later 'C.G. seems to take his disappointment to heart very much'.¹⁸⁷ The following month, 'C.G. says he can't get a girl anywhere. What about N.G.?'¹⁸⁸ One month later, he seems to have left the district: 'C.G. is leaving a sore heart behind'.¹⁸⁹

Another C.G., this time a woman, was contested for in 1898 and 1899. In October 1898, the O.M. described her as 'a charming water-nymph'.¹⁹⁰ One month later, 'C.W. and C.G. were mashing in great style the other night. They seemed to be very sweet.... Polish up your cans, boys: C.W., I hear, is about to abandon single blessedness for matrimonial bliss. Is C.G. to be the lucky girl?'¹⁹¹ Three weeks later, 'C.W. and C.G. are awfully loving. What will you do when she goes away for her holidays, C.? You will be like a lost sheep'.¹⁹² In March 1899 the O.M. asked, 'Has C.W. transferred his attentions elsewhere? ... The betting for C.G. stakes is –

¹⁸² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 December 1888, p. 17.

¹⁸³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

¹⁸⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

¹⁸⁵ 'One who takes part in a baiting': Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang* (London, 1998), p. 560, which hardly seems appropriate.

¹⁸⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

¹⁸⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 May 1889, p. 17.

¹⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 June 1889, p. 18.

¹⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

¹⁹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 November 1898, p. 21.

¹⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

F.W., of Te Aroha W[est], level money; C.W., 2 to 1'.¹⁹³ Neither won, for two months later 'C.G. and 'A.' were going it heavily at the dance the other night'.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps C.W. was not really a strong contender, for in that month it was reported that when he went away 'Miss W.' looked 'sad and lonely'. The same report mentioned that 'C.G. seems to have it in for F.L., and that young man is very wisely keeping out of her way'.¹⁹⁵ Three months after mentioning the 'stakes', 'F.W. looks very loving with C.G. Have you popped the question yet, F.?'¹⁹⁶ Two weeks later, 'F.W. looked really important at the social. So good of C.G. to give him such unstinted praise'.¹⁹⁷

In 1889, W.H., took 'first prize for flirting here. Didn't he look well with two on Sunday night!'¹⁹⁸ 'There is a hard run for the "Journeyman Snip" [a tailor's apprentice? or a hairdresser's?] between two or three of our female beauties. W. does not mind; he says a change is good sometimes'.¹⁹⁹ Three years later, 'how is it C. did not take his two girls to the Band of Hope? Was it because they could not both take his arm?'²⁰⁰

G.S. thought he was doing a smart stroke on Sunday night, disappointing No. 1 girl in order to meet No. 2, but the latter was playing the same game, and took another masher out for a walk, so poor G. had to button up his overcoat tightly round his manly chest as he was left out in the cold.²⁰¹

At a 'toff dance' held later that year, 'T.J. and J.L. were also very noticeable. What would C.L. say if he heard this? I suppose T.J. thinks that out of sight is out of mind'.²⁰² C.L. may have been flirting on a generous scale himself: two months later the O.M. asked: 'What price a kiss over the

¹⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 March 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 May 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1899, p. 21.

¹⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 June 1889, p. 18.

¹⁹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 June 1889, p. 18.

²⁰⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 December 1892, p. 24.

²⁰¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

²⁰² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

counter, C.L.? What, only threepence?’²⁰³ ‘G.H. looked nice at the train; where was L.? ... L. was piling it on in the Domain with the fair sex’.²⁰⁴

In January 1894, ‘W.M. was doing it heavy at the party the other evening with M.C. What will E.H. say when she hears of it?’²⁰⁵ E.H. was mentioned again in September 1895: ‘Is it true that our sweet singing bird, E.H., is engaged to an Auckland gentleman and keeps the young draper for a walking stick?’²⁰⁶

All this flirting with more than one person meant potential partners could be compared. For instance, ‘A.M. said she would rather have A. than T., as A. is more attentive’.²⁰⁷

Trying to hide two-timing: For one example, ‘the “operator” at the Post Office says he is going to Auckland to see his best “gal,” “the sly dorg.” What would Tilly say if she knew it?’²⁰⁸ (And she would now know, like all those who read the *Observer* to find out what their inamoratas were up to).

Rivalry was constant, inevitably. In June 1883, ‘the miner will have to rise earlier on Sunday mornings or the smiling carter will cut him out. Be plucky, F.’²⁰⁹ In September, ‘Fred and H.G. deserted their pets, and went pig-hunting on Sunday. Be careful, Fred, or you will lose her’.²¹⁰ And ‘who was the young man who took F. [a woman, this time] home on Sunday night? B. had better come in from Waiorongomai, as F. says she will have the first one that asks her’.²¹¹ In January 1885, ‘the running is very strong between Tom and the baker for Miss M.’²¹² Three weeks later, ‘what is the attraction for G. round the corner? Is it the pie shop, or to see May?’²¹³ At the end of March, ‘G. swears he will put a head on Walter if he catches him spooning with the girl at the corner again’.²¹⁴ The Waiorongomai O.M.

²⁰³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1894, p. 21.

²⁰⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

²⁰⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

²⁰⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

²⁰⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

²⁰⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

²⁰⁹ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 9 June 1883, p. 180.

²¹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 12.

²¹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 September 1883, p. 12.

²¹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 January 1885, p. 10.

²¹³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 February 1885, p. 10.

²¹⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 March 1885, p. 10.

asked, in September, ‘where was Mark the other night when the gander tackled his little duck?’²¹⁵

In June 1887, ‘somebody looked quite too utterly too-too spooning with the daughter of the regiment at the Fancy Dress Ball on Monday night. What will the other one say when she hears?’²¹⁶ In August 1892, ‘what brings the two Waiorongomai ladies to the Te Aroha dance so often? Is the bootmaker the attraction?’²¹⁷ In the following July, ‘who is the young lady that B.A. and F.W. had their eye on the other night at the concert? Let us see which of you two young men will prove the smarter to win the young lady’s affections’.²¹⁸ And in 1898, ‘the final between J.E. and W.C. for the W.H. stakes comes off at a short date. Both contestants are sanguine. Look out, J.E.; my ticket is on you’.²¹⁹

As the cliché has it, all’s fair in love and war. In 1896, ‘who was the young lady that took M.N.’s young man away from her?’²²⁰ Two years later, ‘it was very mean of W.H. to take advantage of her sister’s absence, but it seemed to make no difference to “uncle” ’.²²¹ Three months later, ‘it was too bad of you, C.W., to take advantage of P’s absence. Nevertheless, you seemed to be enjoying the company of F.S. on Sunday’.²²²

Fickleness was very common, with the gossips sometimes being sympathetic, sometimes disapproving. In January 1893, ‘the little dressmaker was doing a heavy mash with the flax-cutter at the picnic. The milliner looked quite forlorn’.²²³ But one month later, ‘the milliner looked immense on Sunday afternoon – doing it heavy with the flaxmiller’.²²⁴ In subsequent entries, ‘poor George is away, but Miss S. thinks no one will let him know of the little affair in the street’.²²⁵ ‘Too bad of Miss H. to get Pat to take her down to the punt, and then leave him to go with Tig’.²²⁶ ‘That

²¹⁵ ‘Waiorongomai Whispers’, *Observer*, 5 September 1885, p. 4.

²¹⁶ ‘Te Aroha Tips’, *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

²¹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 August 1892, p. 19.

²¹⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

²¹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 August 1898, p. 21.

²²⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

²²¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

²²² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 August 1898, p. 21.

²²³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 January 1893, p. 15.

²²⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

²²⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 January 1885, p. 10.

²²⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 February 1885, p. 10.

little piece of sweetness had better look well after the electric spark, as he is reported to be very fickle'.²²⁷ 'M. looked very sad at the dance on Tuesday night. What was the matter M.? Did Miss W. jilt you?'²²⁸ 'M. says she likes a spoon with the masher. What would the young man in Auckland say "women were deceivers ever?"'.²²⁹ 'How is it that T.E. does not visit Miss F. so often as he used? The O.M. thinks he is very fickle. Where was he going with the bouquet?'²³⁰

Losing at love was, inevitably, common: For example, in 1893 'The Waiorongomai widow looked very down-hearted at Southey's departure. Never mind, you have Richard left'.²³¹ Henry Southey, the departed carpenter, was the son of Henry, a miner; he would never marry, or at least not in New Zealand.²³² As for H.K., he would have soon to go on the shelf for the ladies say that he is too slow'.²³³

There were many examples of more determined lovers being unsuccessful. Three examples from 1883: 'D.S. has given the girl best, as the boys chaff him so.... Pat is off his feed on account of a woman refusing to admit him to the cottage'.²³⁴ 'L., the cabinetmaker, will have to adopt different tactics if he wishes to make any impression on the heart of the gentle B.'.²³⁵ L. was Frederick Leslie;²³⁶ he never married 'the gentle B.' nor indeed anyone else, and no marriage after he left the district either in 1885 or 1886 has been traced in New Zealand.²³⁷ And some were too persistent in

²²⁷ 'Waiorongomai Whispers', *Observer*, 12 September 1885, p. 16.

²²⁸ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 13 February 1886, p. 16.

²²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 March 1893, p. 17.

²³⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

²³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 January 1891, p. 18.

²³² *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1887*, p. 23; *Te Aroha News*, 8 October 1884, p. 7, 19 February 1887, p. 2, 5 March 1887, p. 2, 2 June 1888, p. 2, Warden's Court, 29 May 1889, p. 2; Index of Marriages, 1891-1920, BDM.

²³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

²³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

²³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

²³⁶ See *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 9 June 1883, p. 1, 8 December 1883, p. 3, 18 December 1883, p. 3, 22 December 1883, p. 7; in the *Waikato Electoral Roll, June 1884*, p. 12, he was the only Te Aroha cabinetmaker listed.

²³⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Rent Register 1881-1899, folio 208, BBAV 11501/1a, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 18 September 1886, p. 2; Index to Marriages, 1883-1920, BDM.

the pursuit: At an 1894 ball, 'F. appeared to fancy N. was his private property, which that young lady seemed to object to very much'.²³⁸

In 1890s gossip, arranged chronologically, 'What makes the second-cornet player look so down-hearted lately? Is it because the fair sex have had enough of him?'²³⁹ 'Long Bob looks lost this week since the girl has taken to the draper'.²⁴⁰ 'Willie is very despondent of late. Has the old lady's visit anything to do with it? He has been seen going round the corner to Grey-street, but it is all up with him there, as the coachman is now right bower'.²⁴¹ 'M. says she will die an old maid, because she has been jilted so often, if she can't catch M.'.²⁴² 'Miss W.'s engagement is announced, but the happy man is *not* our only J.M.H.'.²⁴³ 'The tailors say that they are quite full up of a certain young lady. Never mind G. someone else might take pity on you'.²⁴⁴ 'Who was the young lady that took M.N.'s young man away from her?'²⁴⁵ 'W.W. thought he had a "cut in" for the affections of B.B., but he has been cut out by T.C.'.²⁴⁶ 'D.P., I hear, has transferred his affections from pretty Miss M. to the school-teacher, who, he says, is worth all the girls he knows put together.... W.H. seems to be dead gone on M.M.; but she will have none of you, W.'.²⁴⁷

The bitterness of lost love was usually mentioned with jocularly and assurances about having better luck next time. For instance, 'somebody looked down in the mouth on E.S.'s departure for Auckland. Never mind old boy, go it'.²⁴⁸ More precision about who was upset was given three weeks later: 'D.L.M.'s lips fell two inches when E.S. went away. Never mind D. you will soon get another chum'.²⁴⁹ In subsequent examples, 'the girl says she will not have Fred, because he is so thin, and he is just saving funeral

²³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

²³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 September 1890, p. 17.

²⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 18.

²⁴¹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 12 September 1891, p. 17.

²⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 May 1893, p. 17.

²⁴³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

²⁴⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

²⁴⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

²⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

²⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 July 1898, p. 21.

²⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

²⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

expenses'.²⁵⁰ 'J.R. looks very downhearted since the coal man made his appearance. Cheer up, J., there are more pansies than one'.²⁵¹ 'The girls are all pining for J.G.M., but I learn he has been crossed in love and is now a woman hater'.²⁵² 'Said to be all off between J.A. and Miss I., and J. is looking out for another partner, and is taking great interest in school teachers'.²⁵³

Could the following snippet refer to an attempted suicide prompted by being spurned? (To 'put a light out' meant to kill).²⁵⁴ 'Who was the young man who tried to put his light out because a certain lady rejected his affections? Better luck next time, dear boy'.²⁵⁵ This unhappy lover has not been identified, but one who has been, Matthew Corcoran, was an unmarried contractor aged 38 when he was sent to the asylum in 1890 because of 'delusions of persecution' caused by 'disappointed affections', having been 'refused in marriage' by a servant. When in the asylum he 'said he had heard the voice of his wife & wanted to know why she was kept from him'. He was 'quite convinced he is married and that his wife is about the building somewhere and would come to him if allowed to do so'. He was discharged as recovered five months later.²⁵⁶ At the end of 1893 he was readmitted, this time for more delusions of persecution combined with religious mania.²⁵⁷

A saga of love lost was summarized in two entries. 'A.M. is struck and C.C. has taken it very much to heart since she has picked up the Sydney duck'.²⁵⁸ Six months later, 'the 'Sydney duck seems very down-hearted since C.C. took her departure. Cheer up old boy, some day she'll wander back again'.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 August 1891, p. 17.

²⁵¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 May 1895, p. 21.

²⁵² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

²⁵³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1899, p. 22.

²⁵⁴ Partridge, p. 941.

²⁵⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

²⁵⁶ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1663, YCAA 1021/2; Case Book 1890-1892, folio 517, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

²⁵⁷ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1893-1896, p. 177, YCAA 1048/6, ANZ-A.

²⁵⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

²⁵⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

In September 1888, a Waiorongomai miner wrote an ecstatic poem 'in honour of a young lady whom I met at the Rink Carnival held at Waiorongomai on Wednesday evening' in the previous week:

I've seen a host of pretty girls,
 As life I've travelled through,
 With faces fair and forms so rare
 As pencil ever drew;
 But there is one before me now,
 Like sunlight to the shade,
 And while my heart it beats within
 Her memory ne're shall fade.

Her eyes they shone like pearly drops,
 From out her lily face,
 Which wreathed itself in witching smiles
 When she the floor did grace;
 And then to see her sylph-like form
 With step like fawn so light,
 Made rapture thrill throughout my heart
 At such a pleasing sight.

And then to see her winning ways,
 When'er each dance was done,
 Reminded me of flowerets fair
 When smiling to the sun;
 While all around she threw a look
 As pure as is the day,
 And which for her will gain respect
 No matter where she stray.

And to hear her bird-like voice,
 With echoes sweet and soft,
 Doth raise ones thoughts from worldly things
 To think of things aloft.
 I would rather boast the purity
 That's wrapt within her frame,
 Than be the King of England's throne,
 And boast a famous name.

Oh, if her heart is only true
 Unto her God above,
 She's worthy to be toasted with
 Dame Nature's Queens of Love!
 For such a noble looking maid,
 I've never seen before;
 A reigning fair without compare,

Upon this mortal shore.

Now, all the harm that I can wish
 Is that she may retain
 Her bonnie face and pleasing form
 While life it doth remain!
 And may she when the trumpet sounds
 Upon that blessed shore
 Be reigning with the angels bright,
 In peace for evermore –
 Is the real wish of

JIM MCLIVER.²⁶⁰

James Alison McLiver, born in 1856, was one of six McLiver brothers, most of whom were miners.²⁶¹ Despite his enraptured versifying about a much younger girl, there is no indication that his admiration was returned, and his next poem, published two months later, was on an entirely different topic: ‘The Dying Comrade’.²⁶² He continued to perform comic songs at local concerts during the subsequent year, his ‘comicalities’ being ‘greatly appreciated’ at one of these,²⁶³ but this did not aid his love life. After living in Thames for some years after leaving Waiorongomai, he settled in Reefton in 1892; he never married.²⁶⁴

Jealousy: ‘Who were the young men that were on the opposite side of the road grinding their teeth, while our storekeeper was mashing with the pretty girls the other night?’²⁶⁵ ‘Why does the dressmaker lead such a secluded life? Rumour says there is a rich, handsome lover, not a hundred

²⁶⁰ Jim McLiver, untitled poem, written 21 September 1888, printed in *Te Aroha News*, 22 September 1888, p. 2.

²⁶¹ Birth Certificate of James Alison McLiver, 1856/1176; Death Certificate of Ann Gillan, 14 May 1896, 1896/4437, BDM; Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Ohinemuri Claims 1875, BBAV 11568/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 15 May 1896, p. 2; ‘Mercurio’, ‘Local Gossip’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 December 1897, p. 2.

²⁶² Jim McLiver, ‘The Dying Comrade’, published in *Te Aroha News*, 24 November 1888, p. 8.

²⁶³ *Te Aroha News*, 11 July 1888, p. 2, advertisement, 19 December 1888, p. 7, 29 December 1888, p. 2, advertisement, 14 August 1889, p. 2.

²⁶⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 February 1892, p. 2, 11 November 1893, p. 2, 22 November 1893, p. 3; Death Certificate of James Alison McLiver, 1924/6657, BDM.

²⁶⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 October 1890, p. 17.

miles from the fair town of Cambridge, who is most inordinately jealous'.²⁶⁶
And two examples from one column in June 1891:

The concert in aid of funds for the Church of England was a great success.... The lady and gentleman looked very pretty in the tableau of "Jack's Return." The O.M. would like to know what the gentle pressure meant. Strange if the Waihou school-master was not jealous....

The coachbuilder seemed to be piling it on with fair Kate at the Band of Hope. He had better look out for the opposition. Fred says he has got the war paint on.²⁶⁷

Gaining a new partner: The Waiorongomai schoolmaster must have been embarrassed in May 1885 to read that he 'has to be content with Miss H. now'.²⁶⁸ In September, 'the lightning-jerker', meaning a telegraph operator,²⁶⁹ did 'not fret over his ruptured engagement. The charming Miss G. has taken her place'.²⁷⁰ In subsequent columns, 'G.H. makes a fine walking stick for M.H. since E.F. threw him over'.²⁷¹ 'E. has now got another young man to her string. What about that green-boned "chappie" [presumably a youngster] who has left for Sydney?'.²⁷² 'M. gave T.D. his dismissal so he consoled himself with "another" '.²⁷³ At the circus, 'the O.M. was greatly amused to see J.H. and A.G. Another capture, J.'?²⁷⁴

Old loves could be quickly replaced; for instance, 'the parson's lieutenant seems downhearted lately. What is the matter, Fred; has your Hamilton girl given you the mitten? [jilted him]²⁷⁵ Ask Carrie to console you'.²⁷⁶ Eighteen months later, 'I noticed that "anybody's girl" has given Joe

²⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 March 1891, p. 18.

²⁶⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 June 1891, p. 18.

²⁶⁸ 'Waiorongomai Wrinkles', *Observer*, 16 May 1885, p. 16.

²⁶⁹ Partridge, p. 682, who cites the first use of this expression in Australia as being around 1910.

²⁷⁰ 'Waiorongomai Whispers', *Observer*, 5 September 1885, p. 4.

²⁷¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 June 1889, p. 18.

²⁷² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 January 1893, p. 20.

²⁷³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

²⁷⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

²⁷⁵ Partridge, p. 743.

²⁷⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

the mitten and has now got the Earl on the string'.²⁷⁷ (Was 'anybody's girl' meant to imply an excessively flirtatious one?) Two years later, 'M. gave T.D. his dismissal so he consoled himself with another'.²⁷⁸

Seizing opportunities: 'Where oh where have L.P.'s toff mashers gone? The boys will stand a good show now, I suppose'.²⁷⁹ Less than two months later, 'Nothing beats the old boys after all, so says L.P.'.²⁸⁰ But one month later, L.P. was 'sadly missed by the boys. Auckland attraction too strong'.²⁸¹ Four years later, the O.M. wondered whether T.P. intended taking over the Family Hotel, 'or is it the magnetic attraction of L.P. that draws you in that direction so often, T.? Seats, please!'²⁸² (It seems L.P. was a barmaid or hotel servant: but was it the same L.P.?)

Changing behaviour to win affection: 'Billy says if he can only keep straight for a while he thinks he can once more get into favour with Miss H.'.²⁸³

Separated lovers: 'Dave is inconsolable since Jessie's departure. Cheer up, Dave, she will soon return'.²⁸⁴ 'J. says he feels quite lonely since the school teacher went away'.²⁸⁵ 'The barber looks quite forlorn since his girl went to Auckland'.²⁸⁶ 'A. looks quite downhearted since the fair one from the South bid him "good-bye, dear," at the station that morning, followed by kisses and tears'.²⁸⁷ 'W.B. looks very down-hearted since Miss M. went away. Never mind, W., you will be right when the summer comes again'.²⁸⁸ 'A.M. looked very disappointed at the dance the other night because his young lady was not there – Miss C. Never mind, A., in three months she will be back, and you will be able to step out like St Hippo, the three-year old',²⁸⁹ a reference to a horse, not a baby saint. In June 1894,

²⁷⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 July 1892, p. 19.

²⁷⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

²⁷⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

²⁸⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

²⁸¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 December 1894, p. 21.

²⁸² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 November 1898, p. 22.

²⁸³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

²⁸⁴ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 12 September 1891, p. 17.

²⁸⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 January 1893, p. 15.

²⁸⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

²⁸⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1893, p. 21.

²⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

²⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

‘C.K. looks very downhearted since Miss P. has taken her departure, and is often heard singing “Some Day I’ll Wander Back Again”’. As well, ‘F.P. must be hard hit when he thinks a month is too long to wait for N.B.’s return’.²⁹⁰ Three weeks later, F.P. anxiously awaits the return of N.B.’.²⁹¹ Thirteen months later, ‘What makes O.A. look so downhearted lately? Is it because the fair young widow has gone away? Cheer up, O.; some day she’ll wander back’.²⁹² ‘J.R. looks very sad of late. Is it because F.H. is away again? Cheer up, J.; never say die’.²⁹³

‘Absence makes the heart grow fonder – of the other fellow. This is for anyone whom it may concern’.²⁹⁴ But separation did not always make the heart grow fonder: ‘A. looked extremely pretty in the Domain on Thursday afternoon. But what made her look so pale? Is she really fretting about someone? I hardly think so’.²⁹⁵

Reunited: ‘“S.’s Return” or “Reunited Lovers” is the latest trifle from the pen of A.H. Short and sweet’.²⁹⁶ ‘Who was the young lady who was so rejoiced to find A.L.’s arm resume its usual position?’²⁹⁷

Maternal disapproval: ‘Our *Wires*’ [meaning a telegraphist] ‘is fighting shy of Miss C. Did mama want to know his intentions?’²⁹⁸ ‘Can’t B.R. find a better place for spooning, than at the door in Whitaker-street. Mother’s got her eye on you, Bob’.²⁹⁹ F.B., I will tell your ma, talking to the girl over the bar’.³⁰⁰ ‘W.M. was doing the heavy’³⁰¹ the other Sunday with the young lady from town. What would ma say if she knew?’³⁰² And after the first dance arranged by the Quadrille Assembly, the O.M. asked ‘who

²⁹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 16 June 1894, p. 21.

²⁹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 July 1894, p. 21.

²⁹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

²⁹³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 August 1898, p. 21.

²⁹⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

²⁹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 January 1893, p. 19.

²⁹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

²⁹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 August 1899, p. 21.

²⁹⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 September 1883, p. 15.

²⁹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

³⁰⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 January 1893, p. 16.

³⁰¹ Usually meant ‘putting on airs’ (Partridge, p. 543), but here clearly has amorous implications.

³⁰² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

were the young ladies who would not come into the dance, but stopped outside? Did their mamma forbid them to go?' ³⁰³

Paternal disapproval: Two examples from 1889; the first one:

H.C. and M.H. were standing inside the door having a spoon to themselves, when they happened to hear her papa coming. Whereupon the young maid turned and said in a fluttering tone, "kiss me quick and go, my honey." The young man did as he was requested and went, not round the corner, but into the slop-tub - which had been put there on purpose.

The second one: "One more kiss, dear, and I will go." He got it - not a kiss, but papa's boot. Never mind B., better luck next time'.³⁰⁴

In 1892, 'the sisters say they would like to attend the Wednesday dance, only papa says they mustn't'.³⁰⁵ Probably fear of her father explained why G.S. did 'not go all the way home with L.L. on Friday night'.³⁰⁶ Nearly four months later, 'how is it that W.B. does not take L. [the same L.?] home all the way when he goes out riding with her on a Sunday afternoon? Are you afraid of her pa seeing you?'³⁰⁷ In the same vein, 'how is it that J.W. does not take M.R. to church? Is it because he is afraid of his pa giving him the stick?'³⁰⁸ One month later, 'who is the young lady that supplies all the young men at the [skating] rink with button holes? What would pa say, L?',³⁰⁹ thereby revealing to her father what she was doing.

Unwillingness to marry: In May 1883 the O.M. asked: 'When does the gallant postmaster intend to settle down? His flirtations are hurtful to a certain lady's feelings'.³¹⁰ Two months later, 'the good-looking Postmaster' was recorded as being one of those 'taking the girls by storm'.³¹¹ R. Boyne had been postmaster since July 1882; the only R. Boyle living at Te Aroha,

³⁰³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 May 1889, p. 17.

³⁰⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

³⁰⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

³⁰⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 January 1893, p. 16.

³⁰⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 April 1893, p. 16.

³⁰⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

³⁰⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

³¹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 May 1883, p. 122.

³¹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 2 July 1883, p. 248.

Robert, to marry between then and 1902 married Mary McLeod in 1884, after Boyle had left Te Aroha in late 1883.³¹²

In 1900, 'More fun!' was predicted: 'There is likely to be a breach of promise here shortly. Startling disclosures!'³¹³ Regrettably for both gossips and historians, this case did not go to court.

Slow to wed: 'The young blacksmith still takes his evening ride across the river. I think you are a bit long-winded, Fred'.³¹⁴ 'S.N. and A.H. are a long time tying the fatal knot. The O.M. is waiting for a piece of cake. Hurry up, S.'³¹⁵ 'Miss M. is to be married shortly to a Waikato resident to whom she has been engaged for years'.³¹⁶ In 1897, a Te Aroha correspondent reported the recent marriage of 'two old sweethearts who had been engaged for thirty years'; as one of the 'contracting parties' was a friend, he could 'vouch for the truth' of this report.³¹⁷ In the following year, 'G.D. and C.H. are a long time deciding. Oh, do hurry up'.³¹⁸

Lovers' quarrels: 'Ginger says poor Billy was jumping wild when he got that nasty valentine'.³¹⁹ 'What is wrong between E. and Miss D.? Kiss and make it up, old fellow'.³²⁰ 'Are G.D. and N.B. going to make it up again? I wish them better luck this time'.³²¹ 'Who were the young couple making all the row in the Domain the other evening?'³²² 'C.G. seems to have it in for F.L., and that young man is very wisely keeping out of her way'.³²³

Some quarrels were resolved satisfactorily. In late September 1883 Lizzie was 'on the war-path', but one week later 'Harry has had a relapse on Lizzie. The hatchet has been buried, and the pipe of peace smoked'.³²⁴ 'F.H.

³¹² *New Zealand Gazette*, 31 August 1882, p. 1195; advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 29 December 1883, p. 2; Marriage Certificate of Robert Boyle, 1884/1222, BDM.

³¹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 August 1900, p. 22.

³¹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

³¹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

³¹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

³¹⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Argus*, 25 March 1897, p. 4.

³¹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

³¹⁹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 21 March 1885, p. 10.

³²⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

³²¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

³²² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 April 1899, p. 21.

³²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1899, p. 21.

³²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1883, p. 8, 6 October 1883, p. 16.

and G.E. had a tiff on Saturday night, but they soon made it up again'.³²⁵ 'J.W. and the young lady of the corner have made it up once more'.³²⁶ 'J.M. and Miss F. have made it up again'.³²⁷

Differences in ages: 'Reginald is starting young. I notice he has got his eyes on the young school teacher'.³²⁸ 'A girl said if she were that young lady she would not have kissed the old man at the railway station. What about Peter at the back gate?'³²⁹ 'What brings the blacksmith from Waihou on Sundays? Is it to see M.M., of the boarding house? Bob, look out you are not had up for child stealing'.³³⁰ 'M.H. and the boy were doing the heavy on Saturday night in the hall'.³³¹ 'How to become an old man's darling: Ask A.H'.³³² 'Who are the two sisters that want the same young man? Rather young for either of them'.³³³ In the following year, 'the waitress and the youth seemed to stand by their colours in spite of the barracking they got',³³⁴ presumably because of their ages.

In November 1890, 'Harry is evidently going to follow the example set him by his brother Alf, as he has got his eyes on the infant dressmaker'.³³⁵ Two months later, 'Keesing says he will have to leave Te Aroha, as he can't stand seeing Harry going with the infant dressmaker'.³³⁶ The 'infant' was Rosina Maud Andrew, then aged 15, who would marry Henry Samuel Keesing, seven years her senior, in 1897.³³⁷ He may have caught her eye when he was a member of the Te Aroha rugby team.³³⁸

³²⁵ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

³²⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

³²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

³²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 June 1891, p. 17.

³²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

³³⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

³³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 January 1893, p. 16.

³³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

³³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

³³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

³³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 November 1890, p. 17.

³³⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

³³⁷ Births Certificates of Henry Samuel Keesing, 1868/13681; Rosina Maud Andrew, 20 December 1875, 1875/654; Marriage Certificate of Henry Samuel Keesing, 1897/2541, BDM.

³³⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 29 May 1889, p. 2.

Inappropriate partners: ‘Pretty Cockie! Fie, dear, you have captivated the ginger engineer, but you must only ally yourself to one that will be a credit to your family’.³³⁹ An arrangement that may not have involved matrimony was implied in the following snippet: ‘G.T. is trying hard to induce G.H. to take up permanent residence in Boundary-street. Tut tut, G., think before you leap’.³⁴⁰ ‘W.M. should choose his partners with more respect for size. Waiorongomai every time’.³⁴¹

In September 1890, Emma ‘showed much jealousy when her rival from the Thames was singing on the stage’.³⁴² Two weeks later, was the O.M.’s comment meant as a joke or a reproof? ‘The vulgar little boy and Emma seem to be very loving. Will it be a match?’³⁴³ If the latter, the O.M. was presumably pleased to report, nine months later, the ‘Emma says she does like the new teacher from Auckland so much. What about the vulgar boy?’³⁴⁴ (Nearly two months later, Emma seems to have failed to attract the teacher. ‘The Waihou schoolmaster looks remarkably well riding through the town with the ladies’ companion. What will Emma say when she hears it, eh?’)³⁴⁵ Possibly the same Emma reappeared in the following year: ‘Emma looks lonely on Sundays since Harry has taken to the sisters. Why don’t you invite Willie in a little oftener? Would pa object?’³⁴⁶

FLIRTING WITH WAITRESSES. SERVANTS, AND BARMAIDS

Gossip columns often mentioned flirtations with the staff of hotels and boarding houses. For example, ‘Poor John has got quite thin since that Sunday ride. Never mind, the fascinating ways and substantial marks of affection of the cook will soon bring him round’.³⁴⁷ ‘What a jar the housemaid gave C.R. when she told him that kisses went by favour?’³⁴⁸ ‘What brings those young gentlemen up to the Catholic church so often, is it

³³⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 March 1885, p. 10.

³⁴⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

³⁴¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 August 1899, p. 21.

³⁴² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 September 1890, p. 18.

³⁴³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 September 1890, p. 17.

³⁴⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 July 1891, p. 18.

³⁴⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 17.

³⁴⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

³⁴⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 November 1882, p. 153.

³⁴⁸ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 5 June 1886, p. 22.

to see the Father or the servant next door?’³⁴⁹ In the following year, ‘The butcher says he is a man of his word. He’d stand Sam a pair of kid gloves for the barmaid’.³⁵⁰

In 1891, ‘Wild Fred is often seen in Rolleston-street. Is it the girl at the Bank or at the Family Hotel that he goes to see?’³⁵¹ (Could this refer to Fred Wild? Two years later, it was asked ‘What takes F.W. down to the Family Hotel so often?’³⁵² If Frederick William Wild was being referred to, a future Te Aroha town clerk, he would not marry Leila Adelaide Jennings until 1909, when he was 37 and she was 23.³⁵³ He could have been flirting in the early 1890s, but not with his future bride.)

The following snippet suggests that one servant’s employer disapproved of a suitor distracting her from her duties: ‘B. says it is 5 to 1 that a certain lady will not get another Sunday off. Nothing but cold pudding in the cupboard last time’.³⁵⁴

Hot Springs Hotel: In August 1893, ‘Miss E. of the springs [a visitor or a servant?] looks very happy walking in the Domain with the masher from town. Not bad for J.’ And ‘I see F. is right bower with J., of the springs. When is it coming off, F.’³⁵⁵ In the following month, Miss E. claimed ‘the mashers’ were ‘awfully slow’. And ‘what takes A.D. to the Hot Springs Hotel so often. Is it the fair-haired young lady?’³⁵⁶ again possibly a visitor. In 1894, ‘Are the bright eyes at the Springs the attraction H.L. or is it the bagatelle?’³⁵⁷ In 1896, ‘Te Aroha’s prettiest girl is said to be seen in the bar of the Springs Hotel’.³⁵⁸

One waiter received several mentions. ‘Bob, the waiter, looked charming riding out with Minnie on Sunday evening. I expect he has popped the question to her’.³⁵⁹ Two months later, ‘Minnie had better take possession of Bob, of the Hot Springs Hotel, as there are two others of the

³⁴⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

³⁵⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

³⁵¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

³⁵² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 November 1893, p. 21.

³⁵³ Marriage Certificate of Frederick William Wild, 13 April 1909, 1909/7607, BDM.

³⁵⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

³⁵⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

³⁵⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 9 September 1893, p. 21.

³⁵⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

³⁵⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

³⁵⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 November 1890, p. 17.

fair sex on the look out for him – so he says’. Presumably the same Bob had ‘got his lamps [eyes]³⁶⁰ on the young girl lately over from Manawaru’,³⁶¹ upriver. The following month, ‘who are the two sprightly young girls at the Springs? They seem taken up with Bob. I wonder if the doctor ordered it’.³⁶²

Palace Hotel: E.L., a waitress or barmaid working at the Palace Hotel, received considerable attention in the late 1880s. In April 1887 the O.M. asked ‘What is the attraction for the puriri contractor to Te Aroha so often lately? Is it to see the fair E.L., of the P.H.’?³⁶³ His next column reported that L., presumably the same contractor, ‘and E.L. from the P.H. were doing a fine mash in the single buggy on Sunday afternoon. Bai Jove’. At the end of this column, could it be the same E.L. who ‘was seen going about with tears in her eyes; is it because L. has gone away? Never mind, he will soon be back again and bring you lollies too’.³⁶⁴ In January 1889, J.M. was noted as taking E.L. home from a ball.³⁶⁵ Two months later, J.L., possibly the L. already noted, ‘and E.L. were doing a mash under the trees the other evening, while they thought nobody was near. Don’t talk quite so loud next time’.³⁶⁶ Clearly their affections wandered, as indicated by a comment in June: ‘I wonder if E.L. has found an admirer now, since M.K. took Miss C. for a lover?’³⁶⁷

Other female staff of this hotel attracted admirers. In 1887, G.W., possibly George Ellis Wiggins, a waiter,³⁶⁸ ‘looked slightly in it the other Sunday night with Miss M. from the P.H.’.³⁶⁹ George Wiggins had some brief prominence at that time for competing in running and canoe races.³⁷⁰ ‘What takes G.H., T.B., and H.A. to the Palace so often now? Is it to play

³⁶⁰ Partridge, p. 663.

³⁶¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

³⁶² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 February 1891, p. 18.

³⁶³ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

³⁶⁴ ‘Te Aroha Twinkles’, *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

³⁶⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 January 1889, p. 17.

³⁶⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

³⁶⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 June 1889, p. 18.

³⁶⁸ See *Tauranga Electoral Roll, August 1887*, p. 25; possibly the George Wiggins who became manager of the Royal Hotel at Thames?: *Thames Advertiser*, 8 June 1895, p. 3.

³⁶⁹ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

³⁷⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 30 October 1886, p. 2, 6 November 1886, pp. 2, 3, 13 November 1886, p.

billiards or gooseberry?’³⁷¹ ‘The groom has been doing the heavy with the girls at the Palace lately. Bridget’s sister is the favourite’.³⁷² ‘It is too bad of Jackson to cripple his horse for the sake of playing second fiddle at the Palace. Bella says Archie is right bower yet’.³⁷³ In February 1891, ‘Bob says he likes Joe the best out of the two at the Palace, and if all goes well he will tie the fatal knot after Christmas’.³⁷⁴ But this did not happen, for in August 1892, ‘Long Bob’, seemingly the same person, informed the O.M. ‘that the attraction at the Palace is so great he is going to try for the running there again’.³⁷⁵ In October 1893, ‘what takes somebody to the Palace so often? Is K.D. the attraction?’³⁷⁶ Four months later, ‘the long and the short of it is B.L. is engaged to J., of the Palace. Sisters four long to welcome the bride’.³⁷⁷ The following year, the O.M. asked: ‘Who is the little lady that gathers all the boys around her like the poor moths around a candle? Enquire at the Palace’.³⁷⁸

One male staff member sought companionship elsewhere: ‘What takes the cook, of the Palace, down to the lower hotel so often? Is he trying to pile it on with the servant?’³⁷⁹

Club Hotel: ‘How is it C.N. does not visit the Club so often now? Has Miss W. given him the cold shoulder?’³⁸⁰ ‘I hear that Fitz ‘is about to run in double harness with the nurse at the Club Hotel’.³⁸¹ ‘The nice looking tall girl at the Club has many admirers’.³⁸² ‘A., of the store, is becoming quite a ladies’ man; he says he has a great fancy for the girl at the Club.... The tall young waitress at the Club is a great flirt and takes well amongst the

³⁷¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 September 1889, p. 18.

³⁷² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 November 1890, p. 17.

³⁷³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 August 1892, p. 19.

³⁷⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 February 1891, p. 18.

³⁷⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

³⁷⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 October 1893, p. 21.

³⁷⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

³⁷⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

³⁷⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 August 1889, p. 18.

³⁸⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 August 1889, p. 18.

³⁸¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 March 1891, p. 18.

³⁸² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 January 1893, p. 16.

lads'.³⁸³ 'F.T. is off the running with J.McC., of the Club. Never mind F., just as good fish in the sea, etc'.³⁸⁴

Dining room staff: One waitress was particularly popular, judging by four references to her in the same column:

T.M. knows how to do the nyum nyum ['when you feel that your significant other is highly irresistible and you want to smother them with all your love and affection at that very moment']³⁸⁵ with the fair Miss R.T.... How charmingly Miss R.T. dispensed solid and liquid refreshment to weary travellers at the dining-rooms on Good Friday. She is a born Hebe [Greek goddess of eternal youth].... Who were the two Auckland mashers who were holding such a long and interesting confab. with R.T. in the dining-rooms last Friday afternoon? Their audibly-expressed opinion as they left was that she was a perfect "stunner" ... Who were the young fellows who had such a wrangling about which of them was to take R.T. out the other Sunday?³⁸⁶

In. the following month, it was reported that 'R.T. says she is cut out to be an old maid. What a pity!'³⁸⁷ She then disappeared from the gossip columns.

Boardinghouses: 'A local man says he will have to go and stay at the Park House. Is Miss A. the attraction?'³⁸⁸ 'Lizzie from River View' was 'trying to charm the boss of the Syndicate. They seem to make heavy weather of it',³⁸⁹ presumably meaning having difficulty achieving the desired result. One month later, there was 'great speculation' about 'which of the ladies the pork butcher would take back to Auckland with him, the odds being laid on Emma, of River View Villa, while some fancied it would be fair Violet, of Ivy Lodge'. And what took Peter down to the Temperance Boarding House so much lately?³⁹⁰ Five years later, 'What takes J.D. and

³⁸³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

³⁸⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

³⁸⁵ *Urban Dictionary*, online.

³⁸⁶ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

³⁸⁷ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

³⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

³⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

³⁹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

P.H. to Park House? Is it to cultivate their voices, or to capture the young ladies?’³⁹¹ (Who, like Miss A., may have been boarders, not servants.)

FLIRTING WITH SHOP ASSISTANTS

‘What was Joe waiting so anxiously for on Saturday evening last? Was it for the corner shop to close? And ‘what takes ginger-beer Jack up to the Co-operative so often? Is the fair lady up there the attraction’.³⁹² ‘If B. don’t keep out of the dressmaker’s shop Miss P., of the Thames will be giving him turnips’,³⁹³ meaning he would be jilted.³⁹⁴ ‘Is J.Y.M. after the fair one at the fancy shop?’³⁹⁵ And was the following true? ‘What price a kiss over the counter, C.L.? What, only threepence?’³⁹⁶ ‘Wanted, at once, a nice, good-looking young lady to assist in a hairdressing saloon. Apply H.L.’³⁹⁷ ‘What is the magnet that draws J.M. to the fancy goods shop? Is it G.H.’?³⁹⁸ ‘When is the match coming off between the lady at the fancy goods shop and the gay young surveyor?’³⁹⁹ ‘Who is the young man who is so “eager” for the return of S.H.? The corner shop has no attraction now’.⁴⁰⁰ ‘The O.M. would like to know what attraction W.M. has at the dressmaker’s shop so often’.⁴⁰¹ In 1899, J.M. was ‘inquiring for a nice furnished residence, which looks well for the charming dressmaker’.⁴⁰²

In March 1891, ‘the Town Clerk is beginning to come out of his shell, as he is going with the milliner, and he says he don’t care who knows it’.⁴⁰³ Four months later, ‘our milliner says that the very thought of Percy going away seems to add ten years to her life’.⁴⁰⁴ This comment referred to Percy

³⁹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

³⁹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

³⁹³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 September 1883, p. 12.

³⁹⁴ Partridge, p. 1275.

³⁹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

³⁹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1894, p. 21.

³⁹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

³⁹⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

³⁹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 February 1896, p. 21.

⁴⁰⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

⁴⁰¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 July 1898, p. 21.

⁴⁰² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 June 1899, p. 22.

⁴⁰³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 March 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁰⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 23 July 1891, p. 20.

Snegin, who must have been assisting Charles Ahier, the town clerk,⁴⁰⁵ (who was already married)⁴⁰⁶ and whom he replaced in December 1893, one year after marrying an Auckland woman.⁴⁰⁷

FLIRTING WITH PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT

New arrivals, whether to visit or to settle, attracted the flirtatious. In September 1883, 'Miss S., of the Thames, paid Te Aroha a visit last week, and B. was made happy once more'.⁴⁰⁸ 'Miss W. and H. are very spoony. What would the Thames girl do if she knew?'⁴⁰⁹ 'Those Paeroa mashers fancy themselves, don't they! Oh yes, just fancy G.S.G. and T.S.G.! How they made for the door on Sunday.... What a mash the Hamilton butcher was doing with the two Te Aroha girls last Friday'.⁴¹⁰ 'How is it that W.T. won't have anything to do with the Te Aroha young ladies? Is it because of the one at the Thames?'⁴¹¹ 'Leonard is very punctual every Saturday evening, coming from Morrinsville to see the young lady'.⁴¹² 'P. and E. have been doing it grand with the lady visitors'.⁴¹³ 'Too bad of M.R. to have a Hamilton masher coming to see her, when our boys are breaking their hearts about her'.⁴¹⁴ 'Oh! good gracious! The "toff" from the Old Country is cutting out W.M. Sorry for him'. In the same 1894 report, T.J. of Te Aroha West 'says that she loves A.M. so much that she will have to live in town after this'.⁴¹⁵ In August 1894, 'J.K. is on the scene once more. He could not

⁴⁰⁵ See Town Board, *Te Aroha News*, 12 December 1888, p. 2, 26 April 1890, p. 2; 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 July 1891, p. 18; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 September 1892, p. 23, 23 December 1893, p. 22.

⁴⁰⁶ Marriage Certificate of Charles Ahier, 13 May 1876, 1876/708, BDM.

⁴⁰⁷ Marriage Certificate of Percy Snegin, 29 December 1892, 1892/2818, BDM; *Waikato Times*, 7 December 1893, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 12.

⁴⁰⁹ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 20 March 1886, p. 23.

⁴¹⁰ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁴¹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁴¹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 January 1891, p. 18.

⁴¹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

⁴¹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁴¹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

stay away on account of A.A. being here'.⁴¹⁶ Six months later it was rumoured that they would be married soon.⁴¹⁷

Year after year, similar behaviour. 'G.S. thinks there is nothing like new faces. He generally manages to be early in the field. You bet'.⁴¹⁸ 'W.D. was up from Paeroa with the footballers and he called in at the landlord's office to see somebody.... J.Q., from Mangere, was a great attraction for the fair ones of Te Aroha, especially L.'⁴¹⁹ 'S.V. has still got the Auckland duck on the string, or he has her'.⁴²⁰ 'J.D. was piling it on on Sunday, with the new arrival'.⁴²¹

In the 1890s the *Te Aroha News* first employed female composers,⁴²² and in 1898 'the new lady comp. seems to "take on." What a pity W.H. is so infatuated. He gives no one else a chance'.⁴²³

J.M. provided an example of flirting with someone outside the district. In November 1888, the O.M. asked 'What took J.M. to Cambridge on Sunday?'.⁴²⁴ A month later, 'What takes J.M. over to Cambridge, is it to inspect the lambs?'.⁴²⁵ A fortnight later, 'J.M. says the lambs are doing very well over Cambridge way - also the (dear)s'.⁴²⁶ Was he the Jack referred to in 1891? 'Why has Jack knocked off going to Cambridge now? Can he not afford to cripple another horse even for the love of a girl?'.⁴²⁷ But J.M. was also interested in local girls: in 1889 'J.M. took E.L. home from the ball'.⁴²⁸ Four months later, 'what was the attraction that kept J.M. away from the dance? Some of the ladies were enquiring after him. Papa should let you have more of your own way',⁴²⁹ possibly implying that J.M. was rather young.

⁴¹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁴¹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 February 1895, p. 21.

⁴¹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

⁴¹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁴²⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁴²¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

⁴²² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 2 March 1895, p. 21, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

⁴²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

⁴²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 November 1888, p. 17.

⁴²⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁴²⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 December 1888, p. 17.

⁴²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 17.

⁴²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 January 1889, p. 17.

⁴²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 May 1889, p. 17.

The most dramatic account of an assignation between a prominent but unnamed Thames man and a Te Aroha woman was published in 1894:

That august body, the local High School Board of Governors, recently journeyed from the Thames to Te Aroha to inspect a new school there. A small member of the "Board," well-known for his mashing proclivities, seized the opportunity while his fellow-governors were inspecting the school to step outside, and selecting a trap belonging to, or chartered by one of the other fellows, picked up his Te Aroha girl and took her for a drive. Just as the happy pair drove off the rest of the "Board" emerged from the school. They stared in amazement. While they looked the trap suddenly came to grief in crossing the bridge over the river. The horse jibbed, the trap swerved, the masher shot out like a stone from a catapult, while the young lady went up in the air and descended parachute style, *a la* Baldwin. No one was killed or even much hurt. But they did look sheepish that pair when they came back to the township and faced the crowd!⁴³⁰

Marrying people from outside the district was common. For instance, although J.M. may not have married his Cambridge flame, in 1889 David Craig, a Te Aroha tailor, married a Cambridge woman,⁴³¹ an event ignored by the O.M. for once.

WHERE FLIRTING TOOK PLACE

Anywhere and everywhere: Nowhere were young people safe from being spied on. One possibly prurient observer reported in 1883 that 'K.S. found her tight dress very inconvenient when getting through the rail fence last Sunday'.⁴³² A clear hint of where the curious could observe courting couples was given in 1886: 'The fence around one of the boarding-houses is well protected against the wintry winds, for it is propped up on both sides in the evening'.⁴³³ 'S.A. looked well making love through the fence to E.J. on Friday night'.⁴³⁴ 'The village maiden and the hearty fox-man were doing a big spoon near Lord John's private residence on Monday night'.⁴³⁵ 'Why

⁴³⁰ *Observer*, 3 February 1894, p. 7.

⁴³¹ Marriage Certificate of David Craig, 28 February 1889, 1889/213, BDM.

⁴³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 12.

⁴³³ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 5 June 1886, p. 22.

⁴³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 June 1889, p. 18.

⁴³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15.

doesn't A. take his lady-love to a seat in the domain instead of the grassy bank up near Peter [Baine's]⁴³⁶ wood yard?'⁴³⁷ 'What brings so many young ladies down to the Post Office on train days? Is it to have a chat with their mashers?'⁴³⁸ 'H.J.H. haunts the corner since M.'s return'.⁴³⁹ 'The Misses S. have deserted the station platform since the railway bridge received the last coat of paint. Funny, very';⁴⁴⁰ presumably they were flirting with the painters. 'M.B. says that with all H.T.'s faults she loves him dearly; so I should think, judging by the time they spend at the back gate'.⁴⁴¹ 'The O.M. hopes the gay little euchre party enjoyed themselves at Bachelor M's the other evening'. A.L. 'always "carries" a smiling face while pacing to and fro in front of the Domain office, but his waiting is amply rewarded at 8 o'clock',⁴⁴² because then his lover finished work. 'T.Mc. and A.W. were doing a big spoon at the gate the other night'.⁴⁴³

At musical lessons and performances: 'E.D. seems very much gone on the violin, or has the teacher anything to do with it?'⁴⁴⁴ In 1883 a church choir had 'gone from bad to worse since all the pretty young ladies have left'.⁴⁴⁵ In 1890, 'what makes the young printer go to the Wesleyan Church so often lately? Is it the beautiful singing, or the new arrival from Taranaki?'⁴⁴⁶ In the following year, 'Oswald has joined the choir. What is the attraction?'⁴⁴⁷

At sporting events: 'Our footballers are "always on the leather," and are slowly improving. They seem to play A1 when the fair sex are present'.⁴⁴⁸

⁴³⁶ See *Te Aroha News*, 2 January 1889, p. 2, 11 January 1890, p. 2; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 832.

⁴³⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 September 1892, p. 17.

⁴³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 July 1891, p. 18.

⁴³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

⁴⁴¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

⁴⁴³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁴⁴⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁴⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁴⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 September 1890, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 July 1891, p. 13.

⁴⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 September 1894, p. 21.

At church: In mid-1882, the O.M. considered it ‘strange that with so many bachelors up here, our young ladies have to go to church without an escort’.⁴⁴⁹ He later wondered whether ‘the fair A’s converted to the Presbyterian religion, or is there some other attraction?’⁴⁵⁰ Attending church could make men appear to be good marriage prospects, as indicated in 1891, when ‘The Waihi doughy [baker]⁴⁵¹ attends church regularly now. He evidently means business. Get the cans ready, boys’,⁴⁵² a reference to the ‘rough music’ inflicted on newlyweds. ‘E.T. thought he was doing it very prettily with F.D., bringing her to church the other evening’.⁴⁵³ ‘E.W. should be a little more attentive in church, or was it the inamorata (H.W.) that caused the grinning?’⁴⁵⁴ ‘F.P. looked charming with the two little maids from school after church’.⁴⁵⁵ Five months later, ‘What brought F.P. to the Wesleyan Church the other evening? Does he fancy a certain young lady worthy of his gold?’⁴⁵⁶

Using the pretext of going to religious instruction enabled some girls to escape parental supervision and meet young men. When a visiting clergyman gave an address in the Wesleyan Church in 1890, ‘on account of so much spooning going on the O.M. cannot give any further particulars’ of this address.⁴⁵⁷ In the following year, ‘who are the young ladies that leave home to go to Bible Class and go to the dance instead?’⁴⁵⁸ And ‘What makes all the young men go to the Bible Class? Do they think the world is coming to an end?’⁴⁵⁹

Four snippets of gossip about flirtations with clergymen. In 1885 readers were encouraged to ‘Ask Miss B. what the minister said while playing kiss-in-ring on New Year’s Day’.⁴⁶⁰ In March 1891 ‘Our unfledged parson and the organist are doing a great amount of spooning’, and the

⁴⁴⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 June 1882, p. 201.

⁴⁵⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 August 1889, p. 18.

⁴⁵¹ Partridge, p. 335.

⁴⁵² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 June 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁵³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

⁴⁵⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 January 1895, p. 22.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 May 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁵⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 October 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁵⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁴⁵⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 July 1891, p. 17.

⁴⁵⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

⁴⁶⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 January 1885, p. 10.

'Presbyterian "Meenister" has serious thoughts of matrimony. It would be so convenient for all parties'.⁴⁶¹ The following year, 'Our Presbyterian parson is a long time in tying the fatal knot. Miss C. thinks he is too slow'.⁴⁶² This minister was the popular Thomas Allan Norrie,⁴⁶³ who married Clara Cochrane in 1893.⁴⁶⁴ Also in 1893, 'why did a certain young lady go out of church the other evening when the local preacher came in?':⁴⁶⁵ a hint about a relationship that soured?

Band of Hope Meetings: This Protestant temperance movement provided a respectable venue. 'Why has H. deserted Miss L.C.? He does not attend the Band of Hope meeting now'.⁴⁶⁶ 'Why did the Manawaru stockman desert his fair colleen last Monday night at the Band of Hope meeting? Was it to make room for a better man than himself, or gain the charms of the dusky beauty'.⁴⁶⁷ 'J.B. and L.P. were rather conspicuous at the B. of H. meeting. Not a bad dodge to remain seated while the hymn-singing was in full swing, it afforded a splendid opportunity for a quiet spoon'.⁴⁶⁸

Dances enabled for the sexes to mingle, as illustrated by the O.M. writing after a concert and dance in Te Aroha in 1882: 'Why did you let that girl give you the slip, Johnny? The long and short mate were in it with the home girls'.⁴⁶⁹ At Waiorongomai in the following month, 'was Tom studying botany at the late ball, that he hugged that armful of moss so close?'⁴⁷⁰ Spooning was a feature of subsequent dances, although one girl was reproved: 'You shouldn't be so spooney in a dance-room, Annie; everybody knows you have a sourheart'.⁴⁷¹ When few men attended the first of the

⁴⁶¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 March 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁶² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

⁴⁶³ See *Te Aroha News*, 19 June 1889, p. 2, 3 July 1889, p. 2, 17 August 1889, p. 2; 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15; *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 October 1894, p. 10, 12 May 1894, p. 23, 22 September 1894, p. 22.

⁴⁶⁴ Marriage Certificate of Thomas Allan Norrie, 1893/3041, BDM.

⁴⁶⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 May 1893, p. 17.

⁴⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

⁴⁶⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁴⁶⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 November 1882, p. 121.

⁴⁷⁰ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 23 December 1882, p. 234.

⁴⁷¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

Quadrille Assembly's dances in April 1889, 'there was not much mashing done, several of the dancing men being conspicuous by their absence'.⁴⁷²

As an example of wanting to meet the right person at such events, in 1892 the O.M. asked: 'Who was the young lady that said she would not go to the concert unless F.H. was going to dance?'⁴⁷³ There was much flirting at an 1894 ball:

The young ladies in the corner by the stage seemed to carry out flirtation to the letter, which seemed to please their admirers immensely, many of them being greatly captivated. Some quiet corners were very suitable for flirting couples, especially two. A.F. and F.E. didn't care about dancing when the corner was available.⁴⁷⁴

And 'H.L.'s foot promises to be well for the Catholic concert and dance. His best girl is delighted'.⁴⁷⁵ Three months later, 'Mc. is the envy of our boys at the local hops, such a "don" you know; he always captures the belle. The boys call him belladonna. Rather appropriate'.⁴⁷⁶ In 1895, the fortnightly dances were 'a great success', attracting 'a good number from the outskirts, and the moon's gentle rays make it very pleasant for the spooney couples going home'.⁴⁷⁷ Four years later, 'C.G. and "A" were going it heavily at the dance the other night'.⁴⁷⁸

Race meetings were good places to flirt: 'Our medicine man had a happy time coming from the races' in 1882.⁴⁷⁹ In 1895, L.P. was 'doing the heavy between the races with the dark-complexioned jockey'.⁴⁸⁰

Hotels: 'When a hungry young man groped his way in the darkness to Q's dining-room [in Paddy Quinlan's hotel]⁴⁸¹ the other night in search of provender, he found it occupied by a loving couple, and had to retire with

⁴⁷² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁴⁷³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 December 1892, p. 24.

⁴⁷⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

⁴⁷⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 May 1899, p. 22.

⁴⁷⁹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 23 December 1882, p. 234.

⁴⁸⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁸¹ See paper on his life.

appetite unappeased'.⁴⁸² 'The telegraphist likes a cup of afternoon tea amongst the ladies at the [Hot] Springs [Hotel]. What's his game?'⁴⁸³

Out of town, during the daytime: 'M.L. was doing a big spoon under the willow with E.D. Bai Jove!'.⁴⁸⁴ 'What took May out towards the racecourse on Sunday afternoon? Was it to meet that stock-driver whom she terms handsome?'⁴⁸⁵ 'Bob says the reason he took Minnie for a ride was because the doctor ordered it'.⁴⁸⁶ J.R. was 'often' taking a trip to the old racecourse: 'What is the attraction, is there a pansy down there J.?'⁴⁸⁷ It made 'a fellow feel envious to see the number of loving couples gathering ferns up the hill-side, on Sunday afternoons'.⁴⁸⁸ 'The Misses C. cut quite a dash in the buggy on Sunday.... W.S. and Miss P. are carrying on a quiet little flirtation of their own. You look perfectly captivating in riding costume, W.'. ⁴⁸⁹ 'W.C., W.H., J.H. and C. had a nice little drive on Saturday. What would A.G. say if she only knew, J.?'⁴⁹⁰ 'Did A.D. and Miss Mc. find mashing in the rain last Sunday not quite the thing? Waikino every time!'.⁴⁹¹ 'What is the attraction for the young men at the railway bridge?'⁴⁹² 'G.J. and A.L. looked very loving going to the Thames on the morning of Queen's Birthday'.⁴⁹³

Waihou, a village a short distance from Te Aroha, had possible partners. In 1891, 'What is the attraction for the fair young gentleman who walks to Waihou? Is it the fair one at the hotel that is drawing him? There must be something in it, Bill'.⁴⁹⁴ Seven years later, 'E.J. seems very fond of walking to Waihou. Is E.R. the attraction?'⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁸² 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 30 June 1883, p. 233.

⁴⁸³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 July 1892, p. 19.

⁴⁸⁴ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 September 1890, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁴⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

⁴⁹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 June 1898, p. 21.

⁴⁹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

⁴⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 May 1899, p. 22.

⁴⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 June 1899, p. 22.

⁴⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 17.

⁴⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

Bicycles aided the flirtatious. ‘Wanted – Two nice-looking young gentlemen who can ride “bikes.” Apply at public school’,⁴⁹⁶ a reference to unmarried female teachers. ‘I hope W.M. and C.G. enjoyed that little ride on their bikes on Sunday’.⁴⁹⁷ Five months later, ‘C.W. says he has only one disadvantage with W.M. for the C.S. stakes. He can’t ride a bike’.⁴⁹⁸ As bicycling was the latest rage, ‘it may be of interest to the young ladies of Te Aroha to know that P.W. is giving lessons on cycling’.⁴⁹⁹

Outdoors, in the evenings: ‘Moonlight flirting seems to agree with the grocer and Jessie’.⁵⁰⁰ It was ‘too bad of Jack to take the widow out on Sunday night to get her hat spoilt’.⁵⁰¹ ‘Who are the two young men who promenade the railway bridge nightly, waiting for Emma of Te Aroha West?’⁵⁰² In 1894, when the railway line to Paeroa was being completed, the domain had ‘quite lost its charms for lovers at eventide. Over the R[ailway] Bridge or down the line are the chosen walks now’.⁵⁰³ ‘Who was the young lady W.C. had out driving the other evening?’⁵⁰⁴

On the mountainside: A party that climbed the mountain in 1890 ‘disturbed a lady and gentleman, ostensibly sketching, but in reality spooning (at least so my brother said and he considers himself a judge in these matters)’.⁵⁰⁵ Eight years later, ‘what was E.B. and K.O.’s attraction up the hill last Sunday? Was it to meet R.H., H.S., and H.G.?’⁵⁰⁶

In the domain, at any time of day or night: ‘V.P. looked well up in the domain last Sunday with W.C.’⁵⁰⁷ ‘Miss F. says she likes a stroll round the domain on Sunday evening with her best man’.⁵⁰⁸ ‘A Te Aroha West lady was making herself rather conspicuous in the Domain on Sunday evening

⁴⁹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

⁴⁹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

⁴⁹⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

⁴⁹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 March 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁵⁰¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 March 1885, p. 10.

⁵⁰² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁵⁰³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁵⁰⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15.

⁵⁰⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 26 October 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁰⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

with the dudes from Paeroa'.⁵⁰⁹ 'S.C. was promenading the grounds in great style the other evening. The O.M. would like to know who the other party was'.⁵¹⁰

The drinking fountain was a popular place to meet. 'What possible amusement can visitors to the Domain find in sitting in the pavilion gazing at the soda water spring, and at each other, as many can be observed doing?'⁵¹¹ 'What a tale the drinking spring could tell it if could only speak! Would-be spooners, beware!'⁵¹² 'What takes G.S. to the drinking fountain, is it to carry the little blue kettle or to see M.R.?'⁵¹³

On the tennis court: 'H.P. and G.P. should find a more suitable place to spoon than the tennis court in the Domain'.⁵¹⁴ In 1898, in consequence of tennis being 'all the go at present', a second court was 'needed badly'.⁵¹⁵ 'Our F.W. is in great form with the fair sex on the tennis court, where he "wiles" the time away teaching them to play'.⁵¹⁶ A week later, F.W. was 'still seen on the tennis court, and we all hope to see him in double harness before long'.⁵¹⁷ The following month, 'Cupid's darts have been busy on the tennis court. What about the latest engagement?'⁵¹⁸

At family gatherings: 'Miss H. did a bit of flirting at the golden wedding, but I suppose she was thinking of her own'.⁵¹⁹

When horse riding: 'G. arrived safe home on Sunday after his ride to Piako with Maggie'.⁵²⁰

On the river:

Who were the young couple that went out for a sail, and ran their boat into the bank, and had to wait an hour and a-half before they could get anyone to come and help them off? Miss ----'s fellow should learn to manage a boat better before he takes her out

⁵⁰⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁵¹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 March 1899, p. 22.

⁵¹¹ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁵¹² 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁵¹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

⁵¹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 October 1894, p. 21.

⁵¹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 November 1898, p. 21.

⁵¹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵¹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵¹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

⁵¹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵²⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

again on the river.... The boating party (consisting of two) who carried on such jinks on the river the other day, had better mind that the OBSERVER man is not about when they embark on the Waihou again.⁵²¹

Presumably another couple, more competent on the water, were referred to next month: 'G.W. and Miss M. were doing a big spoon on the river on Sunday afternoon'.⁵²² In the following year, 'What takes T.S. and D.W. out on the river so early in the morning? No time for spooning in the evening'.⁵²³ Ten years later, 'C.W. and Miss G. evidently enjoyed their pull in the "Flirt" last week.'⁵²⁴

Rinking [roller skating]: In August 1889, the O.M. asked the 'boys' whether they had seen 'J.J. hand J.A. her skates on Saturday night? A fine broad hint to see her home. What about the sailor boy?' In another reference to the skating rink, he wrote that 'it was very rude of little B. to catch hold of the ladies to support him while skating on Saturday night'.⁵²⁵ In May 1894, 'roller skating started. S.H. and L.C. were most noticeable on the opening night in the porch',⁵²⁶ rather than inside skating. There were two references in July 1895 to people at the rink: 'S.A. does not seem to take the advice of Sam Weller and beware of the widders, judging by the attention he was paying last rink night'; 'Our messenger may always be heard whistling "Since Annie learnt to skate" '.⁵²⁷ In the following month, 'T.D. said he was going to see N. home from the rink, only H.K. was too quick for him'. And 'G.D. said he would like to go to the rink only N. won't let him, as she has changed her night for going out'.⁵²⁸

WEDDINGS

⁵²¹ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁵²² 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁵²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 November 1888, p. 17.

⁵²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

⁵²⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 August 1889, p. 18.

⁵²⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

⁵²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁵²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

Engagements were regularly mentioned,⁵²⁹ and weddings were always of great interest. For instance, in July 1882 ‘the new bride and bridegroom were escorted from the steamer by an admiring crowd’.⁵³⁰ In the following year, ‘how bashful George looked after that very quiet wedding, going down to work as usual’.⁵³¹ Early in 1894, the O.M. recorded ‘an epidemic of weddings lately. Strange how infectious the malady is’:

W.D. has stolen a march on his friends. Privately married to the beautiful and highly accomplished Miss P. Lucky dog, W., the fellows are all green with envy.... W.J.M. has joined the great army of benedicts. More power to you, W.... The engagement is A.F. and E.R. is reported.⁵³²

Five years later,

Get your tin cans polished, boys: there’s going to be a boom on the matrimonial market.... W.M. says single life is a failure, and is taking things seriously.... J.W. has decided to run in double harness.... The O.M. thinks J.T.M. is tired of labouring alone. He has been enquiring about a residence, boys. Keep the ball rolling, Jim.⁵³³

The mention of tin cans referred to the ‘rough music’ performed for newly-weds;⁵³⁴ in response to being thus serenaded, refreshments were provided. ‘Kerosene tins and sardine boxes were in great demand by the youths in anticipation of the return of the beloved M.’⁵³⁵ In December 1888, ‘get your cans ready, boys, as W.B. was speculating largely at the sale on Saturday. Intends to start housekeeping on a small scale. Don’t forget the cake’.⁵³⁶ This was a reference to the marriage two weeks later of a labourer, Walter Edward Beresford, to Edith Sarah, daughter of James Gerrish,⁵³⁷ a

⁵²⁹ For example, *Observer*, 9 December 1882, p. 196.

⁵³⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 July 1882, p. 313.

⁵³¹ For example, ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 9 June 1883, p. 185.

⁵³² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁵³³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵³⁴ ‘Waiorongomai Wrinkles’, *Observer*, 20 March 1886, p. 23.

⁵³⁵ ‘Waiorongomai Wirings’, *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 16.

⁵³⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 December 1888, p. 17.

⁵³⁷ See paper on his life.

local dealer who also was the local bellman.⁵³⁸ In 1893, 'W.McL. and L.W. will soon be running in double harness. Get the tin cans ready, boys'.⁵³⁹ Four months later, '*On dit* that W.McL. and L.W. will be spliced shortly. Get the cans ready boys, plenty of cakes and lemonade there'.⁵⁴⁰ In the following year, 'H.H. and S.B. were entered into the bonds of matrimony last Sunday, and didn't the tin cans rattle'.⁵⁴¹

Others were criticized for being slow to marry and therefore provide the anticipated feast. 'Hurry up, H.J. and C.B. and give us a spree, for all the tin cups will be going rusty in J.'s'.⁵⁴²

Two disappointments: 'The boys were able to keep the tin-cans from getting rusty the other evening as C.C. and Miss J. were made into one. Lots of fun but no cake'.⁵⁴³ 'Our boys are always called a smart lot, but the O.M. doesn't think so when they allowed the newly married couple to escape tin-canning'.⁵⁴⁴

MARRIAGES UNDER STRAIN

The O.M. was fascinated by the, sometimes, tortuous road to matrimony but chose to ignore what happened next, despite being unavoidably aware that some couples did not live happily ever after. There are many examples where women tolerated a husband who occasionally drank to excess even when such behaviour was contrary to their own principles and could create hardship for their families.⁵⁴⁵ Divorce was possible, on restricted grounds: the papers on James Gordon, Margretha Emilia Kilian, Clara Matthews, Laura Devey, and Thomas Quoi provide examples.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

⁵³⁸ Marriage Certificate of Walter Edward Beresford, 29 December 1888, 1888/2787, BDM.

⁵³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

⁵⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 November 1893, p. 21.

⁵⁴¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

⁵⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

⁵⁴³ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁵⁴⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁵⁴⁵ See papers on women's lives and on the drink problem.

The O.M. occasionally made disapproving comments about those who misbehaved. In October 1882, 'Old Kapai thought the company too rough' at a concert and dance.⁵⁴⁶ In the following year, 'the young timber-man should use less rum and milk and more of the waters of regeneration when he next renews his baptismal vows'.⁵⁴⁷ 'Jim looked very foolish when Miss C. refused to dance with him. Who was in the set that she didn't like? Sisters shouldn't quarrel'.⁵⁴⁸ In 1888, 'Who were those boys that made such a noise coming home from the ball on the 9th?'⁵⁴⁹ Shortly afterwards, 'It was a very childish trick to throw sand through the window, but ladies should be careful when they speak, and be sure', implying a row between neighbours.⁵⁵⁰

In 1887, the O.M. asked: 'Who is the young lady who visits the Bachelors' Hall every evening. Remember the OBSERVER man is watching you'.⁵⁵¹ As there was no such building in Te Aroha, this was a private house occupied by single men. There was a hint of moral reproof in this comment, and occasional censorious remarks reflected the views of respectable residents about inappropriate behaviour. For instance, also in 1887, 'who were the young couple that were sitting on the seat in the Domain at one o'clock in the morning? Rather bad hours for young people'.⁵⁵²

SEXUAL MISBEHAVIOUR

Rarely were serious sexual misdemeanours publicized, but in May 1883 two hints were published. 'The fascinating Mrs G. is here, and encountered her long lost husband at the baths. Notwithstanding George's care to separate the sexes at Te Aroha elysium', a reference to the chairman of the domain board, George Wilson,⁵⁵³ designating separate times for men and women to use the hot pools, 'they will get a little mixed as to time; but it was fortunate for S., as he caught a glimpse of his old flame in

⁵⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 November 1882, p. 121.

⁵⁴⁷ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 30 June 1883, p. 233.

⁵⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁵⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁵⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 January 1889, p. 17.

⁵⁵¹ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁵⁵² 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁵⁵³ See paper on his life.

dishabille'.⁵⁵⁴ Does the following hint at an inappropriate liaison between an unmarried man and a married woman?: 'Who was the young married lady that gave J.D. the curtain lecture in the ballroom?'⁵⁵⁵

One girl was in trouble with her parents in 1890: 'Mid seems to be closely housed since that night of great events. Did she let the cat out of the bag?'⁵⁵⁶ This implied parental wrath at incautious sexual experimentation. Whoever Mid was, she continued to seek out masculine company: six months later, 'how happy the young lady at [the] Temperance Boarding House looks since Percy's recovery. Will it be a match, Mid?'⁵⁵⁷ And in September 1892, 'Mid says she will die for Peter yet'.⁵⁵⁸

Were girls being warned to beware by being informed that 'a certain schoolteacher says he does not believe in matrimony'?⁵⁵⁹

Undesired attentions: Two snippets from 1894: 'Who was heard to exclaim "Let me go!" in the Domain the other Sunday? I think we will have to ask G. for this information'. And: 'What was L.P. about when she hurriedly jumped into the coach and left her charge on the station platform? Slightly perceptible, eh L.?'⁵⁶⁰ In the early twentieth century, similar examples can be found; for instance, 'Mr N. does not seem to pay so much attention to K.H. Perhaps he has taken the gentle hint'.⁵⁶¹

Sex before marriage was occasionally hinted at. In January 1894, 'I hear H.J. and C.B. are soon to tie the fatal knot. Get the tin cans ready boys'.⁵⁶² Just over three months later, did the report that 'H.J. and C.B. are talking about going to church again to fix things'⁵⁶³ hint at the need to formalize their relationship by getting married at last? Five years later, it was 'very cute of C and B to go to town by different routes to spend their holidays'.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁵⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 May 1883, p. 122.

⁵⁵⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

⁵⁵⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 July 1890, p. 18.

⁵⁵⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 January 1891, p. 18.

⁵⁵⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

⁵⁵⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 2 March 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁶⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁵⁶¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 August 1905, p. 22.

⁵⁶² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

⁵⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

⁵⁶⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 April 1899, p. 21.

Adultery: In one case when adultery was implied, no initials were used to identify the parties involved: ‘How quietly that gay Lothario at Te Aroha stole through the window when the husband returned home unexpectedly’.⁵⁶⁵ The following month, residents would have known who was being accused of sleeping with whom: ‘Why does Mrs H. go so early in the morning to the residence of C.’⁵⁶⁶ Another rare accusation of presumably adulterous behaviour was printed in February 1885: ‘Next time Mrs S. and Pat are spooning in the kitchen, she had better pull down the blind’.⁵⁶⁷ In 1890 it was discovered ‘that the handsomest man in Te Aroha has a wife and family down South. I feel like weeping. What will the effect be on a certain lady?’⁵⁶⁸ Three years later ‘the little barman looked quite happy at the circus with the grass widow’,⁵⁶⁹ meaning a married woman whose husband was away.⁵⁷⁰ In 1895, the Waiorongomai O.M. wondered what H.W.P. did ‘now since Mrs Joe left for Paeroa’.⁵⁷¹ He was Harold Welsby Pennington, an unmarried storekeeper who would remain unmarried;⁵⁷² Mrs Joe has not been traced.

In October 1883, the O.M. offered ‘a few suggestions for impersonation’ at a fancy dress ball. Charlie T. should be Don Juan and his wife Donna Inez; the reference was to a carpenter, Charles Henry Albert Tonge and his wife Cecilia; whilst there was evidence of his drunken behaviour,⁵⁷³ nothing has survived to indicate he was seeking adulterous sex. ‘F., the ironmonger, Punch’, was probably Daniel James Frazer, the only ironmonger listed in the electoral roll for 1884, but as he had been married in the previous

⁵⁶⁵ *Observer*, 22 September 1883, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1883, p. 8.

⁵⁶⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 February 1885, p. 10.

⁵⁶⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15.

⁵⁶⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 16 July 1892, p. 19.

⁵⁷⁰ Partridge, p. 496.

⁵⁷¹ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁷² See *Waikato Times*, 10 January 1888, p. 3, Waiorongomai Correspondent, 12 February 1889, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 3 May 1890, p. 2, 9 July 1898, p. 2; Index to Marriages, 1895-1920, BDM; Death Notice, *Evening Post*, 2 August 1944, p. 1.

⁵⁷³ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 55/1884, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A; Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 14 December 1888, p. 2.

year,⁵⁷⁴ the suggestion that Miss H. should dress up as Judy, implying a close friendship, was rather peculiar.⁵⁷⁵

Weddings that should have taken place earlier: On 1 September 1883, the Waiorongomai O.M. noted that ‘Alice has the opinion that there are a lot of fellows but none like Tim’.⁵⁷⁶ At the end of the month, the Te Aroha O.M. asked: ‘Why don’t you marry the girl Tim?’⁵⁷⁷ Local residents would have understood the significance of this reference to Timothy Donovan, a contractor who later became a farmer,⁵⁷⁸ and who had some investments in Waiorongomai mining.⁵⁷⁹ He would not marry Alice Maud Brumby until March the following year, when he was 27, she was 19, and their first child was born 16 days later.⁵⁸⁰ (This apparent reluctance to marry was the prelude to almost 45 years of marriage and ten children.)⁵⁸¹

Possibly the editor of the *Te Aroha News* was hinting at the need for prompt weddings when he commented in 1884, at a welcome to the new Wesleyan minister, that as it was leap year he might be called upon to officiate at many weddings. ‘Four or five marriages in the week just past showed plainly that the gentlemen had received a little stirring up lately and quite time too’.⁵⁸² The extent to which people observed the behaviour of their neighbours was indicated in a report in June 1883 that ‘another marriage in high life is about to take place here between one of the great guns of Italy and the Hostess of the Premier de Huta. I hope you enjoyed your up-hill walk last Sunday, Nora’.⁵⁸³ Those referred to were Gregory Goiss, son of a Trieste sculptor, a miner aged 35 who had participated in the

⁵⁷⁴ *Waikato Electoral Roll, June 1884*; Marriage Certificate of Daniel James Frazer [recorded as Frazier], 3 January 1882, 1882/200, BDM.

⁵⁷⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1883, p. 8.

⁵⁷⁶ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 12.

⁵⁷⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 September 1883, p. 16.

⁵⁷⁸ See *Te Aroha News*, Waitoa Road Board, 1 August 1885, p. 2, Piako County Council, 10 July 1886, p. 3, 5 March 1887, pp. 2, 3, Magistrate’s Court, 8 August 1888, p. 2, 19 June 1895, p. 2, 21 September 1917, p. 2, 25 September 1925, p. 5, 16 November 1938, p. 5.

⁵⁷⁹ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folios 28, 118, 132, 172, 173, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁸⁰ Marriage Certificate of Timothy Donovan, 9 March 1884, 1884/249; Birth Certificate of Mary Ellen Donovan, 25 March 1884, 1884/9100, BDM.

⁵⁸¹ Death Certificate of Timothy Donovan, 16 January 1929, 1929/8843, BDM.

⁵⁸² *Te Aroha News*, 26 April 1884, p. 2.

⁵⁸³ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 30 June 1883, p. 229.

Te Aroha rush,⁵⁸⁴ and Norah Burke, aged 23, an illiterate Australian domestic servant who, judging from the wording, worked in the Premier Hotel at Waiorongomai. Their marriage did not in fact take place until mid-December.⁵⁸⁵ What probably happened on that hillside walk and certainly did on similar occasions may be surmised by the fact that, just under five months after their wedding, their first son was born.⁵⁸⁶ (Being simple-minded, in 1912 their son would be admitted to the Auckland asylum.)⁵⁸⁷

In this instance, the outcome was not a long and happy marriage. They experienced two fires, the first, just after the birth of their second child, destroying their house on the upper track at Waiorongomai along with almost all their property:

What adds to the hardships of the case is that Mrs Goiss has just given birth to a child only two days previously and was in bed when the fire broke out. She was alone at the time, her husband having gone a short way away and the poor woman had to make her escape as best she could from the burning building, dragging with her her new-born baby and another child a year or two old. Much sympathy is felt for the unfortunate couple, and subscriptions are being raised to give them a fresh start in life.⁵⁸⁸

They then moved to Karangahake where, early one morning and only seven months after this fire, Goiss discovered his cottage was on fire. 'The flames quickly obtained such a hold as to preclude all hope of saving the building', and only by breaking the bedroom window could he save his family. Once more all his possessions were destroyed and once again a subscription list was opened to provide assistance.⁵⁸⁹

Their other children were born in June 1885, August 1887, November 1888, May 1890, October 1891, and January 1893.⁵⁹⁰ That Goiss struggled

⁵⁸⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 375, issued 25 November 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 154, 188, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 February 1881, p. 258.

⁵⁸⁵ Marriage Certificate of Gregory Goiss, 16 December 1883, 1883/2694, BDM.

⁵⁸⁶ Birth Certificate of Louis John Goiss, 10 May 1884, 1884/9098, BDM.

⁵⁸⁷ Avondale Asylum, Case File on Louis Goiss, YCAA 1026/22, file 4512, ANZ-A.

⁵⁸⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 30 June 1885, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 2 January 1886, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁰ Birth Certificate of Nellie Norah Goiss, 25 June 1885, 1885/10207, BDM; Baptism of Mary Euphemia Goiss, born 16 August 1887, Register of Paeroa and Ohinemuri

financially was indicated by his being sued in 1893 for the minute debt of £1 10s 3d.⁵⁹¹

One month after he left Karangahake in March 1894 and vanished, the police circulated his description. 'He was in bad health, and left with the expressed intention of going to the Thames Hospital; but has not reached there. He also spoke of going to Western Australia, and has probably done so. His wife and family are destitute'.⁵⁹² He would die in an Australian gaol in 1897.⁵⁹³

Norah's last child, born in April 1898, was registered as illegitimate, with the father's name being unrecorded.⁵⁹⁴ When admitted to the asylum in 1934 with senile dementia, Norah's hallucinations were recorded. While some were fantastical imaginings, such as someone accusing her of 'saying she cut the head off her child and buried it' and that her son-in-law was going to give her 15 floggings, others made sense. She may have stolen a ring, as her neighbours claimed, and there was a basis for these neighbours saying 'I am a real bad woman and had children to other men'. She heard 'voices saying that she is a bad woman and too bad for anybody in the street to associate with'.⁵⁹⁵ She had had no other children, nor had she killed any; her illegitimate (and unmarried) daughter died in 1960, aged 62.⁵⁹⁶ Norah herself died in the asylum when aged 80.⁵⁹⁷

A delayed marriage: On 10 September 1892, William Gathercole King, an unmarried fruiterer aged 58,⁵⁹⁸ died of heart disease and

Baptisms 1884-1949, no. 19, Catholic Archives, Auckland; Marriage Certificate of Mary Euphemia Goiss, 1915/5347; Birth Certificates of Gregory Andrew Goiss, 16 November 1888, 1888/7648; May Catherine Goiss, 31 May 1890, 1890/9653; Norah Catherine Goiss, 17 October 1891, 1891/13161; Thomas Lawrence Goiss, 18 January 1893, 1893/2199, BDM.

⁵⁹¹ Magistrate's Court, *Thames Star*, 16 June 1893, p. 2.

⁵⁹² *New Zealand Police Gazette*, 18 April 1894, p. 61.

⁵⁹³ Research by John Robson, University of Waikato Library.

⁵⁹⁴ Birth Certificate of Elizabeth Gertrude Goiss, 24 April 1898, 1898/14189, BDM.

⁵⁹⁵ Avondale Asylum, Case Files, YCAA 1026/219, file 9695, ANZ-A.

⁵⁹⁶ Death Certificate of Elizabeth Gertrude Goiss, 1960/22885, BDM; Probates, BBAE 1570, P1445/1960, ANZ-A.

⁵⁹⁷ Death Certificate of Norah Goiss, 21 June 1941, 1941/18820, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 23 June 1941, p. 1.

⁵⁹⁸ See *Te Aroha News*, 2 July 1887, p. 3.

bronchitis.⁵⁹⁹ His will, made on the day he died, left all his estate (£12 12s 8d) to his unmarried sister.⁶⁰⁰ An obituary recorded him as having ‘a very quiet and retiring disposition’ and being ‘very much respected in the district’; he had two sisters, one in Auckland and another in Te Aroha who had ‘kept house for him for some years’.⁶⁰¹ On 6 November 1892, when aged 35, the latter sister, Anna Maria Gathercole King, married John Williams,⁶⁰² a 49-year-old grocer;⁶⁰³ clearly, she had felt unable to leave her brother to fend for himself. That the couple had long planned for a life together was indicated by the fact that immediately after they married he moved into her house and transferred much of his merchandise to her shop.⁶⁰⁴

A scandalously prompt remarriage: David Samson, the son and grandson of miners,⁶⁰⁵ arrived with his family in New Zealand in 1864, when 12 years old.⁶⁰⁶ In the 1870s he mined with his father, James, at Thames. When accused of stealing specimens from one mine, a newspaper described them as ‘highly respectable men’; as ‘their characters had hitherto been irreproachable ... many citizens were willing to become sureties’.⁶⁰⁷ After hearing evidence from the manager, the magistrate ‘said there was no necessity to make a defence, and discharged the prisoners. There were signs of applause amongst those present, which were quickly hushed up by the police’.⁶⁰⁸ On the last day of 1877, when he recorded his age as 23, he married Agnes Little, aged 19.⁶⁰⁹ Two daughters were born, in March 1879 and November 1880, while he was mining at Huntly, and a third in Thames

⁵⁹⁹ Death Certificate of William Gathercole King, 10 September 1892, 1892/3442, BDM.

⁶⁰⁰ Probates, BBAE 1569/1292; Testamentary Register 1892-1896, folio 34, BBCB 4208/3, ANZ-A.

⁶⁰¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 September 1892, p. 23.

⁶⁰² Marriage Certificate of Anna Maria Gathercole King, 6 November 1892, 1892/2933, BDM.

⁶⁰³ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 831-832; *Te Aroha News*, 17 October 1917, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁴ *Waikato Times*, 10 November 1892, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁵ See Death Certificate of James Samson, 1 October 1914, 1914/7414, BDM.

⁶⁰⁶ Lands and Survey Department, Land Grants for Immigrants, Register of Grantees 1863-1868, folios 107-108, ‘Helenslee’, from Glasgow, BAIE 4115/1c, ANZ-A.

⁶⁰⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 September 1873, p. 3, 23 September 1873, p. 3.

⁶⁰⁸ Police Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 September 1873, p. 3.

⁶⁰⁹ Marriage Certificate of David Samson, 31 December 1877, 1877/2362, BDM.

in June 1883.⁶¹⁰ By the early 1880s the family had moved to Waiorongomai, where his last child, another daughter, was born in 1886 but died after only 16 hours because of ‘fits from birth’.⁶¹¹ Last recorded as living at Waiorongomai in October 1889,⁶¹² in the following year he was mining at Waihi.⁶¹³

In August 1888, Samson sold his residence site to a man who sold it on to Agnes Samson in the following June. During the following decade, when paying the rent she gave her address as ‘c/o T. Hill, Waiorongomai’.⁶¹⁴ When Samson died at Waihi on 27 March 1899, his father, not his widow, informed the registrar.⁶¹⁵ Almost immediately, on 16 April, Agnes, aged 39, married Thomas Hill, a miner aged 29, at Te Aroha.⁶¹⁶

So far, so romantic: clearly, they had wanted to marry for the previous ten years, and seized the chance with what contemporaries may have regarded as indecent haste once the obstacle to their marrying was removed by death. But the reality was less romantic. On 12 July 1899, after only three months of marriage, Agnes sought a prohibition order against her new husband to prevent him drinking in any hotels in the district. Although she did not appear in court and her application was struck out, another three months later she reapplied for one and this time it was granted.⁶¹⁷ Just over another three months later, she sought sureties from him to preserve the peace, but by her not appearing in court this case was struck out.⁶¹⁸ At the end of October 1901 she sought a separation order but then withdrew it.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁰ Birth Certificates of Ellen Samson, 26 March 1879, 1879/14879; Mary Margaret Samson, 19 November 1880, 1880/12482; Ethel Mary Samson, 6 June 1883, 1883/5882, BDM.

⁶¹¹ Birth Certificate of Agnes Anne Samson, 3 April 1886, 1886/5847; Death Certificate of Agnes Anne Samson, 3 April 1886, 1886/44, BDM.

⁶¹² *Te Aroha News*, 23 October 1889, p. 2.

⁶¹³ *Thames Star*, 6 November 1890, p. 2.

⁶¹⁴ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Rent Ledger 1881-1900, folio 125, BBAV 11492/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶¹⁵ Death Certificate of David Samson, 27 March 1899, 1899/665, BDM.

⁶¹⁶ Marriage Certificate of Agnes Samson, 16 April 1899, 1899/1732, BDM.

⁶¹⁷ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 19, 25/1899, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶¹⁸ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 11/1900, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶¹⁹ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 54/1901, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

One month later, she charged him with assault: he was found not guilty.⁶²⁰ At this hearing, Hill sought a prohibition order against her and the police sought one against him; both were granted.⁶²¹

That was the last time they came before the courts. Probably because of Agnes' age, they had no children; despite this and the conflicts early in their marriage, it lasted. Thomas, who for a time was a brass worker in Auckland, which probably damaged his lungs, died in 1920, aged only 50; he left all his estate of £188 4s 8d, to his widow.⁶²² She had another 17 years to live.⁶²³

Illegitimate births were rarely mentioned in the press unless maintenance was sought or the child died in suspicious circumstances. Only an explosion of such births in Thames in 1889 prompted the *Observer's* local correspondent to raise the issue:

Underneath our social stratum there is a seething mass of vice and immorality.... Within the past three months no fewer than nineteen illegitimate children have been born here, some of the unfortunate girls who have become mothers being daughters of respected citizens.⁶²⁴

Based in Thames, one of the most persistent producers of illegitimate children was David Rickard Gellion, a leading sharebroker there since 1872,⁶²⁵ who was briefly associated with the Te Aroha rush.⁶²⁶ In 1881, in an article imagining what Thames might be like in ten years' time, a local author predicted that 'Gelly, the matchless, has at last found his match,

⁶²⁰ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 65/1901, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶²¹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 66, 67/1901, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶²² Death Certificate of Thomas Hill, 16 October 1920, 1920/4728, BDM; Probates, BBAE 1569/14531; Testamentary Register 1920-1921, folio 487, BBCB 4208/12, ANZ-A.

⁶²³ Death Certificate of Agnes Hill, 10 December 1937, 1937/18612, BDM.

⁶²⁴ 'Our Thames Letter', *Observer*, 5 October 1889, p. 18.

⁶²⁵ See *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1873, p. 2, 12 September 1873, p. 3, 11 December 1875, p. 3; *Thames Exchange, Miners and Merchants Directory*, 12 December 1874, p. 4; 'Quaintan Queer', 'Trip to Thames', *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 November 1887, p. 8.

⁶²⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folio 107, BBAV 11594/1a; Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, 1/1880, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 28 April 1881, p. 476.

having married a widow with six children, and I do not think will ever be sorry for the step he has taken'.⁶²⁷ This was an inaccurate forecast: when he died in 1896, aged 53, he was still unmarried.⁶²⁸ But he was not childless, and his flirtations and their outcomes were so blatant that the Thames O.M. could not ignore them, although his identity was usually lightly disguised. When Lydia Howard and her troupe of danseuses visited Thames in 1881, 'Sam' admired her, and 'D.R.G. was also struck'.⁶²⁹ Later that year, the O.M. reported that the rumour that Amy (no surname given) was engaged was false.⁶³⁰ In the following issue, he wrote that 'Many readily believed the rumour referred to in my last *re* Amy as the leading sharebroker has of late been spending his leisure hours at her papa's residence. Beware, David, the OBSERVER man is about'.⁶³¹ One week later, he reported that, at a rink dance, 'Gelly couldn't quite manage to steer himself in the Lancers; the way in which he endeavoured to smack that wall, every now and then, was disgraceful. What was the cause? Miss Alice W. *didn't* kiss him'.⁶³²

Five months later, it was claimed that 'the favourite amongst the ladies is D.R.G.'.⁶³³ Two months later, although aged 39, he appears to have been referred to in an item about a 'bucolic old bachelor of the Scrip Corner', the sharebroking centre, with

still a friendly feeling for the daughters of Eve. The other afternoon he was observed doing the osculatory business [kissing] in a certain licensed house in Grahamstown, the fair creature being a gushing damsel in her teens. Whatever would Jack say if he had caught the couple *in flagrante delicto*?⁶³⁴

This common euphemism for sexual intercourse made clear the nature of their relationship. In the following month, there was 'a likelihood of the Resident Magistrate being called upon at an early date to decide a very delicate point. Strenuous efforts are being made to settle the matter out of

⁶²⁷ 'Robert Smythe', 'A Peep into the Future', *Thames Star*, 4 March 1881, p. 2.

⁶²⁸ Death Certificate of David Rickard Gellion, 14 May 1896, 8581/1896, Victorian BDM.

⁶²⁹ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 5 March 1881, p. 259.

⁶³⁰ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 23 July 1881, p. 507.

⁶³¹ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 30 July 1881, p. 523.

⁶³² 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 6 August 1881, p. 536.

⁶³³ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 14 January 1882, p. 278.

⁶³⁴ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 18 March 1882, p. 9.

Court; but the lady ... is standing out for better terms, and hence the probability of a public *expose*'.⁶³⁵ Clearly this concerned an affiliation case, but a satisfactory maintenance agreement must have been reached because there was no public *expose*. As Gellion was not recorded as the father in any births registered at Thames either in that year or later in that decade,⁶³⁶ it is not possible to confirm that the reference was to him, but it seems likely. Having resolved this complication (if indeed he was the guilty party), Gellion continued his philandering ways, probably being mentioned four months later: 'Ask that sharebroker what he meant by kissing the housemaid of the ____ Hotel at the public entrance, and in broad daylight'.⁶³⁷

Gellion was probably being referred to in another 'Thames Tittle Tattle' column in February 1883: 'Our gay old spark still practices in the lady-killing lines. Not content with his nice little riding parties, his latest notion is a boat, in which his charmers pull him up and down the river'.⁶³⁸ Two months later, Agnes Blanche Smith, aged 22, made it quite clear who was the father of her illegitimate child, for although no father's name was recorded, she named her son Frederick David Gellion.⁶³⁹ Two months later, 'Dame rumour is mixing up the names of a well-known M.P.S. and a "[Scrip] Corner" [share broking] man with an ex-barmaid's and a "little stranger," in anything but an enviable manner'. Perhaps a comment in the same column, that 'Gelly pays for every comfort',⁶⁴⁰ indicated that he had agreed to pay maintenance. In August he was named as one of the local ladykillers.⁶⁴¹

In 1885 Gellion's behaviour became public knowledge. Agnes Blanche Friend, formerly Smith (five months after bearing her son to Gellion she had married George William Friend,⁶⁴² a general agent aged 28),⁶⁴³ charged

⁶³⁵ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 22 April 1882, p. 84.

⁶³⁶ Births Deaths and Marriages, Index of Births 1880-1890, BDM.

⁶³⁷ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 5 August 1882, p. 324.

⁶³⁸ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 10 February 1883, p. 342.

⁶³⁹ Birth Certificate of Frederick David Gellion Smith, 20 April 1883, 1883/5888, BDM.

⁶⁴⁰ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 19 May 1883, p. 134.

⁶⁴¹ *Observer*, 4 August 1883, p. 14.

⁶⁴² Marriage Certificate of Agnes Blanche Smith, 19 September 1883, 1883/1711, BDM.

⁶⁴³ See Marriage Certificate of George William Friend, 19 September 1883, 1883/1711; Birth Certificate of George Friend, 24 July 1884, 1884/9029, BDM; advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 27 March 1873, p. 1; *Thames Star*, 5 March 1875, p. 2.

him with 'Refusing to support his illegitimate male child born 20/4/83'.⁶⁴⁴ On the application of both counsels, the hearing was heard in the secrecy of the magistrate's office and therefore not published. After Gellion's counsel admitted paternity and that his client had 'neglected to support his child', he produced an agreement to pay 12s each week until his son was 14, which was accepted.⁶⁴⁵ The O.M. gave details of the decision, naming Gellion and jokingly describing his son as 'a young sharebroker'.⁶⁴⁶ (Agnes would go on to have two sons by her husband, the first one dying shortly after birth).⁶⁴⁷

Gellion's sex life then stayed out of the public eye until July 1891, when the O.M. appeared to refer to him once more. 'Some of our mining gentlemen have not a very strict code of morality. It is said that a gay Lothario has lately added number four to his family, the mothers of which are scattered about the gold field'. He quoted a 'bachelor broker' as estimating 'that the fruits of free love cost him close on £300 per annum'.⁶⁴⁸ Three months later, Gellion announced that he would travel to Australia to visit relatives and to inspect mines.⁶⁴⁹ He died there five years later,⁶⁵⁰ later being recalled, favourably, as 'matchless'.⁶⁵¹

At Te Aroha, James Gordon produced the most illegitimate children.⁶⁵² The local O.M. ignored illegitimate births, unless the following snippets implied one: 'When did the Taranaki man get struck on the young lady at the chemists? It won't do R! ... Does not R. (Taranaki) look delighted wheeling the perambulator round the Domain? Look out, R., somebody might give you away'.⁶⁵³ There were scandals that the O.M. could have

⁶⁴⁴ Thames Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1883-1886, 96/1885, BACL 13736/36a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁴⁵ Thames Magistrate's Court, Magistrate's Notebook 1883-1885, Hearing of 1 August 1885, BACL 13830/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁴⁶ 'Thames', *Observer*, 8 August 1885, p. 16.

⁶⁴⁷ Birth Certificates of George Friend, 24 July 1884, 1884/9029; George Spears Friend, 1886/9402; Death Certificate of George Friend, 1884/5546, BDM.

⁶⁴⁸ 'Thames', *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

⁶⁴⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 10 October 1891, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁰ Death Certificate of David Rickard Gellion, 14 May 1896, 8581/1896, Victorian BDM; *Thames Star*, 12 June 1896, p. 2.

⁶⁵¹ *Hauraki Tribune*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 21 February 1899, p. 4.

⁶⁵² See paper on his life.

⁶⁵³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 April 1893, p. 17.

recorded had he a mind to, as for instance when the 15-year-old daughter of a mine manager, Thomas Scott,⁶⁵⁴ had an illegitimate son.⁶⁵⁵

Quite apart from the social stigma, having a child out of wedlock meant severe financial repercussions, as illustrated in 1889 when Florence Allen applied through an Auckland legal firm for maintenance from George Ebert, publican of the Palace Hotel, whom she claimed had fathered her child (whose birth was not registered, at least not under Florence's name). Her solicitor pointed out that she was 'absolutely without any means whatever and unable to take a situation, in addition to which she has to support the infant'.⁶⁵⁶ The O.M. had not published any gossip about their relationship, Ebert's initials not appearing in any column after he arrived in Te Aroha in mid-1888.⁶⁵⁷ Hers appeared twice, although someone else may have been referred to. In May 1887 F.A. was mentioned as being likely to marry G.F.⁶⁵⁸ In November the following year, the O.M. considered it was 'Too bad of F.A. to go away without bidding H.M. good-by. What was the matter? Never mind, H., sail in again and get another'.⁶⁵⁹ If this F.A. was Florence Allen, the 'matter' was that she was pregnant and was leaving to hide her shame by having the baby elsewhere. She seems to have been a close friend of H.M., who may have been the father; Ebert certainly denied paternity.⁶⁶⁰ After failing to extract financial assistance, Florence did not take him to court, thereby preserving her reputation from those not in the know but leaving her destitute. Ebert would marry another woman in 1906, and she would marry in 1915.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁴ See *Thames Star*, 16 August 1882, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 3 May 1883, p. 2, 8 August 1885, p. 3, 26 July 1892, p. 2, 5 October 1894, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 10 October 1885, p. 2, 5 June 1886, p. 2, 1 October 1887, p. 2, 23 October 1889, p. 2; Mines Department, MD 1, 87/676, ANZ-W.

⁶⁵⁵ Birth Certificate of James Albert Scott, 20 June 1892, 1892/9672, BDM.

⁶⁵⁶ Jackson and Russell to George Ebert (Palace Hotel, Te Aroha), 19 June 1889, 29 June 1889, Jackson and Russell Letterbook no. 40, pp. 16, 92, MS 360, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

⁶⁵⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Publicans' Licenses 1882-1892, folio 17, BBAV 11493/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁵⁸ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁶⁵⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 November 1888, p. 17.

⁶⁶⁰ Jackson and Russell to George Ebert, 29 June 1889, Jackson and Russell Letterbook no. 40, p. 92, MS 360, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

⁶⁶¹ Marriage Certificates of George Ebert, 1906/1515; Florence Allen, 1915/4497, BDM.

Where paternity was determined, the father was required to pay maintenance each week until the child was 14.⁶⁶² But to obtain maintenance, paternity had to be proved, which in the case of outright denial by the alleged father was often hard to prove. For instance, in 1897 a father sued a man for failing to maintain his child, but as the case was dismissed and costs were refused,⁶⁶³ the evidence must have been considered to be inadequate. Sometimes putative fathers did not wait around to argue the point. For example, in early May 1887 ‘M.M. says he would like to be somebody’s darling. Will some lady kindly oblige?’⁶⁶⁴ If he was the same man as Martin Joseph Morgan, Hannah Maria Brumby, aged 26, had already obliged, for in early December she sued him for failing to support her illegitimate child, Martin Charles Morgan Brumby.⁶⁶⁵ The clerk of court recorded: ‘Summons not Served – Def cannot be found – Case adjourned sine die’.⁶⁶⁶ As the police never traced Morgan, he successfully evaded his responsibilities. He could have been traced if the police had taken the case seriously, for he became a farmer at Gordon, upriver from Waiorongomai, dying there in 1905, aged 45; and unmarried.⁶⁶⁷ Despite having had a child, two years later Hannah Maria was married, to the curiously named Violet Wells Barker (he preferred V. Wells Barker),⁶⁶⁸ a Shaftesbury farm labourer who had been living there for two years (she had lived there for six months, presumably with him), and three weeks later had another son.⁶⁶⁹ Soon afterwards, the couple left New Zealand.⁶⁷⁰ (Delayed

⁶⁶² For example, Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 55/1901, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶⁶³ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 16/1897, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶⁶⁴ ‘Te Aroha Twinkles’, *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁶⁶⁵ Birth Certificate of Martin Charles Morgan Brumby, 21 November 1887, 1887/19901, BDM.

⁶⁶⁶ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 29/1887, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁶⁷ Death Certificate of Martin Joseph Morgan, 1 June 1905, 1905/2312, BDM; Death Notice, *Auckland Star*, 21 June 1905, p. 6.

⁶⁶⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 30 January 1882, p. 6.

⁶⁶⁹ Notices of Intentions to Marry 1889, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/34, folio 866, no. 5, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of Hannah Maria Brumby, 2 September 1889, 1889/2027; Birth Certificate of Francis Joseph Barker, 25 September 1889, 1889/12174, BDM; Birth Notice, *Te Aroha News*, 16 November 1889, p. 2.

marriages were not unusual in this family, for as noted her sister, Alice Maud, had married Timothy Donovan, somewhat belatedly.) The O.M. was silent on both these cases.

DISGUIISING EMBARRASSING FACTS

When community norms were breached, some people went to considerable trouble to disguise the facts. For example, Charles James Longhurst,⁶⁷¹ a labourer and miner with only the briefest involvement with Waiorongomai,⁶⁷² provided details in the birth certificates of his children suggesting a son with the same name was born in both 1890 and 1897. As no boy with this name had died between 1890 and 1897, why use the same name twice?

Longhurst married in 1875, when aged 24 and his bride, Mary Elizabeth Cooper, was 21.⁶⁷³ They had 11 children, of whom seven died.⁶⁷⁴ In October 1889, when his wife sought a divorce on the grounds of cruelty and adultery, she stated that since May that year he had been 'living in adultery with a young girl named Elizabeth Philp'. As he had struck her during the past three years and had threatened her life, she was granted the divorce and custody of the children.⁶⁷⁵ (He was imprisoned in 1893 for three months for not paying maintenance; when charged the following year for not supporting his children he 'cleared out' from Wellington and was not traced.)⁶⁷⁶ His future second wife, correctly Emily, was 16 years old in 1889 and nearly 20 years his junior; he would not marry her until May 1895, when she was 21: presumably her parents had refused permission for her to marry.⁶⁷⁷ In October 1890, when she was 17, she had a son whose birth was

⁶⁷⁰ Index of Deaths, 1890-1940, BDM.

⁶⁷¹ See *Thames Advertiser*, 22 September 1897, p. 3, 12 May 1898, p. 3, 12 July 1898, p. 3; Company Files, BADZ 1518, box 322 no. 1811, box 354 no. 1974, ANZ-A

⁶⁷² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1913, 34/1913, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁷³ Marriage of Charles James Longhurst, 20 November 1875, 1875/2229, BDM.

⁶⁷⁴ Divorce Court, *Evening Post* (Wellington), 22 October 1889, p. 3.

⁶⁷⁵ Divorce Court, *Evening Post*, 22 October 1889, p. 3; Supreme Court, Divorce Register 1868-1897, folio 221, no. 144, AAOM 6042/1, ANZ-W.

⁶⁷⁶ *New Zealand Police Gazette*, 20 September 1893, p. 153, 30 May 1894, p. 88.

⁶⁷⁷ Marriage Certificate of Charles James Longhurst, 1895/4167, BDM.

not registered until 1958.⁶⁷⁸ After their marriage they had a daughter,⁶⁷⁹ and when another son was born in 1897 they registered both boys, the one born in 1890 being described as ‘elder of twins’. It was possible to register them in this way because the registrar did not see the children, who, as was normal practice, were recorded as ‘Not Present’. When legitimized, in 1958, the original birth certificate was crossed out, his brother was no longer listed as ‘younger of twins’, and the new certificate gave all the correct details apart from omitting the date of his parents’ marriage.⁶⁸⁰ As the son had of course known his real age, when he married a 22-year-old he wisely gave his age as 23 rather than 16, but did not bother to correct the birth details until 21 years before his death.⁶⁸¹ The charade was maintained until his father’s death in 1929, when he was recorded, correctly, as having two daughters and two sons from his second marriage, but incorrectly that the latter were twins.⁶⁸²

This was a much more elaborate charade than most, but others also tried, often successfully, to hide indiscretions or complications. James Don, for instance, who for part of the 1880s was licensee of the Hot Springs Hotel,⁶⁸³ and invested in some local mines,⁶⁸⁴ when registering the birth of his last son, Robert, in 1897, stated that he had married Bridget Coffey in Auckland in 1887.⁶⁸⁵ This was unusually vague; normally the day and month were recorded. The reason for this vagueness was because there had been no marriage; and there never would be one, for reasons that cannot be explained. Neither partner was already married, which would have been an obvious reason preventing their official union. There had been a marriage in

⁶⁷⁸ Birth Certificate of Charles Archibald Longhurst, 7 October 1890, 1958/108985, BDM.

⁶⁷⁹ Birth Certificate of Emily Mabel Longhurst, 6 August 1896, 1896/11250, BDM.

⁶⁸⁰ Birth Certificates of Charles Archibald Longhurst, 7 October 1890 [originally recorded as 7 October 1897], 1958/108985; Edward James Longhurst, 7 October 1897, 1897/17592, BDM.

⁶⁸¹ Marriage Certificate of Charles Archibald Longhurst, 9 September 1914, 1914/1258; Birth Certificate of Charles Archibald Longhurst, 7 October 1890, 1958/108985, BDM.

⁶⁸² Death Certificate of Charles James Longhurst, 20 January 1929, 1929/483, BDM.

⁶⁸³ *Te Aroha News*, 28 May 1887, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 2 July 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁸⁴ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 137, 140, BBAV 11567/1a; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 October 1886, p. 3.

⁶⁸⁵ Birth Certificate of Robert Don, 15 July 1897, 1897/8335, BDM.

Oamaru in 1878 of a Bridget Coffey, but the ages and subsequent locations of her and her husband proved that this was a different Bridget.⁶⁸⁶

Don's death certificate stated that he had married Bridget Hogan (a surname that further muddied the water) in Auckland in 'about' 1886; her death certificate stated she had been married there in 'about' 1889 to James Stewart Don (this was one of her sons' names).⁶⁸⁷ Their first child, Agnes Jane Coffey, born in 1887, was registered as Agnes Jane Don when she died nine months later.⁶⁸⁸ They then had twin sons, both registered as Coffey, as was one who died 21 months later.⁶⁸⁹ Their sons William and Archie (the latter's birth not registered under either name) were admitted to the Paeroa School under the surname Don.⁶⁹⁰ They registered their last three children as Don,⁶⁹¹ and James' and Bridget's death certificates both recorded a non-existent marriage.⁶⁹² Presumably the confusion over these certificates was deliberate or were they just incompetent when faced with legalities? And why not just get married and avoid this facade?

TRAGEDIES

The O.M. dealt in jollities, omitting the darker side of private lives, such as young love cut short by a relatively early death. In 1881, 'A marriage is on the *tapis* between Willie H. of Ohinemuri, who is considered the best looking fellow in the Hauraki district, and Miss C., of Waihi'.⁶⁹³ He

⁶⁸⁶ Births Deaths and Marriages, Notices of Intentions to Marry 1878, BDM 20/23, p. 812, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of Bridgett Coffey, 27 March 1878, 1878/2966, BDM.

⁶⁸⁷ Death Certificates of James Don, 9 May 1904, 1904/2946; Bridget Don, 7 June 1918, 1918/2906, BDM; Death Notice, *New Zealand Herald*, 8 June 1918, p. 1.

⁶⁸⁸ Birth Certificate of Agnes Jane Coffey, 1887/14445; Death Certificate of Agnes Jane Don, 1888/2347, BDM.

⁶⁸⁹ Birth Certificates of John Thomas Coffey, 1889/12589; William Saunders Coffey, 1889/12590; Death Certificate of John Thomas Coffey, 1891/2593, BDM.

⁶⁹⁰ Paeroa School, Admissions Register 1895-1899, no. 292 [William], no. 293 [Archie].

⁶⁹¹ Birth Certificates of James Stewart Don, 1893/10460; Margaret Ellen Don, 1895/10934; Robert Don, 15 July 1897, 1897/8335, BDM. For a different date of James Stewart's birth [1890], see file on Archibald James Stewart Don, Army Department, World War One 52168, ANZ-W [online].

⁶⁹² Death Certificates of James Don, 9 May 1904, 1904/2946; Bridget Don, 7 June 1918, 1918/2906, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 12 May 1904, p. 7, 8 June 1918, p. 1.

⁶⁹³ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 8 October 1881, p. 60.

was William James Hyde, a miner who became a milkman, contractor, and butcher with a brother and a brother-in-law living at Te Aroha,⁶⁹⁴ and she was Margaret Frances Cornes, eldest daughter of Clem Cornes.⁶⁹⁵ As they would marry two years later, when he was aged 25 and she was about to turn 19,⁶⁹⁶ the wedding had been anticipated from when she was 16. As was common, within a year their first child was born; they would have 11 children,⁶⁹⁷ but only seven were alive when he died.⁶⁹⁸ One daughter died after six days of life from ‘debility from birth’, suffering from convulsions during her last eight hours.⁶⁹⁹ Another daughter died of pneumonia, aged four.⁷⁰⁰

Hyde participated in sports from 1881 onwards; in that year he was reported as a ‘well-known amateur pedestrian’, meaning a runner.⁷⁰¹ Because of his fitness, in 1904, when aged 46 he was cutting sleepers for the Waihi Company in bush near Te Aroha when a log rolled over him, crushing his head. ‘His mangled remains were carried to Te Aroha ... wrapped in

⁶⁹⁴ See Warden’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 November 1881, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 19 January 1884, pp. 2, 7, 4 April 1885, p. 2, 27 February 1886, p. 2, 16 April 1890, p. 2; Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 22 January 1891, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

⁶⁹⁵ See paper on Clement Augustus Cornes.

⁶⁹⁶ Birth of Margaret Frances Cornes, 26 July 1865, unrecorded except in Thames Register of Baptisms 1868-1874, no. 172, Anglican Archives, Auckland; Marriage Certificate of Margaret Frances Cornes, 17 July 1883, 1883/1663, BDM; *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 July 1883, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁷ Birth Certificates of Clara Ellen Hyde, 18 April 1884, 1884/11626; Alfred William Hyde, 30 May 1885, 1885/5772; Elizabeth Hyde, 30 June 1887, 1887/5263; Susan McDougall Hyde, 25 March 1889, 1889/18850; Henry Hammond Hyde, 1 September 1890, 1890/13889; Margaret Frances Hyde, 1 September 1890, 1890/13890; Silvia May Hyde, 15 January 1893, 1893/2341; Henry Roy Hyde, 26 June 1894, 1894/8107; Barbara Ellen Hyde, 15 April 1896, 1896/16088; Harrietta Perrin Hyde, 7 June 1899, 1899/4373; William James Archibald Hyde, 1 September 1902, 1902/13235, BDM.

⁶⁹⁸ Death Certificate of William [James] Hyde, 21 November 1904, 1904/6521, BDM.

⁶⁹⁹ Death Certificate of Silvia May Hyde, 21 January 1893, 1893/364, BDM.

⁷⁰⁰ Death Certificate of Harrietta Perrin Hyde, 25 September 1902, 1902/4568, BDM.

⁷⁰¹ *Waikato Times*, 22 March 1881, p. 2; see also *Te Aroha News*, 29 December 1883, p. 2, 27 February 1886, p. 2, 27 March 1889, p. 2, 4 May 1889, p. 2.

blankets'.⁷⁰² He left his family £404 3s 10d.⁷⁰³ Margaret was a widow for almost 28 years until her death in 1931, aged 65.⁷⁰⁴

LIFE AFTER LOVED ONES DIED

Life had to continue for those left behind, but some never recovered from the death of loved ones. Robert Guy, a skilled miner who worked at Thames and Waiorongomai and employed as shift boss and underground manager,⁷⁰⁵ was married in Thames in 1874 to Annie Isabella Rattray.⁷⁰⁶ They had no children until she was aged 34, when on 13 June 1891 a daughter was born at her mother's Auckland home; three days later, the child died.⁷⁰⁷ One month later, Annie died from 'persistent oozing of blood from fibroid of uterus'.⁷⁰⁸ Three years later, Guy died, aged 41, at his mother-in-law's home, after having suffered for four years from tuberculosis, probably meaning miners' complaint.⁷⁰⁹ General regret was reported at Te Aroha and Waiorongomai, because he had been 'held in high esteem'. After his wife died, he had 'never seemed the same man'.⁷¹⁰

Although no similar comment was published about the impact of deaths in the family of Robert's brother Christopher, these can be assumed. In 1879, when aged 25, he married Tryphena Jane Wood, two years his junior.⁷¹¹ Their first child was not born until November 1890, and their second and last, another boy, in January 1895.⁷¹² The latter died at the age

⁷⁰² Death Certificate of William [James] Hyde, 21 November 1904, 1904/6521, BDM; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 23 November 1904, p. 2; *Observer*, 3 December 1904, p. 2.

⁷⁰³ Testamentary Register 1903-1906, folio 133, BBCB 4208/5, ANZ-A.

⁷⁰⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 20 March 1931, p. 8.

⁷⁰⁵ See testimonials in Mines Department, MD 1, 92/663, ANZ-W.

⁷⁰⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 December 1874, p. 2.

⁷⁰⁷ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 June 1891, p. 1.

⁷⁰⁸ Death Certificate of Annie Guy, 13 July 1891, 1891/3280, BDM.

⁷⁰⁹ Death Certificate of Robert Guy, 1 October 1894, 1894/697, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 5 October 1894, Monthly Survey, p. 4.

⁷¹⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 October 1894, p. 10.

⁷¹¹ Marriage Certificate of Christopher Guy, 2 April 1879, 1879/2915, BDM; *Thames Advertiser*, 7 April 1879, p. 2.

⁷¹² Birth Certificates of William Pickford [recorded as Pulsford] Guy, 18 November 1890, 1890/13434; Robert Leslie Guy, 2 January 1895, 1895/10098, BDM.

of five after suffering gastritis for one week and convulsions for two days.⁷¹³ Three months later, Christopher was dead, aged 47, after a year of ill-health caused by fibroid phthisis,⁷¹⁴ probably meaning miners' complaint. There was a large attendance at his funeral, and flags were lowered as his cortege passed.⁷¹⁵ Long periods of widowhood were common: Tryphena was 69 when she died after 25 years alone. Her other son had predeceased her, and she was living with her sister-in-law at the time of her death.⁷¹⁶

L.F.

One young woman, known only as L.F., had her flirtations during 1898 and 1899 recorded in some detail. In October 1898, 'The charming L.F. is making rapid strides at tennis. P.W. says it is simply heavenly to teach her. They always end up with a "love" game'.⁷¹⁷ A month later, 'G.D. is quite energetic with L.F. on the tennis court. Don't you miss the others, G.?'⁷¹⁸ Apparently not, judging by a comment published a fortnight later: 'Charming L.F. has made her appearance in the tennis court again. It makes G.D. smile'.⁷¹⁹ A month later, 'G.D. and his young lady look quite nice when together. Hurry up, G., and give us a treat', meaning a wedding celebration. Confirmation that 'his young lady' was L.F. was given later in this column: 'L.F. and G.D. seem to be very loving. What about M.Mc.',⁷²⁰ another example of the O.M.'s fascination with rivalry in love. L.F. was not mentioned five months later, when G.D. had 'started batching' and was 'getting quite fat on it'.⁷²¹ Soon an unnamed 'young man' was 'eagerly wending his way down Bridge Street' to see L.F.'⁷²² In the following column, 'Get your tins cans ready, boys, for F.L. says G.D. is going to tie the knot....

⁷¹³ Death Certificate of Robert Leslie Guy, 26 March 1900, 1900/118, BDM.

⁷¹⁴ Death Certificate of Christopher Guy, 28 June 1900, 1900/4051, BDM.

⁷¹⁵ *Thames Star*, 2 July 1900, p. 2.

⁷¹⁶ Death Certificate of Tryphena Jane Guy, 26 July 1925, 1925/3458, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 28 January 1925, pp. 1, 10.

⁷¹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

⁷¹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

⁷¹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 November 1898, p. 21.

⁷²⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁷²¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1899, p. 21.

⁷²² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 June 1899, p. 22.

They say Miss W. is anxious to know if L.F. has consented'.⁷²³ One month later the 'boys' were urged to get their tin cans together, because 'G.D. and L.F. look more loving than ever'.⁷²⁴ No marriage has been traced, for L.F. has not been identified.

A.P.

A.P., a barmaid at the Hot Springs Hotel for part or most of her time living Te Aroha, was regularly featured for two years in the mid-1890s. As with others, her occupation was not immediately apparent, but in September 1894 'A.P. says she like to see her name in the O., as it is a good advertisement for the H.S.H.',⁷²⁵ meaning this hotel.

She was first mentioned in March 1894. 'F.P. and A.P. should not talk so loud[ly] when billing and cooing in the domain.... A.P. says the little boy is the nicest little fellow in Te Aroha'.⁷²⁶ A month later, 'our usually lively township is now, alas, a vale of tears since A.P. and M.R. departed, leaving many a wounded heart behind. We hope some day they'll wander back again'.⁷²⁷ In September, 'The boys are all joyful over the return of A.P. to Te Aroha.... How is it that L.P. and A.P. were all alone on Sunday night in the Domain? Are all our boys engaged now?'⁷²⁸ Two weeks later, 'S.W. and A.P. are friendly rivals and no mistake. Ask P.P.'⁷²⁹ Two months later, one incomprehensible snippet and two that can be interpreted were reported: 'Consternation at fancy goods store. Cause, priceless gems. Ask A.P.... A.P. and G.P. were missed from church on Sunday night.... A.P. is always heard singing "We never know we love them till they are gone" '.⁷³⁰ Three weeks later, 'A.P. is looking anxiously forward to Christmas. Why? G.P.'s return of course'.⁷³¹

For four months, she was not mentioned; when she was once more, it seemed that she and G.P. were no longer interested in each other. In April

⁷²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 June 1899, p. 22.

⁷²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

⁷²⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁷²⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁷²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

⁷²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 September 1894, p. 21.

⁷²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁷³⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

⁷³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 December 1894, p. 21.

1895 the O.M. wondered what she thought about P.P. and a 'little waitress' walking together in the domain and asked when G.P. would return to Te Aroha, 'as the little Sydney lady has arrived'.⁷³² The following month, 'A.P. has thrown over the Te Aroha boys and may now be heard singing "The Campbells are Coming," and she is thinking about taking a holiday at the Thames, but what about poor H.L.?' Later in the same column, L.L. was 'running A.P. very close for the new arrival, but A.P. came in first'.⁷³³ Two months later, 'Oh, where and oh where does A.P. go on Saturday nights, as her place is filled by a golden-haired damsel not above sixteen summers.... What brings J.B. to the rink, regardless of rain, hail, or snow? Why those laughing eyes of A.P.? But be careful, J.'⁷³⁴ The following month, when giving details of a dance, 'J.W. and A.P. say they love waltzing. So I should think, as no one else stands a show, A.'⁷³⁵ Two weeks later, in a reference to rinking, 'A.P. was in great style on Thursday, and reckons she will get first place at the carnival'.⁷³⁶ The following month, at a fancy dress ball, P.P. and A.P. were 'at loggerheads owing to V.P. taking up the running',⁷³⁷ presumably for the affections of P.P. In December 1895, 'A.P. was all there on Saturday night in the bar with all the Hamilton boys'.⁷³⁸ Two months later, she had left the township: 'The boys are all lamenting the loss of A.P., and hope to see her behind the new bar before long'.⁷³⁹ One week later, 'Our boys are very disconsolate at the loss of A.P., but wish her a safe voyage and a speedy return to Te Aroha'.⁷⁴⁰ She never returned.

MIMA/M.E.

Jemima Duke Edwards, sister of Alexander Watson Edwards,⁷⁴¹ was born in 1872.⁷⁴² (She preferred being called Mima.)⁷⁴³ Possibly she was the

⁷³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁷³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 May 1895, p. 21.

⁷³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁷³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

⁷³⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

⁷³⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

⁷³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

⁷³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

⁷⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁷⁴¹ See paper on Ani Lispey and Alexander Watson Edwards.

⁷⁴² Birth Certificate of Jamima Duke Edwards, 1872/17465, BDM.

M.E. mentioned by the O.M. in 1887, when she was 15: ‘T.H. [Thomas Hotchin]⁷⁴⁴ and M.E. were doing the jam over the back fence on Monday night. Next time they are spooning, they should not speak so loud, as people opposite have ears’.⁷⁴⁵ ‘T.H. and M.E. start spooning very early as they may be seen together at half-past seven in the morning’.⁷⁴⁶ But in the same issue, ‘M. looked very lonely on Monday night down at the landing; where was T.H.’?⁷⁴⁷ If that was her first flirtation, it did not last long.

The name Mima was first mentioned in December 1890, when she was 18: ‘Mima and the photo canvasser were doing a big spoon in the Domain the other night. Look out, Jack; George will hear of it’.⁷⁴⁸ She was next referred to six months later: ‘Our Waiorongomai road gardener’, meaning a road repairer, ‘says that if he can’t get Mima he will have the Gipsy Countess’,⁷⁴⁹ who was never referred to again. In July 1892, ‘Mima looks quite young again since she came back from town. The ivories [false teeth] make a wonderful difference’.⁷⁵⁰ A month later, ‘Mima says she rather likes the mashers to admire how the ivories shine if they would not be so personal’.⁷⁵¹ In early August, ‘Why did Mary go home in the sulks on Wednesday? Was it because Jack showed a little of his affection to Mima?’⁷⁵² Three weeks later, ‘Jack says it is not true about his mashing Mima, and is very sorry if Mary believed him guilty of such a naughty thing’.⁷⁵³ The following month, a ‘French dressmaker says that it might cost the OBSERVER a lot if they pay the O.M. for writing to the paper. She says if Mima and she lay hold of him, he won’t have the pleasure of writing to it again, as they will tear him to pieces’.⁷⁵⁴

There were no later references to Mima, but from the last date onwards there were regular references to M.E., first mentioned in the last

⁷⁴³ Death Notice, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 9 April 1898, p. 2.

⁷⁴⁴ See later in this paper.

⁷⁴⁵ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁴⁶ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁴⁷ ‘Te Aroha Tips’, *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁴⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁷⁴⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 June 1891, p. 17.

⁷⁵⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 23 July 1892, p. 20.

⁷⁵¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

⁷⁵² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 August 1892, p. 19.

⁷⁵³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

⁷⁵⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 17.

gossip column cited, when she is referred to separately as if she was a different person: 'I hear Mr R is coming up from Auckland soon to see M.E. Won't the ivory shine then?',⁷⁵⁵ possibly another reference to her false teeth – or to another M.E.? At a dance in July 1893, M.E. engaged 'her partner for the waltz as well as holding him round the waist. Be sure, M., and put a shawl round his neck so you won't lose him'.⁷⁵⁶ In early September, 'M.E. looked the belle of the jam-tarts dance last Friday'.⁷⁵⁷ Later that month, two of those attending 'the pretty boy's ball' were 'Mr Macnicol, Ghost in the Garden' and 'Miss Edwards, 'Maori Girl''.⁷⁵⁸ David Duncan Macnicol was two years her senior,⁷⁵⁹ and at this time the O.M. did not imply that they were courting. In November, 'J.W. and M.E. seem very gone on each other',⁷⁶⁰ but this was probably the other M.E. In February 1894, 'D.D.M. and M. have returned from town as lively as crickets. The great event is to come off about Easter. Tin is going up in price'.⁷⁶¹ But three months later 'M. is still bachelorizing. M.E. will get tired of waiting'.⁷⁶² In early June, at a ball 'M.E. clung to the stage splendidly. Company not good enough, eh?'; perhaps Macnicol did not attend this dance. Also in the same gossip column, 'The white-headed boy is often to be seen near the timber yard. Is it M.E. or M.L. that he is looking for?'⁷⁶³ Probably this was the other M.E., for, at the end of July, 'Toff dance all the rage for the last week. D.M. and M.E. were very noticeable. They keep well together'.⁷⁶⁴ In mid-September, '*On dit* that M. and M.E. will shortly tie the fatal knot. Get the cans ready, boys'.⁷⁶⁵ The following February, 'We are likely to have a number of marriages here shortly including (so they say) D.M. and M.E.'.⁷⁶⁶ In September, the O.M. announced 'Several weddings before Christmas; amongst others, M.E. and

⁷⁵⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 17.

⁷⁵⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 21.

⁷⁵⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 September 1893, p. 21.

⁷⁵⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

⁷⁵⁹ Birth Certificate of David Duncan Macnicol, 1870/13190, BDM.

⁷⁶⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 November 1893, p. 21.

⁷⁶¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁶² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

⁷⁶⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁶⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 September 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 February 1895, p. 21.

D.M.⁷⁶⁷ Finally, in mid-October 1895, 'D.D.M. and M.E. are at last united' in a 'very quiet' wedding'.⁷⁶⁸ Their marriage made the social column of the *Observer*: 'The numerous friends in Auckland of Mr David C. Macnicol, second son of the Rev R.F. Macnicol, will be pleased to hear of his marriage, on the 3rd inst, to Miss Mima Edwards of Te Aroha. The young couple purpose residing at Te Aroha, where Mr Macnicol is in business'.⁷⁶⁹ His father was a leading Presbyterian minister.⁷⁷⁰

After their marriage, the couple ceased to be of any interest to the O.M. In 1896, their first son, Robert David, was born, and in 1898 a second one, Lorne Aroha.⁷⁷¹ Twelve days after his birth she died, aged 26, followed three-and-a-half hours later by her newborn son, whose hernia had caused gangrene of the bowel.⁷⁷²

Although her many friends had been exceedingly anxious for several days, it was hoped that with the extreme care she was receiving at the hands of Dr Smith, her medical attendant, that her constitution might pull her through and she might recover. However, this was not to be, and after a painful night the lamented lady passed away.... She leaves one little son, fortunately too young to realize the dreadful blow which has befallen him.

The 'greatest sympathy' was expressed for the widower, and the funeral 'was one of the largest we have seen in Te Aroha, plainly showing the esteem in which the deceased lady was held by all classes of the

⁷⁶⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

⁷⁶⁸ Marriage Certificate of David Duncan Macnicol, 3 October 1895, 1895/1727, BDM; 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 October 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁶⁹ 'The Social Sphere', *Observer*, 12 October 1895, p. 8.

⁷⁷⁰ *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 223.

⁷⁷¹ Birth Certificates of Robert David Macnicol, 1896/16011; Lorne Aroha Macnicol, 24 March 1898, 1898/4352, BDM.

⁷⁷² Death Certificates of Jemima Duke Macnicol, 2 April 1898, 1898/1526; Lorne Aroha Macnicol, 2 April 1898, 1898/1527, BDM; Death Notice, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 9 April 1898, p. 2.

community'.⁷⁷³ Seven years later, Macnicol remarried.⁷⁷⁴ His second wife died in 1904, aged 70, and he would die six years later, aged 77.⁷⁷⁵

S.L.

In May 1887, the O.M. asked 'What is the attraction for S.L. at the steps every night of late? Beware of the boys'.⁷⁷⁶ The following month, she was one of two women who 'had to escort themselves out in the evening' because they lacked partners.⁷⁷⁷ A year and a half later, this problem had been solved, at least temporarily: 'H.H. was in an awful fog the night S.L. was mashing with somebody from the Junction Mill'.⁷⁷⁸ Shortly afterwards, the O.M. wondered 'when S.L. is coming back again as J.L. seems very lonely. I intend to get a new book for the next affair so boys be careful'.⁷⁷⁹ What S.L. had been doing elsewhere was revealed the following month, to J.L.'s surprise: 'J.L. had to be carried home on a stretcher when the news came to say S.L. was married. It must have been a great blow to him, poor lad'.⁷⁸⁰

A.E.

In September 1885, the Waiorongomai O.M. noted that 'the dusky storekeeper of Quartzville tried very hard to do a mash at the skating rink'.⁷⁸¹ He was Albert Edwards, who in March that year had become postmaster at Quartzville, a position he held until August the following year and once again, briefly, in 1888.⁷⁸² After combining this position with running the Hill Store in this small settlement for several owners until

⁷⁷³ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 9 April 1898, p. 3.

⁷⁷⁴ Marriage Certificate of David Duncan Macnicol, 1905/157, BDM.

⁷⁷⁵ Death Certificates of Mary Ellen Macnicol, 1942/23196; David Duncan Macnicol, 1948/16408, BDM.

⁷⁷⁶ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁷⁷ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁷⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁷⁷⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 February 1889, p. 17.

⁷⁸⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

⁷⁸¹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 5 September 1885, p. 4.

⁷⁸² *New Zealand Gazette*, 12 March 1885, p. 334, 16 September 1886, p. 1142, 12 April 1888, p. 448, 14 June 1888, p. 683.

1888, he left Quartzville to be a storeman at Waiorongomai.⁷⁸³ In October 1889, when he gave evidence against a man charged with theft from a Waiorongomai store, he explained that he was a storeman employed in this store. He had found the accused ‘in the feed room about half-past seven’ in the evening, and ‘asked him what he was doing there. Accused said he had been eating pork and was taken bad. There was nothing in the stable or feed room belonging to accused. Saw a bag near the feed bin, with over a bushel of oats in it’. After locking up the stable, he informed the store’s bookkeeper, who contacted the police.⁷⁸⁴ In the early 1890s, Edwards had his own drapery and grocery in Waiorongomai,⁷⁸⁵ and acquired his only interest in a mine.⁷⁸⁶ From 1898 until his death he operated the county tramway, very efficiently.⁷⁸⁷

Why a ‘dusky’ storekeeper? This was contemporary shorthand for being part-Maori, presumably seen as a more polite usage than the common expression ‘half-caste’. He was the son of John Edwards, a Raglan farmer who married Rakapa (Rachel) Te Taroto, otherwise known as Rakapa Te Tarete, Rakapa Ngawai, and Rakaka Mere.⁷⁸⁸ As indicated by his death certificate, his family knew nothing about John’s parents apart from his father being a gardener in Essex. He died aged 74, having lived in New Zealand for 47 years. He had married Rakapa (the only wife listed) when he was aged ‘about 40 years’, and left three sons and three daughters.⁷⁸⁹ Rakapa would die in 1910, aged 89; the funeral director could provide no

⁷⁸³ *Te Aroha News*, 21 March 1885, p. 2, 2 May 1888, p. 7; *Waikato Times*, 8 October 1889, p. 2.

⁷⁸⁴ *Waikato Times*, 8 October 1889, p. 2.

⁷⁸⁵ *Te Aroha Electoral Roll, 1890*, p. 10; *Waikato Electoral Roll, 1893*, p. 11; *Cleaves Auckland Directory, 1893*, p. 304.

⁷⁸⁶ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 338, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

⁷⁸⁷ Piako County Council, Letterbook 1897-1899, pp. 291, 438; Letterbook 1899-1901, pp. 1, 97, 186, 188-189, 196; Letterbook 1902-1903, p. 149, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

⁷⁸⁸ Birth Certificate of David Vyvyan Edwards, 14 September 1896, 1896/8269; Death Certificate of Albert Edwards, 16 September 1902, 1902/6635; Marriage Certificates of Helen Edwards, 4 July 1882, 1882/1807; Albert Edwards, 21 October 1895, 1895/1683, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 18 September 1902, p. 1. For paintings of her, one with two of her children, Google ‘Rakapa Ngawai Edwards’ [Find a Grave Memorial].

⁷⁸⁹ Death Certificate of John Edwards, 23 December 1883, 1883/4930, BDM.

information about her parents, but did know that she had been married twice (to partners unknown) before marrying Edwards; no children were recorded.⁷⁹⁰ And adding to the difficulties of tracing the family, and typical for many Pakeha Maori, John Edwards registered the births of only four of his children, though the birth of the first Albert was included in an Auckland newspaper's birth notices.⁷⁹¹

Fortunately a grandson, Lionel Adams, has compiled 'Genealogical information on John and Rakapa Edwards', tracing the latter's illustrious whakapapa from the earliest days of Tainui, and filled in the gaps in the death certificates.⁷⁹² John Edwards was born in Essex in 1809, and was married twice: first to Rangi Whakarato, and then to Rapaka Ngawai, on 21 January 1850 at the Anglican Mission Station at Otawhao (later part of Te Awamutu).⁷⁹³ Having arrived in Sydney, New South Wales, as a young man, he worked for a merchant there before becoming a trader at Kawhia in about 1835 or 1836 on behalf of his Sydney employer. Soon afterwards, he 'married Rangi Whakarato, familiarly called Rato, a lady of high rank of the Ngati Rahui hapu of the Apakura tribe, whose ancestry is traced back in direct line to Ngatoro-i-rangi, the high priest of the Arawa canoe'.⁷⁹⁴ They had a son, who became a Maori interpreter and agent an assessor in the land courts, and a daughter who died when a child. At an unknown date, Rangi Whakarato died; following her death, Edwards, with a friend and fellow trader, settled at the site of the future Te Awamutu, where he met Rakapa Ngawai. After their marriage, he erected a house and store there, trading as a general storekeeper.⁷⁹⁵ Their first child was born in December

⁷⁹⁰ Death Certificate of Rapaka Edwards, 6 February 1910, 1910/8250, BDM.

⁷⁹¹ Birth Certificates of N[ot] R[ecorded] [= Helen] Edwards 1859/5113; Sarah Edwards, 1867/15738; David Edwards, 1869/16603, BDM; Birth Certificate of Arapata (Albert) Edwards, no. 49, Return of Births for the District of Raglan in the Quarter ending 30 September 1865, reproduced in Shane Edwards, 'Albert Edwards: Born June 26th 1865, Died September 16th 1902' (unpublished typescript), p. 1; Birth Notice, *Daily Southern Cross*, 6 November 1863, p. 2.

⁷⁹² E. Lionel Adams, 'Genealogical Information on John and Rakapa Edwards' (typescript, 1974), pp. 1-7, MS 1545, Library of the Auckland Institute and Museum.

⁷⁹³ Adams, p. 8.

⁷⁹⁴ Adams, p. 8.

⁷⁹⁵ Adams, p. 9.

1850 but died before the age of two; they would have five more children, the last being Albert, born in February 1863.⁷⁹⁶

Adams recorded that Rakapa Ngawai was born in Waikato in 1821, the daughter of Tokihaua and Meri Hinemete, members of Ngati Maniapoto. 'On her chin she had a moko which signified that she was the eldest daughter'. According to Adams, she 'must have been a "rangatira" lady of some importance as is evidenced by the lands [the Te Taruna block] ceded to her by the chiefs on her marriage' to Edwards.⁷⁹⁷ Previously, she was married to Tauhou Oneroa, by whom she had a daughter, and then to a Mr Herslett, by whom she had a son, who died in Sydney at an early age.⁷⁹⁸

John Edwards told a public meeting of settlers held at Raglan in July 1863 to discuss fears of war in the Waikato that he had informed a member of the Provincial Council, whom he had met near Pirongia mountain, about members of Ngati Maniapoto going to Taranaki.⁷⁹⁹ Because of the likelihood of war, Edwards and his family were ordered by the government to leave the district.⁸⁰⁰ He assisted the war effort, in February 1864 guiding surveyors from Raglan to the Waipa front.⁸⁰¹ After the conclusion of the Waikato War, he sought compensation for a loss of '£659, furniture and various boxes of various stores, he being a storekeeper; 1 truss hay, fences destroyed, and fruit trees destroyed'. Supported by the evidence of George Gage, a half-caste,⁸⁰² his claim was successful.⁸⁰³

The family lived in Onehunga, where Edwards farmed, until after January 1865, when their son Albert died of dysentery.⁸⁰⁴ Shortly after his death, the family settled at Raglan,⁸⁰⁵ where a second son named Albert was born on 26 June 1865; the registration of his birth recorded his names as 'Arapata (Albert)', and his mother, who was the informant, as Rakapa

⁷⁹⁶ Adams, p. 10.

⁷⁹⁷ Adams, p. 9.

⁷⁹⁸ Adams, pp. 8, 9, 13.

⁷⁹⁹ *Daily Southern Cross*, 28 July 1863, p. 3.

⁸⁰⁰ Adams, p. 10.

⁸⁰¹ *Daily Southern Cross*, 15 February 1864, p. 4.

⁸⁰² See paper on 'Horrible Murder at Te Aroha', plus Philip Hart, research notes on George Gage, held in The Treasury, Thames.

⁸⁰³ *New Zealander*, 12 April 1865, pp. 3, 4.

⁸⁰⁴ Death Certificate of Albert Edwards, 23 January 1865, 1865/4609, BDM.

⁸⁰⁵ Adams, p. 10

Rangimahia.⁸⁰⁶ In the following year, Edwards started farming at Waitetuna, another child died, and his last two children were born. Although the children enjoyed life on the farm and the bush, their father's behaviour spoilt their lives. 'John Edwards was very bad-tempered and used to fly into great rages. Often he'd turn his children out, and Rakapa would steal out through the orchard and take food to whoever was in trouble'.⁸⁰⁷ 'Eventually, Rakapa could stand it no longer' and left her husband and three youngest children 'and went up Rangitoto way' [the range near Pureora, not the island]. For a while, Edwards looked after his children before, in about 1874, sending them to live with his eldest son, John Henry (often called Hare) and his half-caste wife Agnes at Alexandra, the future Pirongia. 'John Edwards paid Henry to keep them and send them to school – but they got very little of the latter'. Agnes treated the children cruelly, forcing them to work and starving them. 'But Rapaka did not forget her children. Sometimes she would visit them', bringing potatoes or half a pig in her 'big flax kit on either side of the horse in front of her', but she did not stay with them for long. Eventually Edwards took Albert and his younger brother David (always called Willie) and sent them to St Stephen's Maori Boys School south of Auckland.⁸⁰⁸ Although Edwards, who had retired around the year 1880 and lived 'in a homestead capable of supplying most of the wants of a country family', he lived alone. 'Rakapa moved around, sometimes living with Henry, or sometimes by herself'. After suffering a stroke, Edwards died in December 1883, aged 74. During her last 12 years, Rapaka lived with her daughter Sarah (the second of that name) in Rotorua. By then totally blind because of cataracts, she died there aged 89: 'just handed up her plate of unfinished porridge and seemed to faint'.⁸⁰⁹

As an illustration of how well the children integrated into Pakeha society, all their daughters married Pakeha, one of them a future mayor of Tauranga.⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁶ Birth Certificate of Arapata (Albert) Edwards, 26 June 1865, Return of Births in the District of Raglan for quarter ending 30 September 1865, reproduced in Edwards, p. 1.

⁸⁰⁷ Adams, p. 10.

⁸⁰⁸ Adams, p. 11.

⁸⁰⁹ Adams, p. 12.

⁸¹⁰ Marriage Certificates of Helen Edwards, 4 July 1882, 1882/1807; Sarah Edwards, 27 December 1897, 1897/2518; Margaret Jane Edwards, 1905/2952, BDM; *Bay of Plenty Times*, 12 November 1915, p. 2.

Albert was a pupil at St Stephen's School from at least January 1877, when he was recorded as being one of 16 half-caste and seven Maori pupils. He received several awards for good work.⁸¹¹ A descendant, Shane Edwards, has two books awarded to him, both of a decidedly improving nature: *Bunyan's Progress and Holy War*, awarded in 1879, and *Parable of Animals*, awarded in 1880 (his last year at school), the latter given 'for answers at Catechism'.⁸¹² In December 1881, when he was delivering bread for an Auckland baker, one leg was broken when the baker's cart capsized in Ponsonby,⁸¹³ but he made a speedy recovery.⁸¹⁴

From the moment he arrived in the Te Aroha district in early 1885, Edwards was prominent in its more respectable social life. Involved with the Wesleyan Sunday School at Te Aroha, he was elected its secretary in 1887, and in October he was the secretary of its 'Service of Song, entitled Uncle Tom'.⁸¹⁵ In the mid-1880s he assisted the Band of Hope, a temperance organization for young people, by selling tickets for concerts raising money for their organ fund.⁸¹⁶ In March 1886, with three Waiorongomai friends he signed a solemn pledge:

- I. We the undersigned do hereby agree to give up smoking a pipe on & after the first day of April 1886.
- II. That we do not touch any intoxicating drink on and after the first day of April 1886 except in case of medicine.⁸¹⁷

In 1888 he was treasurer of the Rinking Club and of a Fancy Dress Carnival (which he attended dressed as 'Minstrel').⁸¹⁸ In the following year, he was secretary of a 'Grand Fancy Dress and Skating Carnival'.⁸¹⁹ Gaps in

⁸¹¹ Edwards, pp. 2-4.

⁸¹² Edwards, pp. 4-5.

⁸¹³ Edwards, pp. 5-6; *Auckland Star*, 29 December 1881, p. 3.

⁸¹⁴ *Auckland Star*, 8 February 1882, p. 2.

⁸¹⁵ Waiorongomai Sunday School, Admission Book 1884-1889, entry for 13 July 1884, 3050/888; Minute Book 1884-1894, entry for 26 April 1887, 3050/881, Methodist Archives, Auckland; *Te Aroha News*, 29 October 1887, p. 3.

⁸¹⁶ Waiorongomai Band of Hope, Minute Book 1883-1889, 3050/916, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁸¹⁷ Pledge signed by Thomas M. Cahill, William Goldsworthy, Albert Edwards, and Henry C. Mace, Waiorongomai, 4 March 1886, photocopy in Edwards, p. 29.

⁸¹⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 5 May 1888, p. 2, 22 September 1888, p. 2.

⁸¹⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 3 August 1889, p. 7.

the files of the local newspaper mean his activities for much of the 1890s cannot be traced, but he continued to be prominent in the community: in July 1897, as starter for a footrace at Waiorongomai, he 'gave every satisfaction'.⁸²⁰ In the following April 1898 he was elected to the Waiorongomai school committee, and was re-elected every year until his death.⁸²¹

His private life was of interest to gossips and gossip writers. In December 1888, the *Te Aroha O.M.* asked: 'Why did L.C. pass A.E. so often on Sunday night? Was it to see if he was someone she knew, or was it his charming looks and handsome figure?'⁸²² Four months later, 'A.E. says the next dance he goes to he will ask to see some young lady home. Wonders will never cease'.⁸²³ A sarcastic comment, for Edwards was popular with young women, as noted in his next column: 'The ladies of this place have taken quite a fancy to A.E.'⁸²⁴ In April 1892, a typical *O.M.* question: 'Who is the young man that said he always likes to oblige the ladies by carrying the umbrella? Not so slow for Albert'.⁸²⁵ In April 1895, the *Waiorongomai O.M.* asked: 'Where did you get that hat, A.E.?'⁸²⁶ Six months later, when he was aged 30 and his bride 22, he married Margaret Jane Scott, the daughter of Thomas,⁸²⁷ a mine manager at Waiorongomai.⁸²⁸ Eleven months later a son, David Vyvyan (later the order of his names was reversed) was born and another 13 months afterwards a daughter, Jennie.⁸²⁹ Their marriage was not to be a long one, for when aged only 37 he died of pneumonia and hyperpyrexia (extreme fever, usually caused by

⁸²⁰ *Thames Star*, 14 July 1897, p. 3.

⁸²¹ *Te Aroha News*, 28 April 1898, p. 3; *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 April 1899, p. 36, 4 May 1900, p. 16, 3 May 1901, p. 14, 8 May 1902, p. 41.

⁸²² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁸²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

⁸²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 September 1889, p. 18.

⁸²⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

⁸²⁶ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁸²⁷ Marriage Certificate of Albert Edwards, 21 October 1895, 1895/1683, BDM.

⁸²⁸ For his career, see *New Zealand Herald*, 27 September 1884, p. 3 + Philip Hart, research notes on Thomas Myers Scott, held in The Treasury, Thames

⁸²⁹ Birth Certificates of David Vyvyan Edwards, 14 September 1896, 1896/8269; Jessie [!] Edwards, 25 October 1897, 1897/12370, BDM.

infection) in September 1902.⁸³⁰ In his eldest son's Family Bible these words were written in the Memoranda section: "In loving memory of our dear Papa who died at Waiorongomai Sept 16th 1902. "So 'He' giveth his beloved sleep'. Jennie and Vyvyan'.⁸³¹ An 'In Memoriam' notice published a year after his death confirmed that it had been a happy marriage:

In loving memory of Albert, the dearly-beloved husband of Margaret J. Edwards, who died at Waiorongomai, Sept 16, 1902. 'So He giveth His beloved sleep'.⁸³²

The local newspaper's obituary stressed that he 'was very popular in Waiorongomai and will be greatly missed'. In addition to being secretary and treasurer of the school committee, 'when anything of the nature of an entertainment, for the benefit of the school or for the amusement of the children was afoot, he was always foremost to give a helping hand'. He was 'a most useful and reliable' servant of the council as manager of its tramway. 'Notwithstanding the stormy weather, a considerable number of the residents of Waiorongomai and other friends' attended his burial at Te Aroha West.⁸³³

Upon being informed of his death, a former resident of Waiorongomai (and her future brother-in-law), Leonard Livingstone Beeson, wrote to 'My Dear Mrs Edwards' from London:

In Albert I had [a] good true & intimate friend, and we confided as few people beyond yourself were aware of. His many good qualities, & sterling principals,⁸³⁴ I always admired, would that only a few others were possessed of such in this world, how⁸³⁵ much nicer it would be, for the more I knew of him the better I liked him, & I regret now that I did not know him better.⁸³⁶

⁸³⁰ Death Certificate of Albert Edwards, 16 September 1902, 1902/6635, BDM; *The Oxford Medical Companion*, ed. John Walton, Jeremiah A. Barondess, Stephen Lock (Oxford, 1994), p. 393.

⁸³¹ Memoranda, Vyvyan David Edwards' Bible: photocopy in Edwards, p. 49.

⁸³² 'In Memoriam', *New Zealand Herald*, 16 September 1903, p. 1.

⁸³³ *Te Aroha News*, 18 [or 20?] September 1902, p. 2 [original lost in the 1911 fire: press cutting in possession of Shane Edwards, printed in Edwards, p. 62.

⁸³⁴ As written.

⁸³⁵ Written as 'had'.

⁸³⁶ Leonard L Beeson to Margaret Jane Edwards, 22 October 1902, reproduced in Edwards, pp. 68-71.

Less than two years after his death, his widow married Edwin George Beeson, son of George Robert Beeson, a miner, carpenter, and farmer at Waiorongomai from the 1880s onwards;⁸³⁷ as an indication of their friendship, she had authorized Beeson to notify the registrar of Edwards' death.⁸³⁸ Margaret had no children to her second husband, who would die in the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918.⁸³⁹ After her death, in February 1921,⁸⁴⁰ an obituary described her as 'a woman of sympathetic disposition', who before the death of her second husband 'had done much benevolent work' at Matamata, where they had settled. 'By this she endeared herself and made many friends'.⁸⁴¹

M.S.

A woman whose identity is uncertain; possibly more than one person was being referred to:

In April 1887, 'M.S. says W.C. has bought the ring, and the wedding is only a matter of time. Get the tin cans ready, boys!'⁸⁴² At the end of the month, 'M.S. looks very down-hearted since W.C. has given her the cold shoulder. Never mind, somebody else will take pity on her before long'.⁸⁴³ A week later, 'M.S. was heard to offer a kiss to anyone to tell her who the OBSERVER man is. Send her along this way, please', and to further annoy her, the O.M. continued to report her flirtations: 'M.S. and T.B. seemed to be very thick on Sunday night. What will W.C. say when he hears about it?'⁸⁴⁴ 'W.C. is coming back to Te Aroha again; great rejoicing among the

⁸³⁷ For his career, see *Te Aroha News*, 27 May 1907, p. 2 + Philip Hart, research notes on George Robert Beeson held in The Treasury, Thames.

⁸³⁸ Death Certificate of Albert Edwards, 16 September 1902, 1902/6635, BDM; Waiorongomai School Class Rolls, online, ANZ-A.

⁸³⁹ Marriage Certificate of Margaret Jane Edwards and Edwin George Beeson, 25 April 1904, 1904/2952; Death Certificate of Edwin George Beeson, 23 November 1918, 1918/8852, BDM; *Matamata Record*, 28 November 1918, p. 2.

⁸⁴⁰ Death Certificate of Margaret Jane Beeson, 12 February 1921, 1921/9244, BDM.

⁸⁴¹ *Waikato Times*, 19 February 1921, p. 11.

⁸⁴² 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 2 April 1887, p. 18.

⁸⁴³ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

⁸⁴⁴ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

girls; M.S. will be happy once again'.⁸⁴⁵ She had been without a lover while he was away: 'What a pity M.S. and S.L. had to escort themselves out in the evening. Will two young men kindly oblige?'⁸⁴⁶ Eighteen months later, when mentioned once more, young men had obliged: 'Has R.F. left M.S. in the cold? You ought to remember M.S. two is company &c, when you go for a walk on a Sunday night'.⁸⁴⁷ Immediately afterwards, she was again bereft: 'What will M.S. do now that she has lost her masher? I am sorry for her, but being fast myself cannot help her. Will some young man kindly step forward and oblige?'⁸⁴⁸ Two months later, 'I see that M.S. and R.F. have made it up again. M.S. says she don't like to be bad friends with anyone'.⁸⁴⁹ A month and a half later, 'M.S. said she would like to be somebody's darling, as she is tired of living alone. Will some young gentleman kindly step forward, as the time is going on?'⁸⁵⁰ Two months later, she had solved her problem, now having 'two mashers. She says it doesn't matter which, so long as it's in the family',⁸⁵¹ an elusive comment: two brothers? Three months later, the O.M. observed 'G.T. and M.S. doing a great mash on Sunday afternoon. I suppose they will soon be making two into one, and then what will J.T. do?'⁸⁵² This was the last report about M.S.; presumably she had had left the district.

F.E.

In May 1893, the O.M. reported that 'F.E., the new arrival at the Springs, is a great ladies' man. C. has got his eye on you, so beware'.⁸⁵³ He was a visitor, not on the staff of the Hot Springs Hotel, and C.'s response suggests that his reputation had preceded him. One month later, 'F.E. will soon have to get a new pair of boots if he goes to the park house', a boardinghouse, 'so often to listen to the young lady playing the piano, "What will you do love when I am going?"'⁸⁵⁴ Two months later, 'F.E. seems to be

⁸⁴⁵ 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁸⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁸⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁸⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 December 1888, p. 17.

⁸⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 February 1889, p. 17.

⁸⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

⁸⁵¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 June 1889, p. 18.

⁸⁵² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 September 1889, p. 18.

⁸⁵³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

going to the park still. Knocking at the door is out of fashion, F. Tapping at the window and whistling is coming in'.⁸⁵⁵ At the end of that month, 'F.E. and A.K. are training for the Te Aroha steeplechase. Some say that F. will win. I say that A. will win. Tips: 2 to 1'.⁸⁵⁶ For once this seems not to be an elaborate attempt to jest about flirting but a reference to horseracing. One week later, 'I hear that F.E. is going to board at the Park House. What is the attraction?'⁸⁵⁷

Was the attraction M.K.? One month later, in September 1893, 'F.E. seems down-hearted since M.K. took her departure for town. Cheer up, F., some day she'll wander back again'.⁸⁵⁸ He did not cheer up, for another two months later 'F.E. is often seen at the Domain gate whistling "only to see thy face again." Is it M.K.'s face he means?'⁸⁵⁹ But he may have begun seeking consolation elsewhere, for prior to this entry the O.M. had asked 'What did Miss F. and F.E. make such a row about in the hall?'⁸⁶⁰ Two weeks later, in October, 'F.E. was piling it on with A.F. at the Social the other week. What would M.K. say if she knew?'⁸⁶¹

In January 1894, 'What takes A.F. down to the train so often now, is it to meet F.E. should he return?'⁸⁶² The following month, 'the engagement of A.F. and E.R.' was 'reported',⁸⁶³ but, assuming this was the same A.F., it was a false report. During the intervening period, he had returned, for in March 'What takes F.E. to the Flat so often? Do they play speaks⁸⁶⁴ since M.L. left Te Aroha?'⁸⁶⁵ All the gossiping about him prompted F.E. to threaten that if he caught the O.M. he would 'make mince-meat of him'.⁸⁶⁶ In the same column the O.M. recommended him as a 'respectable' masher for a masherless woman.⁸⁶⁷ The following month, it seemed that he was

⁸⁵⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

⁸⁵⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 September 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 November 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁶⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

⁸⁶¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 October 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁶² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁶⁴ Not traced in dictionaries of slang.

⁸⁶⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁸⁶⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

being toyed with rather than the other way round: ‘Oh, M.G., do you think it quite the thing to have poor F.E. hanging on the string while you wink your other eye’.⁸⁶⁸ In the following issue, ‘F.E. did a moonlight slope to Tauranga so that he would not pass the Flat’.⁸⁶⁹ As a ‘slope’ meant running away or decamping,⁸⁷⁰ clearly his relationship with whomsoever lived in the lower part of Te Aroha had turned very sour. A month later, A.F. was back in his arms at a ball: ‘A.F. and F.E. didn’t care about dancing when the corner was available’.⁸⁷¹ Perhaps she lived on ‘the Flat’, for the following issue announced that ‘F.E. is still very fond of the Flat’.⁸⁷² The following month, ‘A.F. looks very down-hearted since F.E. went away. But cheer up, A., absence makes the heart grow fonder’.⁸⁷³ He spent the next month of so ‘“doing the block” in Auckland’,⁸⁷⁴ meaning promenading around the centre of the city.⁸⁷⁵

In May 1895, A.F. was ‘still waiting for F.E.’s return. I am afraid you will have to wait, A. Why not give the “new boy” a trial?’⁸⁷⁶ Two months later, the O.M. wondered ‘What took F.E. to Waihi? Was it to take unto himself a wife? What did the Te Aroha girls do, especially L.L.?’ In the same column he asked: ‘Why does A.F. always get her brother to see her home? Why not give someone else’s brother a chance?’⁸⁷⁷ Clearly their relationship had ended. The following month the O.M. wondered why she had left a dance ‘so early’.⁸⁷⁸ After that date, they were no longer mentioned: had both left the district?

P.P.

Reports about P.P., a fervent but fickle lover, first appeared in March 1894. ‘What takes P.P. to the Hot Springs [Hotel] so often? Is the pretty

⁸⁶⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

⁸⁶⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 May 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁰ Partridge, p. 1090.

⁸⁷¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

⁸⁷² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 16 June 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁷³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 July 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁵ Partridge, p. 96.

⁸⁷⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 May 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

little woman the attraction? Who was the lady that gave F.W. the go-bye for the sake of P.P. on Sunday night?’⁸⁷⁹ Two issues later, ‘P.P. says he will not take two ladies driving again, as the horse will not stand it’, and the O.M. opined it was ‘Too bad of P.P. to let his lady-love go to the concert alone and then meet her after it was over. Save up your pence for the coming one’.⁸⁸⁰ A month later, ‘Since S.W. returned from Franklin P.P. looks inches taller’.⁸⁸¹ Two months later, ‘P.P. says it’s sweet to love, but oh how bitter, etc’.⁸⁸² Six weeks later, ‘P.P. says he loves them all, bless ’em. He refers to the girls, of course’.⁸⁸³ The following issue, ‘*On dit* that P.P. was in town to see one of the parsons’,⁸⁸⁴ by implication about getting married. A month later ‘P.P. is heard whistling now “Linger Longer Loo;” that accounts for his loving glances’.⁸⁸⁵ Two weeks later, ‘S.W. and A.P. are friendly rivals and no mistake. Ask P.P.’⁸⁸⁶ Two-timing had its perils: a month later ‘P.P. says he is between two fires, and no mistake’.⁸⁸⁷ His problem was quickly solved: a month later, ‘P.P. says one fire is out entirely. So it is’.⁸⁸⁸

Nothing more was heard from him for five months until, in April 1895, he was behaving predictably. ‘How nice P.P. and the little waitress looked walking through the Domain. What does A.P. think of it?’⁸⁸⁹ In July, L.P. was reputedly in need of a masher. ‘Must be tall and good-looking. What about P.P.? ,, What takes P.P. to Pukekohe now and then? Is the young lady at the refreshment room the attraction?’⁸⁹⁰ In the following month, ‘P.P. looked well walking between the two sisters from over the river’.⁸⁹¹ Two weeks later, ‘Didn’t the tonsorial artist’s lip hang when P.P. took A.P. home from the rink’.⁸⁹² A month later, ‘P.P. and A.P. are at loggerheads

⁸⁷⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁸⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁸⁸¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

⁸⁸² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 16 June 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁸³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁸⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁸⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 September 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁸⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁸⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁸⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁸⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

owing to V.P. taking up the running'.⁸⁹³ Another month later, 'P.P. says he likes waltzing with N.O'G. What's the attraction?'⁸⁹⁴ At the end of the year, 'P.P. and H.K. were trying very hard on Sunday to mash the New Woman, but were evidently afraid of the stick'.⁸⁹⁵

In February 1896, 'P.P. says it is a painful predicament to be in when your young lady faints and there is no water to hand'.⁸⁹⁶ The following week, when he attended a Volunteer Social, he had 'transferred his affections. He evidently thinks that fair exchange is no robbery'.⁸⁹⁷ As the O.M. did not contribute any columns between August 1896 and May 1898, P.P.'s affairs during that time cannot be traced. He reappeared in June 1898: 'P.P. and L.L. are as devoted as any lovers need wish to be, and I think it is about time they were tying the knot'.⁸⁹⁸ But later that month 'P.P. looked quite happy carrying Miss B.'s parcels up the street on Saturday night. Didn't you know that W.C. was waiting around the corner for her, P.?'⁸⁹⁹ He then escaped the O.M.'s eye for six months until a cryptic comment was published in December 1899, presumably implying that his attentions had been transferred to a Morrinsville woman: 'P.P. says the road from Morrinsville in terrible. But L.S. doesn't seem to think so'.⁹⁰⁰ He was ignored in 1899: had he left the district? As there was no O.M. at Te Aroha in 1900, it is not possible to trace his love life beyond 1899.

Who was P.P.? No man with those initials was listed in the 1896 electoral roll, suggesting that he was then aged under 21. The 1899 and 1900 rolls listed Peter Owen Pilkington, who would become borough foreman for 35 years. In 1900 he married Elizabeth Saunders,⁹⁰¹ who had arrived in Te Aroha in 1894 at the age of 16 with her sister Clara to live with her aunt, Emma Blencowe.⁹⁰² But this P.P. seemed to be discreet and respectable, no gossip linking him to an E.S. Neither Elizabeth nor Clara

⁸⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 October 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

⁸⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁸⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

⁸⁹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 June 1898, p. 21.

⁹⁰⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁹⁰¹ Marriage Certificate of Peter Owen Pilkington, 1900/3528, BDM.

⁹⁰² *Te Aroha News*, 24 July 1956, p. 4; Probate of Emma Blencowe, Hamilton Probates, BCDG 4420/1730, ANZ-A.

caught the O.M.'s eye, the latter possibly because she had no admirers: she never married.⁹⁰³

The other P.P. was Patrick Page, a coach driver.⁹⁰⁴ In September 1893, 'Mr Page, Dummy', attended a fancy dress ball.⁹⁰⁵ Three years later, Mary Ann Everitt, aged 19, took him to court for failing to maintain his illegitimate child Albert Henry;⁹⁰⁶ presumably because he had agreed to contribute, at the court hearing she made no plea and the case was withdrawn.⁹⁰⁷ It so happens that M.E. was one person P.P. had not been accused of flirting with: the O.M. would have known what was going on, as a pregnancy could not be hidden for long, but as on other occasions he chose not to reveal genuinely embarrassing details. Page never married (at least not in New Zealand), unless he was the Patrick John Page who married in 1910.⁹⁰⁸ Mary Ann Everett did not marry in New Zealand either.⁹⁰⁹

T.H.

In April 1887, 'T.H. seemed to be slightly in it on Saturday night with F.M. hanging on his arm'.⁹¹⁰ He was Thomas Hotchin, a local blacksmith, aged 19.⁹¹¹ Later that month, J.F. and T.H. were doing a fine "go in" on Saturday night, along with Miss L.L.... J.E., what's the attraction at the blacksmith's shop? No, not T.H., R.C'.⁹¹² This potential rival was Robert

⁹⁰³ Probate of Emma Blencowe, Hamilton Probates, BCDG 4420/1730, ANZ-A.

⁹⁰⁴ See *Ohinemuri Electoral Rolls, 1899*, p. 88; *1900*, p. 73.

⁹⁰⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

⁹⁰⁶ Birth Certificates of Mary Ann Everitt, 1877/17125; Albert Henry Everitt, 1896/4419, BDM.

⁹⁰⁷ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 21/1896, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁹⁰⁸ Marriage Certificate of Patrick John Page, 1910/3880; Indexes to Marriages 1896-1920, BDM.

⁹⁰⁹ Indexes to Marriages, 1896-1920, BDM.

⁹¹⁰ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 2 April 1887, p. 18.

⁹¹¹ See Te Aroha Goldfields School, Class List, November 1882, YCAF 4135/7a, ANZ-A; *Tauranga Electoral Roll, August 1887*, p. 12; for photograph of him with his father, Moses Hotchin, see *Te Aroha News*, 19 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

⁹¹² 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

Kelly Cannell, also a blacksmith,⁹¹³ who was secretary of the Bachelor's Ball in October that year.⁹¹⁴ Two months later Cannell was 'about to travel to Waiorongomai in search of a girl', but he would not marry J.E., or indeed anyone else.⁹¹⁵

At the end of April 1887, 'T.H. and M.E. were doing the jam over the back fence on Monday night. Next time they are spooning, they should not speak so loud, as people opposite have ears'.⁹¹⁶ The following month 'T.H. and G.F. have a call to bring the girls out to the fence (whistle and I'll come to you, my lad), and so they did, but not as they expected, as it turned out to be the missus with the broom'. The O.M. asked what took T.H. 'down to the bottom hotel so often lately? Is it to see the girl, or whom?'⁹¹⁷ The following month, 'What made T.H. look so red in the face the other night. Was it because R.W. kissed his girl?' As well, 'T.H. and M.E. start spooning very early as they may be seen together at half-past seven in the morning'.⁹¹⁸ But then 'M. looked very lonely on Monday night down at the landing; where was T.H.?'⁹¹⁹

Early in 1888, Hotchin left for Broken Hill in New South Wales. In farewelling him, the *Te Aroha News* described him as a 'smart young man' who was 'not afraid of hard work' and therefore deserved to succeed.⁹²⁰ He returned ten years later, having visited most Australian goldfields.⁹²¹ Despite all this flirting, Hotchin did not marry either in New Zealand or New South Wales.⁹²²

W.W.W.

⁹¹³ See *Tauranga Electoral Roll, August 1887*, p. 4; *Te Aroha News*, 5 May 1888, p. 2, 16 January 1889, p. 2; *Te Aroha Correspondent, Auckland Weekly News*, 21 May 1892, p. 22; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 6 August 1892, p. 8.

⁹¹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 15 October 1887, p. 3.

⁹¹⁵ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18; *Ohinemuri Electoral Roll, 1897*, p. 9; *Bay of Plenty Electoral Roll, 1903*, p. 11; Index to Marriages, 1887-1920, BDM.

⁹¹⁶ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

⁹¹⁷ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁹¹⁸ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁹¹⁹ 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁹²⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 3 March 1888, p. 2.

⁹²¹ *Te Aroha News*, 27 January 1898, p. 2.

⁹²² Indexes to Marriages, BDM and New South Wales BDM.

As William Wylie (or Wiley) Wiggins, although popular with women, did not marry in New Zealand (he seems to have left the colony in 1888), his age is unknown. He was first mentioned in the *Observer* in September 1880 because he had got drunk in Auckland and been arrested at 2 o'clock in the morning for singing in the street. He was described as 'a good-looking young bushman'.⁹²³ Five months later he gave evidence in an Auckland assault case.⁹²⁴ During 1881 he participated in the Tiki gold rush, near Coromandel.⁹²⁵ In July the *Observer* announced that 'Bill' Wiggins had been elected foreman of a coroner's inquest because he looked so respectable, 'so he says himself'.⁹²⁶ This issue also reported a fight 'at the Tiki "wake," and poor Wiggins got a black eye, trying to save the corpse from being knocked off the table'.⁹²⁷ The following month, 'Bill Wiggins, of the Tiki, says he knows a thing or two now, and will soon be as good a miner as there is in the field'.⁹²⁸ The next issue stated that another man '(bar Bill Wiggins) is in all respects one of the best fellows on the field'.⁹²⁹ Five weeks later, he was reportedly 'a great acquisition at the Coromandel Rink Club. Several ladies have tried to copy his style'.⁹³⁰ He had 'given up mining and started in business at the Tiki. He is getting up a sweep on the Melbourne Cup, does a little sharebroking and gives lessons in skating. His motto is to be, "Large profits, and small exertions" '.⁹³¹ Shortly afterwards, he 'was the hero of the recent Rink Dance at Coromandel'.⁹³² He also defeated a sharebroker at 'throwing the cricket ball'.⁹³³ When canvassing during an election, he was also 'in town for the Melbourne cup "burst," and looked blooming'.⁹³⁴ Presumably a flirtation was behind the comment that 'Georgie Grey has gone to Tiki to interview Bill Wiggins on a matrimonial subject'.⁹³⁵ At that

⁹²³ *Observer*, 18 September 1880, p. 4.

⁹²⁴ Police Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 10 February 1881, p. 3.

⁹²⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 11 April 1881, p. 6, 19 April 1881, p. 6, 23 September 1881, p. 5.

⁹²⁶ 'Personal', *Observer*, 16 July 1881, p. 488.

⁹²⁷ 'Brief Mention', *Observer*, 16 July 1881, p. 487.

⁹²⁸ 'Personal', *Observer*, 13 August 1881, p. 548.

⁹²⁹ 'Personal', *Observer*, 20 August 1881, p. 570.

⁹³⁰ 'Coromandel', *Observer*, 1 October 1881, p. 44.

⁹³¹ 'Brief Mention', *Observer*, 1 October 1881, p. 44.

⁹³² 'Society', *Observer*, 22 October 1881, p. 44.

⁹³³ 'Coromandel', *Observer*, 29 October 1881, p. 105.

⁹³⁴ 'Brief Mention', *Observer*, 12 November 1881, p. 218.

⁹³⁵ 'Personal', *Observer*, 17 December 1881, p. 218.

time ‘Bill Wiggins and Miss Rayner are the champion croquet players at Coromandel’.⁹³⁶

Was an amorous entanglement behind a January 1882 comment that ‘A “joker” at Coromandel wants to know why Bill Wiggins runs away when he sees the barber’s dog. Perhaps William will oblige and tell us’.⁹³⁷ He did not. An entanglement seems a likely explanation for two snippets: ‘The young ladies of Coromandel were at a loss to know why Wiggins had such a long stay at the Tiki without visiting the village, but they have found out at last. What about the black eye?’⁹³⁸ ‘Bill Wiggins has now to play second fiddle to our German friend’.⁹³⁹ But other women were interested in him: ‘The young ladies of Coromandel want to know why the trucker of the Home Rule, W.W.W., shaved’.⁹⁴⁰ Three weeks later, in late April, the Coromandel O.M. asked: ‘Where is Wiggins? His friends are anxious about his health’.⁹⁴¹ In May, when sued for £8 6s 6d, the clerk of the court recorded that he had left Coromandel for Te Aroha.⁹⁴²

He had left to be a storekeeper, taking out a miner’s right in late August and acquiring interests in three Waiorongomai claims (the earliest on 4 November) and one company.⁹⁴³ He continued to appear in gossip columns, the first mention being of him living at Waiorongomai being published in December: ‘Wiggins in the garden, pumpkins sprouting’.⁹⁴⁴ The following April, ‘the Wiggins is a walking gentleman’.⁹⁴⁵ In May, ‘Wig, you sly dog, what [did] that parcel for Miss G. contain? The first of the season’s birds? Don’t be afraid of poachers next time’.⁹⁴⁶ Especially puzzling was the following question: ‘What were the apostle and Wig about not to save their

⁹³⁶ ‘Brief Mention’, *Observer*, 17 December 1881, p. 220.

⁹³⁷ ‘Personal’, *Observer*, 28 January 1882, p. 310.

⁹³⁸ ‘Coromandel’, *Observer*, 18 March 1882, p. 9.

⁹³⁹ ‘Coromandel’, *Observer*, 25 March 1882, p. 25.

⁹⁴⁰ ‘Coromandel’, *Observer*, 1 April 1882, p. 41.

⁹⁴¹ ‘Coromandel’, *Observer*, 22 April 1882, p. 89.

⁹⁴² Coromandel Magistrate’s Court, Foreign Process Receipt Book 1881-1896, entries for 2 May 1882, 15 May 1882, ZAAAN 14047/1a, ANZ-A.

⁹⁴³ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Miner’s Right no. 2236, issued 26 August 1882, Miners’ Rights Butt Book 1882, BBAV 11533/1j; Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folios 28, 118, 132, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 12 April 1883, p. 722.

⁹⁴⁴ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

⁹⁴⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Observer*, 21 April 1883, p. 76.

⁹⁴⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 12 May 1883, p. 122.

own dunnage? Rather careless: keep cool in times of emergency'.⁹⁴⁷ Four months later, the Waiorongomai O.M. asked: 'What is the attraction for W.W. out here? You had better stick to the Thames girl, old boy'.⁹⁴⁸ The Thames O.M. mentioned this girl in the next issue: 'The fair Winnie is about to depart for Te Aroha. Won't W.W. be in it then!'⁹⁴⁹ The following month, the Te Aroha O.M. suggested that 'W.W.W.' should be 'The Rainbow' at a fancy dress ball,⁹⁵⁰ for reasons no longer apparent. In December, 'W.W.W. and Alice G. are passing friends. Pheasants sent in brown paper parcels, alike slippers, are forbidden topics. W. thinks English society would be unbearable with Alice',⁹⁵¹ a possibly snobbish reason for the end of their friendship.

In February 1884 he was a member of the committee organizing the Bachelor's Ball at Te Aroha,⁹⁵² but the loss of the *Observer* for 1884 means his social activities and private life cannot be traced further. In December that year he became postmaster at Hikutaia,⁹⁵³ but then disappeared from the newspapers until October 1886,⁹⁵⁴ when he was a commission agent in Auckland and boarding in the Market Hotel. He gave evidence in a case about selling liquor after hours, admitting that when the publican was not present he went into the bar and gave drinks to two other men. 'Had no authority to go into the bar, or to supply liquor.... Witness paid for the liquor, and threw the money into the till'.⁹⁵⁵

In July 1888, the *Thames Advertiser* published a letter from an old Thamesite about meeting him in Broken Hill:

I was startled to hear the Maori word "Tenajuo"⁹⁵⁶ uttered close to my ear in a voice having a strong Italian accent. Turning quickly who should stand before me but Wiggins – the immortal

⁹⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 May 1883, p. 154.

⁹⁴⁸ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 22 September 1883, p. 12.

⁹⁴⁹ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 29 September 1883, p. 8.

⁹⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 October 1883, p. 8.

⁹⁵¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 December 1883, p. 16.

⁹⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 23 February 1884, p. 2.

⁹⁵³ *New Zealand Gazette*, 8 January 1885, p. 30; *Te Aroha News*, 17 January 1885, p. 2.

⁹⁵⁴ He was not the William Wiggins who worked in the Whangarei area: see *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 December 1884, p. 13.

⁹⁵⁵ Supreme Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 14 October 1886, p. 6.

⁹⁵⁶ Correctly tena koe = welcome.

Wiggins of old, whose cheery laugh all the dust and discomfort of Broken Hill cannot alter.⁹⁵⁷

The following year he was on the committee of a rugby club there,⁹⁵⁸ after which reports about him ceased. Despite these hints of amorous attachments, he did not marry in either New Zealand or New South Wales, and as he was not recorded as returning to the former it is unlikely he was the William Wiggins who married Sarah Peacock in 1898.⁹⁵⁹

THE COLONEL AND MISS C.

The 'colonel' may have been a nickname rather than someone holding that rank who featured in some gossip columns in the early 1880s before, presumably, leaving the district. The O.M. first observed him at a dance in October 1882: 'What a time the Colonel had behind the flag with his arms around the fair Jessie's waist. I wonder how Charlie would like it had he seen them'.⁹⁶⁰ The following month, 'Why did the colonel let that young lady give him the slip that night of the play? How about the £10000 - expectations, eh?'⁹⁶¹ In March 1883 the O.M.'s report of alleged flirtations was written in the style of a horse race:

Wonderful excitement here. A race for the fair Miss C. ending, to the horror of our local talent, in a complete boil-over. Four started, viz, Billiards, Electricity, The Colonel, and His Reverence. Billiards was a hot favourite, 4 to 1 being offered by his backers. He is a very game little horse, and when the flag fell jumped to the front, closely followed by Electricity, The Colonel and His Reverence bringing up the rear. At the first hurdle Billiards bolted, and Electricity came to grief, unseating his jockey and leaving some nasty marks on his face. The race now lay between The Colonel and His Reverence. The positions, however, varied, first one and then the other having the front place. On coming to the last hurdle The Colonel had a clear lead of ten lengths, but in taking the jump he struck the hurdle and came down, his rider was picked up insensible and carried off the

⁹⁵⁷ Letter from 'Young Dodd', *Thames Advertiser*, 26 July 1888, p. 3.

⁹⁵⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 March 1889, p. 2.

⁹⁵⁹ Marriage Indexes, BDM and New South Wales BDM; Marriage Certificate of William Wiggins, 1898/2438, BDM; *Auckland Star*, 4 August 1898, p. 8.

⁹⁶⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 November 1882, p. 121.

⁹⁶¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 November 1882, p. 153.

course, where he was attended by Drs [John] Bond and [George] Robson [a chemist]. His Reverence cantered in a winner, hard held. Inside totalisator, 300 investors, of whom two were on the winner; dividend, £47 16s.⁹⁶²

In the next issue, ‘The Colonel, at Te Aroha, has lost his dignity together with his “tin” [money]. He may be seen in black ashes and mud up to his waist sowing grass seed. The Colonel says his seed will live after him if he does much of it’.⁹⁶³ This suggests he was a farmer, much in need of financial assistance.

At Waiorongomai in June, ‘Mrs. F. mourns the loss of her brown teapot. All that is left to the Colonel of his ancestral fame is a long-handled shovel’.⁹⁶⁴ Was he the same colonel, or did Waiorongomai have another one, and what did these comments mean? The following month the O.M. asked: ‘When is the happy event to take place between a certain grocer’s daughter and the Colonel?’⁹⁶⁵ This was an anticipation of his marriage to Martha Clarke, daughter of James, a grocer and general storekeeper whose family had settled in August 1882.⁹⁶⁶ In November, the Waiorongomai O.M. asked whether the Colonel had ‘squared with Martha’,⁹⁶⁷ implying they had quarreled, for by then a doctor had arrived in the district who would wed her one year later, when she was aged 20 (her husband was ten years older).⁹⁶⁸

Martha Clarke was regularly praised in gossip columns, a very rare phenomenon. Her musicality, beauty and dress sense were all lauded, as in November 1882, when ‘our Martha looked very well at the concert, and would have been the belle had she stayed for the dance’.⁹⁶⁹ Three months

⁹⁶² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 March 1883, p. 395.

⁹⁶³ ‘Personal’, *Observer*, 10 March 1883, p. 412.

⁹⁶⁴ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 30 June 1883, p. 233.

⁹⁶⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁹⁶⁶ See *Thames Directory for 1881* (Thames, 1881), p. 103; *Thames Directory for 1886* (Thames, 1886), p. 150; *Thames Star*, 7 August 1882, p. 2; ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 2 June 1883, p. 170; Marriage Certificate of Martha Clarke, 4 September 1884, 1884/3230, BDM.

⁹⁶⁷ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 24 November 1883, p. 12.

⁹⁶⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 27 October 1883, p. 2; Marriage Certificate of Martha Clarke, 4 September 1884, 1884/3230, BDM.

⁹⁶⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 November 1882, p. 153.

after she arrived in Te Aroha, the church choir was ‘progressing favourably under the tuition of Miss C., much (surprising to say) to the parson’s discomfiture’.⁹⁷⁰ The following month, ‘Miss C. looked well in a dark-green riding-habit at the Te Aroha Races’.⁹⁷¹ In May 1883, with two of ‘her Thames lady friends’ she ‘tastefully decorated’ the hall for a dance and concert. She ‘played the different accompaniments and several difficult pieces as a variety, and, as was expected, brought down the house. By-the-bye, she was awfully pretty in block velvet, trimmed with satin of the same colour’.⁹⁷² When presented at a concert with an elegant silver flower stand before leaving the district with her husband, she was described as ‘a young lady who has been a leading spirit in musical matters here during the last two years’.⁹⁷³ The O.M. provided a much more flamboyant tribute by comparing her to another young woman:

An improvement on the electric light is about to be introduced into Te Aroha. Miss R. (3000 candle-power) is to take her stand nightly on the top of the bald hill [Bald Spur], and Miss C. (25,000 candle-power) on the top of the Buck Reef [above Waiorongomai village]. It is calculated sufficient light will be obtained from the above to pick up pins on the darkest night all over the district.⁹⁷⁴

The following month, he suggested that Miss C. should go to a fancy dress ball as ‘Mother Hubbard (in blue goggles)’, another reference to her candlepower. Miss R. would be appropriate as ‘Electric Light’.⁹⁷⁵

As for Te Aroha’s colonel, he disappeared from the gossip columns after two mysterious entries. In September 1883, ‘The Colonel acts the ghost splendidly. He and his dog have been seen wandering over the mountain at midnight looking for Hamlet’.⁹⁷⁶ By December he had ‘resigned his post in the English Army and has taken to dancing’.⁹⁷⁷

⁹⁷⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 170.

⁹⁷¹ *Observer*, 16 December 1882, p. 214.

⁹⁷² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 2 June 1883, p. 170.

⁹⁷³ *Waikato Times*, 4 September 1884, p. 3.

⁹⁷⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 September 1883, p. 8.

⁹⁷⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1883, p. 8.

⁹⁷⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 September 1883, p. 12.

⁹⁷⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 December 1883, p. 16.

RICHARD THOMAS JANSEN AND HIS FAMILY TROUBLES

Richard Thomas Jansen, a labourer and, for a time, a miner,⁹⁷⁸ had to cope not only with his aging parents but also stepchildren. His father, Peter Thomas, born in Denmark in 1832, was naturalized in 1890.⁹⁷⁹ In the mid-1880s, briefly, and unsuccessfully, Peter had attempted to be a roading contractor in the Te Aroha district, assisted by his son.⁹⁸⁰ In 1884, his house burnt down;⁹⁸¹ rebuilding it resulted in his being sued for £11 1s, for labour. He did not appear in court to answer the builder's statement that he had 'frequently applied' for this money. 'Account had never been disputed by the defendant, who had promised to pay, but now latterly he had told plaintiff his place was secured to' a local firm 'and he could do his best, hence the present proceedings'. He was ordered to pay.⁹⁸² Later, he farmed 97 acres of 'very good land' in the High School Endowment at Waiorongomai until his farm was sold by the mortgagee in 1894.⁹⁸³ An indication of his poor finances was that he had not paid the rates.⁹⁸⁴

Despite his financial problems, Peter was of sufficient repute to be elected to the Waiorongomai school committee, as his son would be in 1900 and 1901.⁹⁸⁵ In 1892, Peter slipped off his horse when riding over a bridge in the Rotokohu gorge, near Paeroa, breaking his thigh. Although for a time in a 'precarious condition' and when taken home was in a 'most critical

⁹⁷⁸ For his attempts to mine at Te Aroha in the early twentieth century, see papers on financing miners and mining companies in general and in the Te Aroha Mining District.

⁹⁷⁹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Old Age Pensions Claim Register 1899-1909, claim 9, BBAV 11503/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 31 July 1890, p. 876.

⁹⁸⁰ Piako Country Council, *Waikato Times*, 2 April 1885, p. 2.

⁹⁸¹ *Te Aroha News*, 1 November 1884, p. 2.

⁹⁸² Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 7 March 1885, p. 7.

⁹⁸³ *Thames Star*, 3 December 1883, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1886, p. 2; Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 16 April 1889, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 October 1894, p. 10.

⁹⁸⁴ Piako County Council, Letterbook 1893-1899, p. 225, Matamata-Piako District Council, Te Aroha.

⁹⁸⁵ *Waikato Times*, 28 April 1892, p. 3; *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 May 1899, p. 36, 4 May 1900, p. 16, 3 May 1901, p. 14.

state',⁹⁸⁶ he recovered and did not die until 1909, aged 73, of a heart attack; in his last years he had suffered from senile decay.⁹⁸⁷

Peter Jansen and his only child Richard were Anglicans; Bridget Mallard or Malliard or Mallin, an Irishwoman whom Peter married in Auckland when aged 25, was a Roman Catholic.⁹⁸⁸ She was not mentioned in newspapers until 1886, when, in a case that shone some light on the family, she charged Godfrey Gouldie with stealing her shawl. Bridget stated that Gouldie had accompanied her and her husband to a hotel, where she left him in charge of their horse and trap along with her shawl. 'We had been up to his house with some hay for a cow he had bought from us, and he came down to mind the trap for us, while we had a bath'. Having to wait for half an hour for this, 'my husband turned back', took the trap into the hotel yard, and the two men 'had some beer', after which Jansen had his bath. 'I missed the shawl when leaving the hotel to start for home. I suspected the accused, and wanted my husband to take out a search warrant at once; but he would not do so'. Four months later, she laid an information against Gouldie and was present when the police searched his house and Gouldie's wife 'handed it out of her bedroom'.

Gouldie stated that he had bought Jansen's cow for £5, paying £4 in cash. 'Next morning Jansen was to give me a receipt (not being able to read and write himself)', and when they met Jansen mentioned having lost a shawl, which Gouldie found on his land when returning home that night.

Jansen asked me to give the £1 balance, due on the cow, to a Mr [John] Bew [a brickmaker]; to whom he owed some money. I saw Bew and told him I would give him the £1 as soon as I could. Some time afterwards Jansen met me and abused me terribly for not having paid the £1 to Bew. I offered him the cow back at £3. I should have mentioned to him about the shawl but did not, because he was so abusive. Later on he came to my house and abused me so badly again for not paying the £1 that even had I thought of telling him about his shawl, I would not have done so at that time.

⁹⁸⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 31 August 1892, p. 2; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 3 September 1892, p. 4; *Auckland Weekly News*, 3 September 1892, p. 20.

⁹⁸⁷ Death Certificate of Peter Thomas Jansen, 8 June 1909, 1909/4051, BDM.

⁹⁸⁸ Death Certificates of Peter Thomas Jansen, 8 June 1909, 1909/4051; Richard Thomas Jansen, 5 April 1911, 1911/2624, BDM; Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1995, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

The magistrate doubted whether Gouldie intended to return the shawl and imprisoned him for 24 hours.⁹⁸⁹

In February 1892, Bridget was placed in the Te Aroha lock-up, charged with 'Being a dangerous lunatic and not being under proper control', and then sent to the Auckland asylum.⁹⁹⁰ Aged 50, her sub-acute mania was diagnosed as caused by the 'climacteric', otherwise menopause.⁹⁹¹ 'First attack of five years duration supposed to be due to change of life not epileptic or suicidal – dangerous'.

She is talkative, incoherent and absurd, says all the food and water in Waiorongomai is poisoned and therefore eats very little, says all the people are dirty, has threatened her husband's life more than once. Her son who came with her says she has fallen off in weight very much of late owing to her refusing food but there is in his opinion no danger of her starving herself altogether.

In April, she was reported to be lazy and reluctant to eat the food. Although claiming that her husband and son had 'perished', she was anxious to return home. The following month, she escaped and went to the Ponsonby Convent to find out who had placed her in the asylum. In June, she had 'delusions thinking that her neighbours at home persecuted her and her husband by coming around the house annoying her & speaking evil of her. She also says they poisoned the well water in order to damage their cows etc'.⁹⁹² Her husband paid 7s 6d towards her upkeep until June, when he stated he could not pay any more and requested her return.⁹⁹³ Being in good bodily health, she was discharged as 'relieved' on his bond in October.⁹⁹⁴

Two years later, when travelling by coach to Thames, her behaviour 'was rather peculiar', prompting the coachman to telephone the police. She

⁹⁸⁹ Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 26 June 1886, p. 2.

⁹⁹⁰ Armed Constabulary Force, Return of Charges taken at Te Aroha Lock-Up 1880-1903, 5/1892, in private possession.

⁹⁹¹ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1767, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

⁹⁹² Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 713, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁹³ Avondale Asylum, Record Book of Investigation into Relatives' Ability to Pay Maintenance 1890-1899, folio 57, YCAA 1044/1, ANZ-A.

⁹⁹⁴ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1767, YCAA 1021/2; Case Book 1853-1892, folio 713, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

was ‘under the impression that her relations and friends are continually attempting to murder her by putting poison in her tea, etc’.⁹⁹⁵ Two Thames doctors reported on her condition:

She says that boys annoy her, tear her clothes, and rend her boots. They are urged on by their grandfather who is half man and half woman. They throw filth in her well etc. Says all the cows and sheep are fed on filth and that the butter is filthy on that account. She was arrested by the Constable on account of her peculiar behaviour in the street. She thinks she keeps a paddock for the convenience of government officers. Boys have holes in the wall of the house and throw ground glass in to blind her.⁹⁹⁶

Recommitted, she informed the asylum’s doctors that ‘telegram boys annoy her. She says she keeps a paddock for horses that come with newspapers.... She says that she is of no religion, that there is no religion in the world, and that we are all to be buried as dogs. She denies having husband or children’.⁹⁹⁷ Her husband stated that she had spent four years at the Cape of Good Hope before living in New Zealand for 30 years:

Has a good memory, a strong will and violent temper. Is clever, passionate, affectionate energetic and industrious, strong, healthy woman. Has grieved lately because of her husband’s property being sold by mortgagee.... Has been more or less insane for 6 yrs. She thinks she is being poisoned. Cause Climacteric. Menstruation ceased 6 yrs ago. Was always regular.⁹⁹⁸

Diagnosed as suffering from recurrent mania, she remained in the asylum until her death in 1913.⁹⁹⁹ Abusive and threatening, she never improved.¹⁰⁰⁰ Required to pay maintenance, her husband claimed that ‘owing to slackness of work’, he was ‘still unable to contribute. Will settle a/c at earliest opportunity’. As he did not, the local police reported on his circumstances: ‘Able to work – No property. Sold up recently by mortgagee’.

⁹⁹⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 October 1894, p. 2.

⁹⁹⁶ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 714, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁹⁷ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 714, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁹⁸ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 714, YCAA 1049/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁹⁹ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1995, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 714, YCAA 1049/5, ANZ-A.

He continued not to contribute.¹⁰⁰¹ Nor did her son: Richard's financial state was revealed in the following year, when a shopkeeper sued him for goods supplied and he agreed to pay £1 per month.¹⁰⁰²

Only on two occasions did Richard Jansen come to the attention of the authorities. In 1891, he pleaded guilty to cruelty to a horse and was fined 20s.¹⁰⁰³ Six years later he was charged with assault, but the charge was withdrawn.¹⁰⁰⁴ He was sociable, participating in at least one foot race 'for a small stake',¹⁰⁰⁵ and played cricket and football for the Waiorongomai teams.¹⁰⁰⁶ In 1887 he was secretary of the Waiorongomai Jubilee Minstrels' entertainment.¹⁰⁰⁷ He joined the Te Aroha Rifles in 1893, and two years later participated, badly, in a Volunteer shooting competition.¹⁰⁰⁸

In April 1892, he married, at the age of 30, Alice Burchell, an Irishwoman aged two year older, who had been widowed in August 1888, or so the marriage certificate recorded.¹⁰⁰⁹ According to his death certificate, he was 27 when married, and she was six years older.¹⁰¹⁰ Her first husband, Arthur Burchell, a Waiorongomai miner, had died of pneumonia, possibly caused by miners' complaint, aged 31; his final illness lasted 12 days and he had not received any medical assistance.¹⁰¹¹ The *Te Aroha News* reported his death as coming after a 'lingering and painful illness of some weeks'. Although not having lived for long at Waiorongomai, 'by his generous spirit' he 'had made many friends, who did all in their power to alleviate his suffering and administer to the wants of his family'.¹⁰¹² He left two

¹⁰⁰¹ Avondale Asylum, Record Book of Investigation into Relatives' Ability to Pay Maintenance 1890-1899, folio 57, YCAA 1044/1, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁰² Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 4 May 1895, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰³ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 5/1891, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 6/1897, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 11 May 1889, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 10 October 1888, p. 7, 15 May 1889, p. 2, 28 August 1889, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 2 July 1887, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Te Aroha Rifles, Nominal Roll to 29 February 1896, Army Department, ARM 41, 1911/66r, ANZ-W; *Te Aroha News*, 10 July 1895, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Marriage Certificate of Richard Thomas Jansen, 7 April 1892, 1892/982, BDM.

¹⁰¹⁰ Death Certificate of Richard Thomas Jansen, 5 April 1911, 1911/2624, BDM.

¹⁰¹¹ Death Certificate of Arthur Burchell, 25 August 1888, 1888/5408, BDM.

¹⁰¹² *Te Aroha News*, 29 August 1888, p. 2.

daughters, aged eight and five, and a son aged seven.¹⁰¹³ To assist his destitute family, £35 was raised.¹⁰¹⁴

Richard Jansen did not father any children. His stepson, Arthur John Burchell, another miner, married a 26 year-old widow in 1902 when he was 23, and had a daughter in the following year.¹⁰¹⁵ His wife died three years later,¹⁰¹⁶ and even though his stepson had neither died nor remarried, Jansen became guardian of the girl.¹⁰¹⁷ In 1897, an unnamed stepdaughter was living in another family's house at Waiorongomai when it burnt down; she escaped unharmed, and returned to live with her mother and stepfather.¹⁰¹⁸ In February 1900, when aged 20, his stepdaughter Alice, a domestic servant,¹⁰¹⁹ had an illegitimate son to Charles Thomas Young; her mother was present at the birth.¹⁰²⁰ Jansen sued Young for maintenance, but the case was 'Dismissed for want of collaborative evidence'.¹⁰²¹ In June, additional 'evidence was given at great length', and the magistrate was convinced.¹⁰²² As Young failed to obey the maintenance order, he was taken to court again to enforce payment.¹⁰²³ Quite a typical case; except that the child died after 11 weeks,¹⁰²⁴ so why should Young be required to pay maintenance on a dead child?

¹⁰¹³ Death Certificate of Arthur Burchell, 25 August 1888, 1888/5408, BDM.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 29 August 1888, p. 5.

¹⁰¹⁵ Marriage Certificate of Arthur John Burchell, 1902/4977; Birth Certificate of Vida Elvene Burchell, 11 September 1903, 1903/6580, BDM.

¹⁰¹⁶ Death Certificate of Suzanna Eliza Burchell, 1906/6385, BDM.

¹⁰¹⁷ Te Aroha School, Admissions Register no. 4 (1904-1918), no. 2267, School Archives, Te Aroha.

¹⁰¹⁸ 'Te Aroha Notes', *Waikato Argus*, 5 June 1897, p. 3.

¹⁰¹⁹ Church of England, Te Aroha Register of Baptisms 1880-1908, no. 607, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁰²⁰ Birth Certificate of Arnold George Burchell, 2 February 1900, 1900/3445, BDM.

¹⁰²¹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 16/1900, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A; Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 8 March 1900, p. 2.

¹⁰²² Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 June 1900, p. 38.

¹⁰²³ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 21/1900, BCDG 12200/1b, ANZ-A.

¹⁰²⁴ Death Certificate of Arnold George Burchell, 1900/2392, BDM.

After failing as a miner, Jansen became a labourer, working near Thames when admitted to hospital in March 1911.¹⁰²⁵ Almost two years after the death of his father, he died of the combination of diabetes and a carbuncle; according to his death certificate, he was only 46.¹⁰²⁶

CONCLUSION

The O.M.'s chatty voyeurism did not deal with the harsh realities of life, and often his snippets were meaningless to later readers. For instance, in 1891 'the £5,000 man has gone, also his lady friend, not forgetting the "skipper" '.¹⁰²⁷ And sometimes gossip should not be believed, as in an example from the early days of the goldfield, written about the warden's clerk:

Someone went to B's tent in a great state of mind the other evening, with the story that a woman was locked up in the office. B. blushed, said "impossible," and went for his pants. And investigation showed that the false impression had been caused by Detective F's little dog, which, by some extraordinary mischance, had become separated from its master.¹⁰²⁸

In this case, an innocent explanation was provided, but in other cases such explanations were not published, although appearances may have been worse than the reality. The most obvious difficulty in using gossip as a source is whether it was accurate. For instance, in 1884 the *Te Aroha News* recorded that 'some festive Waiorongamite yesterday endeavoured to hoax us with a bogus advertisement ... that Louis Kalman', a Waiorongomai storekeeper and unsuccessful mining investor,¹⁰²⁹ 'was the father of twins'.¹⁰³⁰ As Kalman was unmarried, and remained so,¹⁰³¹ this was scandalous; but the local newspaper was in a position to know whether it

¹⁰²⁵ Thames Hospital, Fees Register 1910-1912, entries for 29 March 1911, 5 April 1911, YCAH A431/73, ANZ-A.

¹⁰²⁶ Death Certificate of Richard Thomas Jansen, 5 April 1911, 1911/2624, BDM.

¹⁰²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 February 1891, p. 18.

¹⁰²⁸ *Te Aroha Miner*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 19 February 1881, p. 2.

¹⁰²⁹ See *New Zealand Gazette*, 18 October 1883, p. 1518, 14 August 1884, p. 1260; District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 4 February 1885, p. 3.

¹⁰³⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 9 February 1884, p. 2.

¹⁰³¹ Index to Marriages, 1880-1920, BDM.

was being hoaxed. As the *Observer* was published in Auckland it could not check the truthfulness of what it printed but tried to cover itself by disguising those being gossiped about, usually by using their initials. This would not fool residents but would hide their blushes from others.

Presumably the O.M. and his informants usually attempted to be accurate, but they appear to have exaggerated many flirtations. It seems that a young person could not talk or walk or dance with someone without it being alleged that a new flirtation had begun, whereas usually the interaction was quite 'innocent' and the old love continued. And sometimes the O.M. misinterpreted what he (or his spies) saw or misunderstood what they were told. For instance, in April 1893 the O.M. asked: 'Why does G. look so broken-hearted? Is it because "The Rose" went to Rotorua? Cheer up G. dear, he's coming back soon'.¹⁰³² G. soon clarified her preferences: 'G. says she likes the little tailor better than all the "roses" '.¹⁰³³ And were individuals' claims of, or popular beliefs about, their attractiveness to the opposite sex (there was no gossip about the attractiveness of the same sex) to be believed? That 'L.B. is getting the greatest lady-killer in Te Aroha'¹⁰³⁴ may have been how he liked to be perceived or how his friends liked to portray him but should not be taken at face value. The more exciting the gossip, the more interesting to readers, who were given details of 'ladykillers' but not of faithful lovers and model married couples.

Sometimes the O.M.'s reproofing comments could be seen as a form of social control on young people; for instance, 'the Morrinsville young man who attended the social should not make such an exhibit of himself'.¹⁰³⁵ It was notable that he did not report on the behaviour of married couples, except for the occasional hint of extra-marital relations.

Gossip can alert historians to particular people and events, but needs to be combined with other evidence to recreate, as far as is possible, the lives and personalities of obscure people. In the absence of letters and diaries, and with newspapers usually ignoring people of little local importance, gossip and court records are the only way to trace them, even though these cannot provide a full picture either of individuals or of such social groups as servants and shop assistants. But gossip should be used with care and cross-referenced with other sources whenever possible. And,

¹⁰³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 April 1893, p. 17.

¹⁰³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1893, p. 21.

¹⁰³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

¹⁰³⁵ 'Waiorongomia', *Observer*, 26 September 1891, p. 21.

after all the checking of sources to discover what was going on and who was who, nothing unexpected was revealed, just behaviour, both good and bad, common throughout the world.

Appendix

Figure 1: 'Te Aroha Faces: By a Lady Artist', Observer, 21 December 1895, p. 7.

Figure 2: 'Blo' [William Blomfield], 'Faces and Forms at the Te Aroha Volunteer Banquet', Observer, 24 June 1899, p. 17.

Figure 3: 'Modesty Cottage', Waiorongomai, n.d. [late 1880s or early 1890s]: Albert Edwards is in the middle (Te Aroha Museum; used with permission).



Figure 1: 'Te Aroha Faces: By a Lady Artist', *Observer*, 21 December 1895, p. 7.



FACES AND FORMS AT THE TE AROHA VOLUNTEER BANQUET.

Figure 2: 'Blo' [William Blomfield], 'Faces and Forms at the Te Aroha Volunteer Banquet', *Observer*, 24 June 1899, p. 17.



Figure 3: 'Modesty Cottage', Waiorongomai, n.d. [late 1880s or early 1890s]: Albert Edwards is the man in the middle (Te Arohas Museum; used with permission).