

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

Whilst other newspapers sometimes retailed details of the private lives of some residents, in its first decades the *Observer* made gossip a feature of each week's edition. Unfortunately for social historians there are large gaps in the nineteenth century; for instance, none of the 1884 issues have survived. In other years, such as 1897, there were no columns on 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 denote its targets, 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 if they were the same people. 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 people who can be identified much of the texture of private life 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. Whilst much of the gossip recorded may seem trivial, the relationships referred to 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 depended couples' futures in an age when 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 to see who was included, as noted below. And when trying to write 'history from below' and investigating the lives of waitresses or barmaids or shop assistants, gossip often provides the only information about such people.

Although the identities of most of those mentioned cannot now be determined, many features of social behaviour can be detected through gossip. Where identities can be discovered, these snippets of information can be confirmed from other sources and provide details otherwise lost. Even when identities cannot be determined, the activities noted provide insights into daily life, especially for the young. Those gossiped about were often described as 'boys' and 'young ladies', for most were teenagers, which explains why many cannot be traced by using electoral rolls (only from 1893 for women). 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.!'¹ They would have been schoolgirls because girls left school by about 14 or at most 15;² was C. being reprovved for 'cradle-snatching'? In the following year, 'The two little girls in blue' who at a dance 'seemed to have H.H. all to themselves'³ 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';⁴ again, this should be taken literally, and in due course she would learn more dancing skills. Clearly some young girls were forward in their flirtations: 'Oh, where and oh where does A.P. go on Saturday nights, as her place is filled by a golden-haired damsel not above

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

² 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.

³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 October 1895, p. 21.

sixteen summers'.⁵ And 'who are the two sisters that want the same young man? Rather young for either of them'.⁶

Young people in their mid-teens were sometimes indiscreetly interested in the opposite sex, but in general the O.M. refrained from gossiping about the more respectable members of the community and refrained from providing the full facts of sexual misdemeanours. 'Ladykillers', meaning 'male flirts',⁷ and their female prey (all relationships recorded were of heterosexual couples) were identified in disguised ways, though when initials were used local residents cannot have had too much difficulty in working out who was who.

Despite its universality, gossiping was disapproved of; for instance, in 1883 one fertile provider of gossip, the Te Aroha *Observer* Man, had the gall to criticize gossips:

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']⁸ one another into jelly. They would find much more profitable employment in looking after their little ones and repairing their husband's unmentionables [undergarments].⁹

WHO WAS THE OBSERVER MAN?

In May 1887 'the fair maidens' wanted to know the identity of the OBSERVER man.¹⁰ 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'.¹¹ The O.M.'s delight in the frustrations of those seeking to know his identity was 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

⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

⁷ Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 661.

⁸ *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 5 ed. (Oxford, 1964), p. 203.

⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 September 1883, p. 16.

¹⁰ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

¹¹ 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 18 June 1887, p. 18.

happy to inform them that he is quite well, and the “muscles of his brawny arms” would bear comparison with John L. Sullivan,¹²

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.¹³ Clearly at this time he was assumed to be male, as again 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’.¹⁴ 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’.¹⁵ Was he the same Willie who complained in the previous 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.¹⁶ At a fancy dress ball in September 1893, one man came dressed as the O.M.’¹⁷ 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’.¹⁸ 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.’ The O.M. stated.¹⁹ 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’.²⁰

¹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 March 1890, p. 14.

¹³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 March 1891, p. 18.

¹⁴ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 26 September 1891, p. 21.

¹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

¹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

¹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

¹⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

¹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

²⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

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'.²¹ When 'the bon-tons held a successful hop' he 'was enthusiastically invited to be conspicuous by his absence. He lives in hopes of gaining admission to the next'.²² The following year, 'the O.M. received an invite to stay away from the creamery picnic, but he was there in disguise', and described the behaviour of two men.²³ Four months later, bricks were 'in great demand for the laying out of the OBSERVER fiend. Worry round, boys; you'll find him'.²⁴

BEING SPIED ON

The *Observer* Man liked to stress his all-seeing gaze, which no doubt like that of other residents concentrated on flirting couples: watching and overhearing the flirtatious and minding everyone else's business was a constant feature of 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'.²⁵ 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'.²⁶ Three years later, 'Look out, the O.M. has returned from his holidays'.²⁷

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',²⁸ presumably a hotel dining room. Later that year, 'W. looked very nice carrying the umbrella for Miss G. on Saturday night'.²⁹ 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.'.³⁰ In 1893, 'M. looked nice passing through the gorge the other Sunday

²¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

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

²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 March 1899, p. 22.

²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

²⁵ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

²⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 March 1891, p. 18.

²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

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

²⁹ 'Te Aroha Teachings', *Observer*, 6 June 1885, p. 16.

³⁰ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 16.

with C. You did not think the O.M. was so near'.³¹ 'The Ironmonger should not leave his buggy on the road side when he goes to see his Sunday girl'.³² 'The girl at the Hot Springs Hotel looked well on Sunday with R.F. Don't make so much noise next time for the O.M. had his eye on you'.³³ 'The man from Waihou and E.W. were piling it on [saying too much]³⁴ the other evening. Do not speak so loud or passers will hear you'.³⁵ In the following year, 'G.H. and the dusky beauty [a Maori?] should not speak so loud when discussing their beaus. Porches have ears'.³⁶ 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'.³⁷ 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?'³⁸

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.'. ³⁹ 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'.⁴⁰ 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'.⁴¹

Prurient spying on others was illustrated in December 1882: 'If kissing goes by favor, what a favored individual G.B. was on Thursday night' at Te Aroha;⁴² 'Who were the two nymphs that took a dip in the [Waiorongomai] creek in a perfect state of beauty unadorned, etc'.⁴³ The following year, 'W. should pull down the blinds when next he receives lady visitors at the

³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 January 1893, p. 15.

³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 March 1893, p. 17.

³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

³⁴ *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*.

³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

³⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

³⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 May 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁴¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 December 1882, p. 218.

⁴³ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

“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?’⁴⁴

EMBARRASSMENT

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’.⁴⁵ This was a reference to Caroline Ida Devey, daughter of George, a carpenter and cabinetmaker;⁴⁶ she would not deviate from the paths of propriety but marry a respectable bookkeeper, John McLeod Murray, the following April.⁴⁷ Four years later, F.M.L. said that ‘she was never in the OBSERVER until she came to Te Aroha’,⁴⁸ without revealing whether she enjoyed the publicity.

In 1893, ‘T.K. was greatly annoyed at the O.M. making game of his coat’.⁴⁹ 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’.⁵⁰ In July 1895, the O.M. asked: ‘Who is the young lady that supplies all the young men at the rink with button holes? What would pa say, L.’⁵¹ 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’.⁵²

ENJOYING SEEING THEMSELVES OR OTHERS BEING REPORTED

⁴⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 September 1883, p. 15.

⁴⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 December 1883, p. 16.

⁴⁶ See paper on George Devey and his family

⁴⁷ Marriage Certificate of Caroline Ida Devey, 16 April 1884, 1884/912, BDM.

⁴⁸ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁴⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

⁵⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 September 1894, p. 21.

⁵¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁵² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

Probably more 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 [temperance] performance on Tuesday evening. Was Carrie trying to find her own name there?’⁵³ ‘Our young ladies take great interest in the OBSERVER, as they walk up the street in Indian file with an OBSERVER each in their hand’.⁵⁴ At Waiorongomai, ‘Where was Ettie taking the OBSERVER to on Sunday afternoon?’⁵⁵ 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’.⁵⁶ And in the following year, ‘Great excitement here on arrival of the OBSERVER. Every copy sold out at once’.⁵⁷

After amateurish sketches of unnamed ‘Te Aroha Faces: By a Lady Artist’, were published in 1895,⁵⁸ F. would not visit the Octagon ‘at any price, and the other F. is constantly seen admiring himself’, while the ‘Waihou boy says the shape of his nose is exaggerated but on the whole, they are all well pleased with themselves’.⁵⁹

MALICIOUS GOSSIP

Gossip could be accurate, exaggerated, or malicious, and it is almost impossible now to determine which was which. As an example of malice, in 1893 an account of the ‘pretty boys’ ball’ at Te Aroha included details of the fancy dress costumes. Some, such as Indian Princess or Policeman, seem typical but others seem odd. Amongst the women were ‘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 others had odd costumes: ‘Mr Davis, Bogie man’, ‘Mr Page, Dummy’, ‘Mr B. Cornes, Tattler’, and ‘Mr Macnicol, Ghost in the Garden’. Did some of the names

⁵³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 June 1891, p. 18.

⁵⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

⁵⁵ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 26 September 1891, p. 21.

⁵⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 2 March 1895, p. 21.

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

⁵⁸ ‘Te Aroha Faces: By a Lady Artist’, *Observer*, 21 December 1895, p. 7.

⁵⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 January 1896, p. 21.

hint at liaisons? For instance, ‘Miss Johnson, Negro’, could be a close friend of ‘Mr A. Everett, Nigger’; ‘Miss Fugill, Queen of Flax’, seems to go with ‘Mr Davis, Flax King’; ‘Miss T. Whitten, Jack Tar’, could be involved with ‘Mr McLean, Nancy Lee’; ‘Miss Dillon, Chinawoman’, could be linked to ‘Mr W. Maingay, Chinaman’; possibly ‘Mrs Cornes, Given up toys and taken to boys’ had an extra-marital relationship with ‘Mr Devey, Baby Boy’; ‘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.⁶⁰ No doubt those ‘in the know’ would have made other connections.

Some of these implied relationships did exist. For instance, William James McLean, a baker, married Elizabeth Whitten in the following year.⁶¹ In August 1892 the O.M. asked: ‘Who is the young man that said he always likes to oblige the ladies by carrying the umbrella? Not so slow for Albert’.⁶² Two weeks later, ‘A.D. looked quite fatherly in the domain on a recent Sunday. Getting your hand in, Albert?’⁶³ 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?’⁶⁴ She was Katherine, originally Catherine, Fugill, who, when aged 18, married Albert Davies, a 24-year-old labourer, in September 1893.⁶⁵

A strong hint that these names were not randomly chosen was that Mrs Matthews was Judy and her husband was Punch. John Matthews, a

⁶⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

⁶¹ 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.

⁶² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

⁶³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

⁶⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 September 1892, p. 17.

⁶⁵ 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.

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, 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 his wife, and in leaving the district failed to provide any means for her support.⁷⁰ Unwilling to admit to these circumstances, when seeking work she 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.⁷²

In the following issue, the editor of the *Observer* replied to a letter from a Te Aroha resident about printing a ‘fictitious and offensive account of a supposed fancy dress ball’ by stated 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 was taken to clarify the circumstances.

MEANINGLESS GOSSIP UNLESS ‘IN THE KNOW’

Because of the disguised identities of people who were usually young people rather than their parents who featured in newspapers and court records, some of the gossip is now unintelligible although it probably made sense to contemporaries. For instance, what can be made of the ‘Te Aroha

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.

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 occurred. Also in 1883, one E. denied 'that she used cayenne pepper to drive the ladies out of the room'.⁷⁵ '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. Another question asked in that year, 'who is the young man that implored H.L. to cut his hair?',⁷⁷ may have made sense then, but means nothing to historians, even if they could discover the identity of H.L. He 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 wedding festivities.

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

The first man mentioned may have been a bookkeeper and later butcher who was active in social and sporting events, George Manny Burke,

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.

aged 25 in that year, who was 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.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: examples are given near the end of this chapter. 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

A question posed in June 1882 indicated the importance of elegant attire: ‘Was it that young surveyor who started the fashion of wearing cloth hats with the rims turned down?’⁸³ At the house-warming party given by a storekeeper, restaurant owner, and boardinghouse keeper, Moses Hotchin,⁸⁴ in November that year, ‘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,⁸⁵ ‘bore off the palm for graceful dressing’.⁸⁶ At Waiorongomai one week later, ‘the fair tobacconist’

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

⁸⁴ 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.

⁸⁵ Marriage Certificate of Mary Jane Hotchin, 24 January 1883, 1883/1773, BDM.

⁸⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 170.

looked 'too-utterly indescribable behind the counter'.⁸⁷ 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'.⁸⁸ 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'.⁸⁹

Rarely was male attire and concern for appearance commented on, and then often mockingly, implying narcissism. In Waiorongomai in 1882, 'E. had better get a grey bell-topper if he wants to heal the sick round here', possibly a reference to a visiting doctor, there being no resident one.⁹⁰ And 'young Charlie F. has determined to sport his figure at the next ball. There will be a flutter in the ball-room when he appears. Borrow a set of ears, Charlie, or there will be trouble'.⁹¹ In 1892, 'H. and C.'s assistant is beginning to grow sideboards. It makes you look ancient, Fred'.⁹² 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 quire a dude on Sunday afternoons when he is mounted on horseback'.⁹³ In January 1893, 'W. looks well in the glasses. The O.M. is about to get a pair'.⁹⁴ 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.'. ⁹⁵ These collars (and the same person?) were referred to again one month later: 'W.M. is calling tenders for padding stand-up collars, as they cut his neck'.⁹⁶ In 1896, 'Why has H.L. taken to white shoes? Is it to please Miss C.?'⁹⁷ 'Why did C.W., of the battery, take his beard off? Was it to please Miss R., or is it not fashionable enough?'⁹⁸

⁸⁷ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 August 1891, p. 18.

⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

⁹⁰ See paper on health issues in the Te Aroha district.

⁹¹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 October 1892, p. 17.

⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 January 1893, p. 20.

⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 September 1893, p. 21.

⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

The O.M. proffered unsolicited advice on etiquette. A nickname disguised one offender noted in 1882 at Te Aroha: 'Porangi [‘mad; in a hurry’],⁹⁹ when you next conduct ladies from church, it would be advisable to keep them out of the many water holes on the way home’.¹⁰⁰ At Waiorongomai, in 1885, ‘The next time Mrs S. sends the young mother a valentine she should learn how to spell’.¹⁰¹ At the same settlement, in 1886, ‘J.S. should not spoon so much before folks’.¹⁰² And ‘who was the gentleman who took a young lady to the dance on Thursday night and was ashamed to go in with her?’¹⁰³ 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’.¹⁰⁴ Also in that year,

Who was the Hamilton fellow who brought his girl for a walk up the mountain on Good Friday, and, thinking he would be late for the train, tumbled himself and her so fast down to the township again, that it was only with great exertion she was able to walk to the station. Don’t treat a girl like that again, G., even if you have to miss the train.¹⁰⁵

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’.¹⁰⁶ In the following year, ‘who was the unmannerly dude that the boys were abusing for keeping his hat on at the concert?’¹⁰⁷ 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.

⁹⁹ P.M. Ryan, *The New Dictionary of Modern Maori* (Auckland, 1973), p. 34.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 170.

¹⁰¹ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 21 March 1885, p. 10.

¹⁰² ‘Waiorongomai Wirings’, *Observer*, 13 February 1886, p. 16.

¹⁰³ ‘Waiorongomai Wrinkles’, *Observer*, 20 March 1886, p. 23.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Te Aroha Twinkles’, *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 August 1889, p. 18.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 July 1890, p. 17.

Well done, pretty Camelia! You are the only one that can put them in their place.¹⁰⁸

In the following year, ‘a certain young lady ought to learn to behave herself before she goes to church again’.¹⁰⁹ Two years later, ‘what made L.W. beat time in church the other night? Oh, L.W.!’¹¹⁰ And ‘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?’¹¹¹ ‘Who was the young man that took his intended bride to a ball and imbibed too freely?’¹¹²

Undue familiarity either experienced or feared seems to have been the reason for the following questions: ‘Why does that girl keep her hat on at the dance? Is it to keep the boys from leaning their faces against hers?’¹¹³

FLIRTING, AND MORE SERIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

In 1896, the O.M. claimed that Te Aroha was ‘generally acknowledged to be a capital place for spooony couples. Once under the shadow of the Mount of Love, they appear to yield to its influence’.¹¹⁴ 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!’¹¹⁵ And ‘what was D.C. doing up the hill at Waiorongomai last Monday?’¹¹⁶ What, indeed? That question cannot be answered now, although residents would have recognized the person and the meaning of the jibe.

Love was continually 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’.¹¹⁷ Two years later, ‘W.M., the

¹⁰⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 July 1892, p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

¹¹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 9 March 1895, p. 21.

¹¹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

¹¹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

¹¹³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

¹¹⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

¹¹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 June 1882, p. 201.

¹¹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

¹¹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 16 July 1892, p. 19.

youth of classic profile, is casting sheep's eyes at J.R.'¹¹⁸ There was love (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', presumably mid-way between the two settlements.

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 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).... The O.M. does not see A.C. so often now since H.M. went over to the land of cream,¹¹⁹

presumably a reference to someone becoming a dairy farmer. (Miss Cumming did not marry J.P.H.)¹²⁰ Five months later, 'J.S. is in love, and becoming quite thin'.¹²¹

Lonely people without partners: There were always young, and not so young, people seeking love, which 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 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 Johnnies here just now'.¹²⁶ In

¹¹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

¹¹⁹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

¹²⁰ Index to Marriages, 1895-1920, BDM.

¹²¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

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 June 1893, p. 22.

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'.¹²⁷

A Waiorongomai comment of 1886 that 'it looks bad of the young storeman to be standing about the Hall door at every dance'¹²⁸ suggests a lonely man who could not attract a partner. Without knowing even his initials it is not possible to discover whether he eventually married, but most of the lonely did. 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.¹²⁹ Five years later, in 1890, 'who were the young ladies dancing outside of the Public Hall on Wednesday night? Can't they raise a masher each?'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

¹²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

¹²⁸ 'Waiorongomai Wrinkles', *Observer*, 20 March 1886, p. 23.

¹²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 February 1885, p. 10.

¹³⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

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.

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 can it be?'¹⁴¹ In the following year, '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

Many were cautious or shy about associating with the opposite sex. 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, especially the shy, together. For instance, at the Bachelors' Ball 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,

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

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

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.

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

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 ‘Our tailor has 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 and 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’. What role the bellman had to play in this endeavour was not explained; 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*. He did so in his normal 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 well have been the miner

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

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.

John O'Shea¹⁵⁸ (a full stop and not an apostrophe was used immediately afterwards for Michael O'Keefe), but O'Shea was not married until June 1888, to Nora Keohane, a Thames girl who would have been 17 in 1883.¹⁵⁹ He also wrote that 'Tommy and Maggie are hard at it', a reference to the miner Thomas Gavin¹⁶⁰ and Margaret Murphy, who would indeed marry in the following April.¹⁶¹ The column ended by cryptically stating that 'Alphabet O.K., a Knight of the Hammer, and Gad are going to met 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'Keefe,¹⁶³ who would not marry Margaret O'Leary until October the following year, when she was a domestic servant, not a cook.¹⁶⁴ The most likely 'Knight of the Hammer', otherwise an auctioneer, was James Craig,¹⁶⁵ who would not marry for another 12 years, 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 *Observer* Man at Waiorongomai recorded¹⁶⁸ that 'the young blacksmith' was 'thinking of getting a [long?]-haired striker'.¹⁶⁹ If this was a reference to William Jackson Ellis, the pioneer blacksmith there,¹⁷⁰ he was not married until 1889, to a Paeroa girl.¹⁷¹ In December, 'our blacksmith says if he knew your correspondent he'd take a

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.

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'Keefe [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 Only an incomplete and damaged copy has survived of his gossip.

¹⁶⁹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 18 November 1882, p. 153.

¹⁷⁰ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 847; *Hauraki Plains Gazette*, 13 April 1932, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ Marriage Certificate of William Jackson Ellis, 28 January 1889, 1889/53, BDM; *Thames Advertiser*, 5 February 1889, p. 2.

rise out of him. God bless his extreme youth, he could not take a rise out of a kangaroo cat'.¹⁷² Ellis was 25.¹⁷³ The information published in the following year that 'Fred drinks nothing else but lemonade, and promises to make M. happy after 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.¹⁷⁴

In May 1887 J.J. was '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'.¹⁷⁵ James Johnson, a bricklayer,¹⁷⁶ married Margaret Jane Keith in the following January.¹⁷⁷ In 1893, the O.M.'s comment seemingly implied that a 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.'¹⁷⁸

As was to be expected, many unmarried women managed to find a husband. For instance, at a Band of Hope 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'.¹⁷⁹ James Mills, later the first mayor of Te Aroha,¹⁸⁰ had two daughters, both of whom would marry. Ellen, the elder, married 16 months later, 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.¹⁸¹ The other daughter, Mary Alice, born in 1867, married in 1888; her marriage in Greymouth to a former

¹⁷² 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

¹⁷³ *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 847; Death Certificate of William Jackson Ellis, 12 April 1932, 1932/4689, BDM.

¹⁷⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1883, p. 8.

¹⁷⁵ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

¹⁷⁶ See *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1887*, p. 13; *Te Aroha News*, 3 October 1940, p. 5.

¹⁷⁷ Marriage Certificate of James Johnson, 4 January 1888, 1888/405, BDM.

¹⁷⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 November 1893, p. 21.

¹⁷⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 November 1884, p. 18.

¹⁸⁰ See paper on his life.

¹⁸¹ 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.

butcher and mining investor in Waiorongomai (in a very small way) lasted until the accidental death of her husband in 1931.¹⁸²

Flirting with several, either simultaneously or sequentially: In 1888, the O.M. considered that ‘C.G. had better watch his p’s and q’s; he can’t always have three on a string’.¹⁸³ He also noted ‘W.B. coming sailing down the street with a fair wind and one on each side. Not greedy, old man, but you like a lot’.¹⁸⁴ 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!’.¹⁸⁵ C.G. may have been one of the following:

Teamster [a carter?], Hanker,¹⁸⁶ 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.¹⁸⁷

C.G. lost, and five weeks later ‘C.G. seems to take his disappointment to heart very much’.¹⁸⁸ The following month, ‘C.G. says he can’t get a girl anywhere. What about N.G.?’¹⁸⁹ One month later, he seems to have left the district: ‘C.G. is leaving a sore heart behind’.¹⁹⁰

Another C.G., a woman, was contested for in 1898 and 1899. In October 1898, ‘C.W. and Miss G. evidently enjoyed their pull in the “Flint” last week. What a charming water-nymph you made, C.G.’¹⁹¹ One month

¹⁸² 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.

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

¹⁸⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 December 1888, p. 17.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

¹⁸⁶ ‘One who takes part in a baiting’: Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang* (London, 1998), p. 560, which hardly seems appropriate.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

¹⁸⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 May 1889, p. 17.

¹⁸⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 June 1889, p. 18.

¹⁹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

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?'¹⁹² 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'.¹⁹³ In March 1899 the O.M. asked, 'Has C.W. transferred his attentions elsewhere? ... The betting for C.G. stakes is – F.W., of Te Aroha W[est], level money; C.W., 2 to 1'.¹⁹⁴ Neither won, for two months later 'C.G. and 'A.' were going it heavily at the dance the other night'.¹⁹⁵ 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'.¹⁹⁶ Three months after mentioning the 'stakes', 'F.W. looks very loving with C.G. Have you popped the question yet, F.?'¹⁹⁷ Two weeks later, 'F.W. looked really important at the social. So good of C.G. to give him such unstinted praise'.¹⁹⁸

In 1889, W.H., took 'first prize for flirting here. Didn't he look well with two on Sunday night!'¹⁹⁹ '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'.²⁰⁰ 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?'²⁰¹

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.²⁰²

¹⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 November 1898, p. 21.

¹⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

¹⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 March 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 May 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1899, p. 21.

¹⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

¹⁹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 June 1889, p. 18.

²⁰⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 June 1889, p. 18.

²⁰¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 December 1892, p. 24.

²⁰² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

At a ‘toff dance’ 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’.²⁰³ C.L. may have been flirting on a generous scale himself: two months later the O.M. asked: ‘What price a kiss over the counter, C.L.? What, only threepence?’²⁰⁴ ‘G.H. looked nice at the train; where was L.? ... L. was piling it on in the Domain with the fair sex’.²⁰⁵

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?’²⁰⁶ Two months later, ‘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?’²⁰⁷ 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?’²⁰⁸

Flirting with more than one person enabled a choice to be made on the basis of experience. For instance, ‘A.M. said she would rather have A. than T., as A. is more attentive’.²⁰⁹

Trying to hide two-timing (which the O.M. regularly exposed):

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?’²¹⁰ (And she would now know it, as with all the others who read the *Observer* to find out what their inamoratas were up to). Discovering two-timing could be devastating: ‘The latest *on dit* is 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?’²¹¹

Rivalry was common, 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.’²¹² In September, ‘Fred and H.G. deserted their pets, and went

²⁰³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

²⁰⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1894, p. 21.

²⁰⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

²⁰⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

²⁰⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

²⁰⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

²⁰⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

²¹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

²¹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15.

²¹² ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 9 June 1883, p. 180.

pig-hunting on Sunday. Be careful, Fred, or you will lose her'.²¹³ And 'who was the young man who took F. home on Sunday night? B. had better come in from Waiorongomai, as F. says she will have the first one that asks her'.²¹⁴ In January 1885, 'the running is very strong between Tom and the baker for Miss M.'.²¹⁵ Three weeks later, 'what is the attraction for G. round the corner? Is it the pie shop, or to see May?'²¹⁶ 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'.²¹⁷ The Waiorongomai O.M. asked, in September, 'where was Mark the other night when the gander tackled his little duck?'²¹⁸

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?'²¹⁹ In June 1891, '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'.²²⁰ In August 1892, 'what brings the two Waiorongomai ladies to the Te Aroha dance so often? Is the bootmaker the attraction?'²²¹ 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'.²²² 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'.²²³

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?'²²⁴ Two years later, 'it was very mean of W.H. to take advantage of her sister's absence, but it

²¹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 12.

²¹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 September 1883, p. 12.

²¹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 January 1885, p. 10.

²¹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 February 1885, p. 10.

²¹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 March 1885, p. 10.

²¹⁸ 'Waiorongomai Whispers', *Observer*, 5 September 1885, p. 4.

²¹⁹ 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

²²⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 June 1891, p. 18.

²²¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 August 1892, p. 19.

²²² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

²²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 August 1898, p. 21.

²²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

seemed to make no difference to “uncle”’.²²⁵ 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. in Sunday’.²²⁶

Fickleness was common, the gossips being sometimes sympathetic, sometimes reproving. In January 1893, ‘the little dressmaker was doing a heavy mash with the flax-cutter at the picnic. The milliner looked quite forlorn’.²²⁷ But one month later, ‘the milliner looked immense on Sunday afternoon – doing it heavy with the flaxmiller’.²²⁸ In subsequent entries, ‘poor George is away, but Miss S. thinks no one will let him know of the little affair in the street’.²²⁹ ‘Too bad of Miss H. to get Pat to take her down to the punt, and then leave him to go with Tig’.²³⁰ ‘That little piece of sweetness had better look well after the electric spark, as he is reported to be very fickle’.²³¹ ‘M. looked very sad at the dance on Tuesday night. What was the matter M.? Did Miss W. jilt you?’²³² ‘M. says she likes a spoon with the masher. What would the young man in Auckland say “women were deceivers ever?”’.²³³ ‘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?’²³⁴

Losing at love: For example, in 1893 ‘The Waiorongomai widow looked very down-hearted at Southey’s departure. Never mind, you have Richard left’.²³⁵ Henry Southey, a carpenter, was the son of Henry, a miner; he would never marry, or at least not in New Zealand.²³⁶

There were many examples of the more determined being unsuccessful. Three examples from 1883: ‘D.S. has given the girl best, as

²²⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

²²⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 August 1898, p. 21.

²²⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 January 1893, p. 15.

²²⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

²²⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 January 1885, p. 10.

²³⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 February 1885, p. 10.

²³¹ ‘Waiorongomai Whispers’, *Observer*, 12 September 1885, p. 16.

²³² ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 13 February 1886, p. 16.

²³³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 March 1893, p. 17.

²³⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

²³⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 January 1891, p. 18.

²³⁶ *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.

the boys chaff him so.... Pat is off his feed on account of a woman refusing to admit him to the cottage'.²³⁷ 'L., the cabinetmaker, will have to adopt different tactics if he wishes to make any impression on the heart of the gentle B.'²³⁸ L. was Frederick Leslie;²³⁹ he never married 'the gentle B.' nor anyone else, and no marriage after he left the district in 1885 or 1886 has been traced.²⁴⁰

The hesitant were despised and seen as deserving not to succeed: for instance, 'H.K. will have soon to go on the shelf for the ladies say that he is too slow'.²⁴¹ One reference, in 1887, was more precise than usual about who was being recorded: 'P.M. seems to be very quiet lately. What's the reason, I wonder? ... K.W. looks rather down-hearted lately, what is the reason, I wonder'.²⁴² In subsequent 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?'²⁴³ 'Long Bob looks lost this week since the girl has taken to the draper'.²⁴⁴ 'Why was that Auckland youth walking to and fro past the boarding house so often on Sunday night? I think you are on a wild goose chase, old boy, because a certain stoker has got a say there'.²⁴⁵ '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'.²⁴⁶ 'M. says she will die an old maid, because she has been jilted so often, if she can't catch M.'²⁴⁷ 'Miss W.'s engagement is announced, but the happy man is *not* our only J.M.H.'²⁴⁸ 'The tailors say that they are quite full up of a certain young lady. Never

²³⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

²³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

²³⁹ 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.

²⁴⁰ 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.

²⁴¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

²⁴² 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

²⁴³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 September 1890, p. 17.

²⁴⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 18.

²⁴⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 September 1890, p. 18.

²⁴⁶ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 12 September 1891, p. 17.

²⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 May 1893, p. 17.

²⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

mind G. someone else might take pity on you'.²⁴⁹ 'Who was the young lady that took M.N.'s young man away from her?'²⁵⁰ 'W.W. thought he had a "cut in" for the affections of B.B., but he has been cut out by T.C.'²⁵¹ '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.'²⁵²

The bitterness of lost love was usually covered up 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'.²⁵³ 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'.²⁵⁴ In subsequent examples, 'the girl says she will not have Fred, because he is so thin, and he is just saving funeral expenses'.²⁵⁵ 'J.R. looks very downhearted since the coal man made his appearance. Cheer up, J., there are more pansies than one'.²⁵⁶ 'The girls are all pining for J.G.M., but I learn he has been crossed in love, and is now a woman hater'.²⁵⁷ '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'.²⁵⁸

Can the following snippet refer to an attempted suicide? (To 'put a light out' meant to kill).²⁵⁹ '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'.²⁶⁰ This unhappy lover has not been identified; one who has been, Matthew Corcoran, was an unmarried contractor aged 38 when sent to the asylum in 1890 because of 'delusions of persecution' lasting a week caused by 'disappointed affections', having been 'refused in marriage' by a

²⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

²⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

²⁵¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

²⁵² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 July 1898, p. 21.

²⁵³ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

²⁵⁴ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

²⁵⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 August 1891, p. 17.

²⁵⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 May 1895, p. 21.

²⁵⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

²⁵⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1899, p. 22.

²⁵⁹ Partridge, p. 941.

²⁶⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

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.²⁶¹ At the end of 1893 he was readmitted, this time for more delusions of persecution combined with religious mania.²⁶²

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'.²⁶³ 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'.²⁶⁴

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' 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;

²⁶¹ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1663, YCAA 1021/2; Case Book 1890-1892, folio 517, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

²⁶² Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1893-1896, p. 177, YCAA 1048/6, ANZ-A.

²⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

²⁶⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

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.²⁶⁵

James Alison McLiver, born in 1856, was one of six McLiver brothers, most of whom were miners.²⁶⁶ 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

²⁶⁵ Jim McLiver, untitled poem, written 21 September 1888, printed in *Te Aroha News*, 22 September 1888, p. 2.

²⁶⁶ 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; 'Mercutio', 'Local Gossip', *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 December 1897, p. 2.

topic: 'The Dying Comrade'.²⁶⁷ He continued to perform comic songs at local concerts during the subsequent year, his 'comicalities' being 'greatly appreciated' at one,²⁶⁸ but this did not aid his love life. After living in Thames for some years after leaving Waiorongomai, he settled in Reefton in 1892, and never married.²⁶⁹

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?'²⁷⁰ 'Why does the dressmaker lead such a secluded life? Rumour says there is a rich, handsome lover, not a hundred miles from the fair town of Cambridge, who is most inordinately jealous'.²⁷¹ 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.²⁷²

At an 1894 ball, 'F. appeared to fancy N. was his private property, which that young lady seemed to object to very much'.²⁷³

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'.²⁷⁴ In September, 'the lightning-jerker', meaning a telegraph

²⁶⁷ Jim McLiver, 'The Dying Comrade', published in *Te Aroha News*, 24 November 1888, p. 8.

²⁶⁸ *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.

²⁶⁹ *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.

²⁷⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 October 1890, p. 17.

²⁷¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 March 1891, p. 18.

²⁷² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 June 1891, p. 18.

²⁷³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

²⁷⁴ 'Waiorongomai Wrinkles', *Observer*, 16 May 1885, p. 16.

operator,²⁷⁵ did ‘not fret over his ruptured engagement. The charming Miss G. has taken her place’.²⁷⁶ In subsequent columns, ‘G.H. makes a fine walking stick for M.H. since E.F. threw him over’.²⁷⁷ ‘E. has now got another young man to her string. What about that green-boned “chappie” [presumably a youngster] who has left for Sydney?’.²⁷⁸ ‘M. gave T.D. his dismissal so he consoled himself with “another” ’.²⁷⁹ At the circus, ‘the O.M. was greatly amused to see J.H. and A.G. Another capture, J.’²⁸⁰

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]’²⁸¹ Ask Carrie to console you’.²⁸² Eighteen months later, ‘I noticed that “anybody’s girl” has given Joe the mitten, and has now got the Earl on the string’.²⁸³ (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’.²⁸⁴

Seizing opportunities: ‘Where oh where have L.P.’s toff mashers gone? The boys will stand a good show now, I suppose’.²⁸⁵ Less than two months later, ‘Nothing beats the old boys after all, so says L.P.’²⁸⁶ ‘It was very mean of W.H. to take advantage of her sister’s absence, but it seemed to make no difference to “uncle” ’.²⁸⁷

Changing behaviour to gain acceptance: ‘Billy says if he can only keep straight for a while he thinks he can once more get into favour with Miss H.’²⁸⁸ Was he referred to in the following month?: ‘Willie is going with

²⁷⁵ Partridge, p. 682, who cites the first use of this expression in Australia as being around 1910.

²⁷⁶ ‘Waiorongomai Whispers’, *Observer*, 5 September 1885, p. 4.

²⁷⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 June 1889, p. 18.

²⁷⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 21 January 1893, p. 20.

²⁷⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

²⁸⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

²⁸¹ Partridge, p. 743.

²⁸² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

²⁸³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 16 July 1892, p. 19.

²⁸⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

²⁸⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

²⁸⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

²⁸⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

²⁸⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

Miss H again, now that no one else would have him'.²⁸⁹ Three years later, 'W.C. has given up whiskey and taken to milk, as L.M. says it is good for his health'.²⁹⁰

Separated lovers: 'Dave is inconsolable since Jessie's departure. Cheer up, Dave, she will soon return'.²⁹¹ 'J. says he feels quite lonely since the school teacher went away'.²⁹² 'The barber looks quite forlorn since his girl went to Auckland'.²⁹³ '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'.²⁹⁴ 'W.B. looks very down-hearted since Miss M. went away. Never mind, W., you will be right when the summer comes again'.²⁹⁵ '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',²⁹⁶ a reference to a horse, not a baby saint. In June 1894, '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'.²⁹⁷ Three weeks later, F.P. anxiously awaits the return of N.B.'.²⁹⁸ In November that year, 'A.P. is always heard singing "We never know we love them till they are gone" '.²⁹⁹ In the following month, A.P. was 'looking anxiously forward to Christmas. Why? G.P.'s return of course'. And L.P. was 'sadly missed by the boys. Auckland attraction too strong'.³⁰⁰ 'What makes O.A. look so downhearted lately? Is it because the fair young widow has

²⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 September 1892, p. 17.

²⁹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

²⁹¹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 12 September 1891, p. 17.

²⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 January 1893, p. 15.

²⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

²⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1893, p. 21.

²⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

²⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

²⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 June 1894, p. 21.

²⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 July 1894, p. 21.

²⁹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

³⁰⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 December 1894, p. 21.

gone away? Cheer up, O.; some day she'll wander back'.³⁰¹ 'J.R. looks very sad of late. Is it because F.H. is away again? Cheer up, J.; never say die'.³⁰²

'Absence makes the heart grow fonder – of the other fellow. This is for anyone whom it may concern'.³⁰³ 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'.³⁰⁴

Reunited: '“S.'s Return” or “Reunited Lovers” is the latest trifle from the pen of A.H. Short and sweet'.³⁰⁵ 'Who was the young lady who was so rejoiced to find A.L's arm resume its usual position?'³⁰⁶

Maternal disapproval: 'Our *Wires*' (meaning a telegraphist) 'is fighting shy of Miss C. Did mama want to know his intentions?'³⁰⁷ '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'.³⁰⁸ F.B., I will tell your ma, talking to the girl over the bar'.³⁰⁹ 'W.M. was doing the heavy'³¹⁰ the other Sunday with the young lady from town. What would ma say if she knew?'³¹¹

Paternal disapproval: Two examples from one column in 1889, starting with:

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.

³⁰¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

³⁰² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 August 1898, p. 21.

³⁰³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

³⁰⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 January 1893, p. 19.

³⁰⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

³⁰⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 August 1899, p. 21.

³⁰⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 September 1883, p. 15.

³⁰⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

³⁰⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 January 1893, p. 16.

³¹⁰ Usually meant 'putting on airs' (Partridge, p. 543), but here clearly has amorous implications.

³¹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

And ending with: ‘ “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’.³¹²

In a possible reference to Augustus Lipsey, then aged 15,³¹³ in 1892 the O.M. noted there was ‘no law in Ireland to stop people from courting, but there is a law in Te Aroha who will put a head on [‘disfigure by punching’, thereby getting ‘the better of’]³¹⁴ Augustus if he catches him in his back yard again’.³¹⁵ The ‘law’ was either a reference to the local policeman or to the Wesleyan minister, John Law.³¹⁶

As another example of parental control, also in 1892 ‘the sisters say they would like to attend the Wednesday dance, only papa says they mustn’t’.³¹⁷ Probably fear of her father explained why G.S. did ‘not go all the way home with L.L. on Friday night’.³¹⁸ 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?’³¹⁹ 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?’³²⁰ 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?’³²¹ thereby revealing to her father what she was doing. Three years later, ‘what a sell the party from the Glen got when they found paterfamilias at home’.³²²

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’.³²³ Two months later, ‘the good-looking Postmaster’ was recorded as being one of those ‘taking the girls by storm’.³²⁴ R. Boyne

³¹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

³¹³ See paper on his life.

³¹⁴ Partridge, p. 939.

³¹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 August 1892, p. 19.

³¹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 July 1891, p. 18, 1 April 1893, p. 17; *Te Aroha Electoral Roll, 1890*, p. 19.

³¹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

³¹⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 January 1893, p. 16.

³¹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 April 1893, p. 16.

³²⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

³²¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

³²² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 September 1898, p. 22.

³²³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 12 May 1883, p. 122.

³²⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 2 July 1883, p. 248.

had been postmaster since July 1882; the only R. Boyle, Robert, to marry between then and 1902 married Mary McLeod in 1884, after Boyle had left Te Aroha, in late 1883.³²⁵

In 1900, 'More fun!' was predicted: 'There is likely to be a breach of promise here shortly. Startling disclosures!'³²⁶ 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'.³²⁷ '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.'³²⁸ 'Miss M. is to be married shortly to a Waikato resident to whom she has been engaged for years'.³²⁹ Two years later, 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.³³⁰ In the following year, 'G.D. and C.H. are a long time deciding. Oh, do hurry up'.³³¹

Lovers' quarrels: 'Ginger says poor Billy was jumping wild when he got that nasty valentine'.³³² 'What is wrong between E. and Miss D.? Kiss and make it up, old fellow'.³³³ 'Are G.D. and N.B. going to make it up again? I wish them better luck this time'.³³⁴ 'Who were the young couple making all the row in the Domain the other evening?'³³⁵ 'C.G. seems to have it in for F.L., and that young man is very wisely keeping out of her way'.³³⁶

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'.³³⁷ 'F.H.

³²⁵ *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.

³²⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 August 1900, p. 22.

³²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

³²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

³²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

³³⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Argus*, 25 March 1897, p. 4.

³³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

³³² 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 21 March 1885, p. 10.

³³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

³³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

³³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 April 1899, p. 21.

³³⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1899, p. 21.

³³⁷ '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'.³³⁸ 'J.W. and the young lady of the corner have made it up once more'.³³⁹ 'J.M. and Miss F. have made it up again'.³⁴⁰ 'Who was the young lady who was so rejoiced to find A.L.'s arm resume its usual position?'³⁴¹

Differences in ages: 'Reginald is starting young. I notice he has got his eyes on the young school teacher'.³⁴² '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?'³⁴³ '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'.³⁴⁴ 'M.H. and the boy were doing the heavy on Saturday night in the hall'.³⁴⁵ 'How to become an old man's darling: Ask A.H'.³⁴⁶ 'Who are the two sisters that want the same young man? Rather young for either of them'.³⁴⁷ In the following year, 'the waitress and the youth seemed to stand by their colours in spite of the barracking they got',³⁴⁸ 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'.³⁴⁹ Two months later, 'Keesing says he will have to leave Te Aroha, as he can't stand seeing Harry going with the infant dressmaker'.³⁵⁰ The infant was Rosina Maud Andrew, aged 15; she would marry Henry Samuel Keesing,

³³⁸ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

³³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

³⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

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

³⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 June 1891, p. 17.

³⁴³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

³⁴⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

³⁴⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 January 1893, p. 16.

³⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

³⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

³⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

³⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 November 1890, p. 17.

³⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

seven years her senior, in 1897.³⁵¹ He may have caught her eye as a member of the Te Aroha rugby team.³⁵²

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’.³⁵³ 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’.³⁵⁴ ‘W.M. should choose his partners with more respect for size. Waiorongomai every time’.³⁵⁵

In September 1890, Emma ‘showed much jealousy when her rival from the Thames was singing on the stage’.³⁵⁶ Two weeks later, was the O.M.’s comment a joke or a reproof? ‘The vulgar little boy and Emma seem to be very loving. Will it be a match?’³⁵⁷ 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?’³⁵⁸ (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?’)³⁵⁹ 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?’³⁶⁰

FLIRTING WITH WAITRESSES, SERVANTS, AND BARMAIDS

Gossip columns often mentioned flirting with the staff of hotels, boarding houses, and shops. For example, ‘Poor John has got quite thin

³⁵¹ 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.

³⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 29 May 1889, p. 2.

³⁵³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 March 1885, p. 10.

³⁵⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

³⁵⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 August 1899, p. 21.

³⁵⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 September 1890, p. 18.

³⁵⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 September 1890, p. 17.

³⁵⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 July 1891, p. 18.

³⁵⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 17.

³⁶⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

since that Sunday ride. Never mind, the fascinating ways and substantial marks of affection of the cook will soon bring him round'.³⁶¹ 'What a jar the housemaid gave C.R. when she told him that kisses went by favour?'³⁶² 'What brings those young gentlemen up to the Catholic church so often, is it to see the Father or the servant next door?', it was asked in 1891, when also '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?'³⁶³ As for another man, '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'.³⁶⁴ 'The butcher says he is a man of his word. He'd stand Sam a pair of kid gloves for the barmaid'.³⁶⁵ And 'what takes F.W. down to the Family Hotel so often?'³⁶⁶ 'Does T.P. purpose taking over that hotel, or is it the magnetic attraction of L.P. that draws you in that direction so often, T.? Seats, please!'³⁶⁷

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'.³⁶⁸

Hot Springs Hotel: In 1883, 'the soft purring of Miss Jane, who does the honours at the Hot Springs Hotel, Te Aroha, does not seem to be appreciated by George',³⁶⁹ suggesting irritation rather than flirting. 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.?'³⁷⁰ 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?',³⁷¹ again possibly a visitor. In 1894, 'Are the bright eyes

³⁶¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 November 1882, p. 153.

³⁶² 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 5 June 1886, p. 22.

³⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

³⁶⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

³⁶⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

³⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 November 1893, p. 21.

³⁶⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

³⁶⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

³⁶⁹ *Observer*, 10 March 1883, p. 406.

³⁷⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

³⁷¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 September 1893, p. 21.

at the Springs the attraction H.L., or is it the bagetelle?’³⁷² In 1896, ‘Te Aroha’s prettiest girl is said to be seen in the bar of the Springs Hotel’.³⁷³

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’.³⁷⁴ Two months later, ‘Minnie had better take possession of Bob, of the Hot Springs Hotel, as there are two others of the fair sex on the look out for him – so he says’. Presumably the same Bob had ‘got his lamps [eyes]³⁷⁵ on the young girl lately over from Manawaru’,³⁷⁶ 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’.³⁷⁷ Two weeks later, ‘Bob says he likes Jo the best out of the two at the Palace, and if all goes well he will tie the fatal knot after Christmas’.³⁷⁸ He seems not to have done so, for 18 months later ‘Long Bob’ (if he was the same person) told the O.M. that the attraction at the Palace [Hotel] is so great he is going to try for the running there again’.³⁷⁹

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.’?³⁸⁰ 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’.³⁸¹ In January 1889, J.M. was noted as taking E.L. home from a ball.³⁸² 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

³⁷² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

³⁷³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

³⁷⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 November 1890, p. 17.

³⁷⁵ Partridge, p. 663.

³⁷⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

³⁷⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 February 1891, p. 18.

³⁷⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 February 1891, p. 18.

³⁷⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

³⁸⁰ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

³⁸¹ ‘Te Aroha Twinkles’, *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

³⁸² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 January 1889, p. 17.

loud next time'.³⁸³ 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?'³⁸⁴

Other female staff of this hotel attracted admirers. In 1887, G.W., possibly George Ellis Wiggins, a waiter,³⁸⁵ 'looked slightly in it the other Sunday night with Miss M. from the P.H.'.³⁸⁶ George Wiggins had some brief prominence at that time for competing in running and canoe races.³⁸⁷ 'What takes G.H., T.B., and H.A. to the Palace so often now? Is it to play billiards or gooseberry?'³⁸⁸ 'The groom has been doing the heavy with the girls at the Palace lately. Bridget's sister is the favourite'.³⁸⁹ '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'.³⁹⁰ 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'.³⁹¹ 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'.³⁹² In October 1893, 'what takes somebody to the Palace so often? Is K.D. the attraction?'³⁹³ 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'.³⁹⁴ 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?

³⁸³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

³⁸⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 June 1889, p. 18.

³⁸⁵ 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.

³⁸⁶ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

³⁸⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 30 October 1886, p. 2, 6 November 1886, pp. 2, 3, 13 November 1886, p. 2.

³⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 September 1889, p. 18.

³⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 November 1890, p. 17.

³⁹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 August 1892, p. 19.

³⁹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 February 1891, p. 18.

³⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

³⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 October 1893, p. 21.

³⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

Enquire at the Palace'.³⁹⁵ Three years later, 'J.C. is to be often seen round about the Palace. Do you intend taking it over, J.?'³⁹⁶

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?'³⁹⁷

Club Hotel: 'How is it C.N. does not visit the Club so often now? Has Miss W. given him the cold shoulder?'³⁹⁸ 'I hear that Fitz', apparently L. Fitzsimmons, 'is about to run in double harness with the nurse at the Club Hotel'.³⁹⁹ 'The nice looking tall girl at the Club has many admirers'.⁴⁰⁰ '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 lads'.⁴⁰¹ 'F.T. is off the running with J.McC., of the Club. Never mind F., just as good fish in the sea, etc'.⁴⁰²

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']⁴⁰³ 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.... Who were the two Auckland mashers ['ladykillers, dandies, lovers']⁴⁰⁴ 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?⁴⁰⁵

³⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

³⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 August 1898, p. 21.

³⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 August 1889, p. 18.

³⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 August 1889, p. 18.

³⁹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 March 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁰⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 January 1893, p. 16.

⁴⁰¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

⁴⁰² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

⁴⁰³ *Urban Dictionary*, online.

⁴⁰⁴ Partridge, p. 725.

⁴⁰⁵ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

The following month, it was reported that ‘R.T. says she is cut out to be an old maid. What a pity!’⁴⁰⁶ She then disappeared from the gossip columns.

Similar flirtations occurred elsewhere. ‘What attracts J.R. to the Trocadero? Is it the pies or the sweet attendant?’⁴⁰⁷

Boardinghouses: ‘A local man says he will have to go and stay at the Park House. Is Miss A. the attraction?’⁴⁰⁸ ‘Lizzie from River View’ was ‘trying to charm the boss of the Syndicate. They seem to make heavy weather of it’,⁴⁰⁹ 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?’⁴¹⁰ Five years later, ‘What takes J.D. and P.H. to Park House? Is it to cultivate their voices, or to capture the young ladies?’⁴¹¹ (Who, like Miss A., may have been boarders, not servants.)

FLIRTING WITH SHOP ASSISTANTS

‘If B. don’t keep out of the dressmaker’s shop Miss P., of the Thames will be giving him turnips’,⁴¹² meaning he would be jilted.⁴¹³ ‘Is J.Y.M. after the fair one at the fancy shop?’⁴¹⁴ And was the following true?: ‘What price a kiss over the counter, C.L.? What, only threepence?’⁴¹⁵ ‘Wanted, at once, a nice, good-looking young lady to assist in a hairdressing saloon. Apply H.L.’⁴¹⁶ ‘What is the magnet that draws J.M. to the fancy goods shop? Is it G.H.’?⁴¹⁷ ‘When is the match coming off between the lady at the fancy goods

⁴⁰⁶ ‘Te Aroha Twinkles’, *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁴⁰⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 March 1899, p. 22.

⁴⁰⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 11 November 1893, p. 21.

⁴⁰⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁴¹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

⁴¹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

⁴¹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 September 1883, p. 12.

⁴¹³ Partridge, p. 1275.

⁴¹⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁴¹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1894, p. 21.

⁴¹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁴¹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

shop and the gay young surveyor?’⁴¹⁸ ‘Who is the young man who is so “eager” for the return of S.H.? The corner shop has no attraction now’.⁴¹⁹ ‘The O.M. would like to know what attraction W.M. has at the dressmaker’s shop so often’.⁴²⁰ The following year, J.M. was ‘inquiring for a nice furnished residence, which looks well for the charming dressmaker’.⁴²¹

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’.⁴²² Four months later, ‘our milliner says that the very thought of Percy going away seems to add ten years to her life’.⁴²³ This referred to Percy Snewin, who must have been assisting Charles Ahier, the town clerk,⁴²⁴ who was already married,⁴²⁵ and whom he replaced in December 1893, one year after marrying an Auckland woman.⁴²⁶

FLIRTING WITH PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT

New arrivals and visitors to the district attracted the flirtatious. In mid-1883, the O.M. noted that ‘Miss T.’ was ‘back in Te Aroha again, looking as proud as ever’.⁴²⁷ ‘Miss S., of the Thames, paid Te Aroha a visit last week, and B. was made happy once more’.⁴²⁸ ‘Miss W. and H. are very spoony. What would the Thames girl do if she knew?’⁴²⁹ ‘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

⁴¹⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 February 1896, p. 21.

⁴¹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

⁴²⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 July 1898, p. 21.

⁴²¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 June 1899, p. 22.

⁴²² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 March 1891, p. 18.

⁴²³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 23 July 1891, p. 20.

⁴²⁴ 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.

⁴²⁵ Marriage Certificate of Charles Ahier, 13 May 1876, 1876/708, BDM.

⁴²⁶ Marriage Certificate of Percy Snewin, 29 December 1892, 1892/2818, BDM; *Waikato Times*, 7 December 1893, p. 6.

⁴²⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁴²⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 12.

⁴²⁹ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 20 March 1886, p. 23.

butcher was doing with the two Te Aroha girls last Friday'.⁴³⁰ '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?'⁴³¹ 'Leonard is very punctual every Saturday evening, coming from Morrinsville to see the young lady'. 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'.⁴³² 'P. and E. have been doing it grand with the lady visitors'.⁴³³ 'Too bad of M.R. to have a Hamilton masher coming to see her, when our boys are breaking their hearts about her'.⁴³⁴ 'Oh! good gracious! The "toff" from the Old Country is cutting out W.M. Sorry for him'. In the same 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'.⁴³⁵ 'G.S. thinks there is nothing like new faces. He generally manages to be early in the field. You bet'.⁴³⁶ '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.'.⁴³⁷ 'S.V. has still got the Auckland duck on the string, or he has her'.⁴³⁸ 'J.D. was piling it on on Sunday, with the new arrival'.⁴³⁹ In the 1890s the *Te Aroha News* first employed female compositors;⁴⁴⁰ 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'.⁴⁴¹

In August 1894, 'J.K. is on the scene once more. He could not stay away on account of A.A. being here'.⁴⁴² Six months later it was rumoured that they would be married soon.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁰ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁴³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁴³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 January 1891, p. 18.

⁴³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

⁴³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁴³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

⁴³⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

⁴³⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁴³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁴³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 2 March 1895, p. 21, 14 May 1898, p. 21.

⁴⁴¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

⁴⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁴³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 February 1895, p. 21.

An example of flirting with someone outside the district was J.M. In November 1888, the O.M. asked ‘What took J.M. to Cambridge on Sunday?’.⁴⁴⁴ A month later, ‘What takes J.M. over to Cambridge, is it to inspect the lambs?’.⁴⁴⁵ A fortnight later, ‘J.M. says the lambs are doing very well over Cambridge way - also the (dear)s’.⁴⁴⁶ 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?’⁴⁴⁷ But J.M. was also interested in local girls: in 1889 ‘J.M. took E.L. home from the ball’.⁴⁴⁸ 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’.⁴⁴⁹

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!⁴⁵⁰

Marrying those living outside the district was common. For instance, J.M. may not have married his Cambridge flame, but in 1889 David Craig,

⁴⁴⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 November 1888, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 December 1888, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 January 1889, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 May 1889, p. 17.

⁴⁵⁰ *Observer*, 3 February 1894, p. 7.

a Te Aroha tailor, married a Cambridge woman,⁴⁵¹ an event ignored by the O.M.

WHERE FLIRTING TOOK PLACE

As one would expect, everywhere around the townships: 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’.⁴⁵² 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’.⁴⁵³ ‘S.A. looked well making love through the fence to E.J. on Friday night’.⁴⁵⁴ ‘The village maiden and the hearty fox-man were doing a big spoon near Lord John’s private residence on Monday night’.⁴⁵⁵ ‘Why doesn’t A. take his lady-love to a seat in the domain instead of the grassy bank up near Peter [Baine’s]⁴⁵⁶ wood yard?’⁴⁵⁷ ‘Louie is still conspicuous walking the streets with Fred. Ah, Fred! You should not show your affections so much’.⁴⁵⁸ ‘What brings so many young ladies down to the Post Office on train days? Is it to have a chat with their mashers?’⁴⁵⁹ ‘H.J.H. haunts the corner since M.’s return’.⁴⁶⁰ ‘The Misses S. have deserted the station platform since the railway bridge received the last coat of paint. Funny, very’;⁴⁶¹ 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’.⁴⁶² ‘The O.M. hopes the gay little euchre party enjoyed themselves at

⁴⁵¹ Marriage Certificate of David Craig, 28 February 1889, 1889/213, BDM.

⁴⁵² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 12.

⁴⁵³ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 5 June 1886, p. 22.

⁴⁵⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 June 1889, p. 18.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15.

⁴⁵⁶ See *Te Aroha News*, 2 January 1889, p. 2, 11 January 1890, p. 2; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 832.

⁴⁵⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 23 September 1892, p. 17.

⁴⁵⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 January 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁵⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 July 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁶⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁶¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

⁴⁶² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

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'.⁴⁶³ 'T.Mc. and A.W. were doing a big spoon at the gate the other night'.⁴⁶⁴

At musical lessons and performances: 'E.D. seems very much gone on the violin, or has the teacher anything to do with it?'⁴⁶⁵

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'.⁴⁶⁶

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'.⁴⁶⁷ He later wondered whether 'the fair A's converted to the Presbyterian religion, or is there some other attraction?'⁴⁶⁸ Perhaps these bachelors were more interested in other types of social gatherings, but women certainly used church attendance to attract attention to their charms. In 1883 a church choir had 'gone from bad to worse since all the pretty young ladies have left'.⁴⁶⁹ 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?'⁴⁷⁰ In the following year, 'Oswald has joined the choir. What is the attraction?'⁴⁷¹

Attending church could make men appear to be good marriage prospects, as indicated in 1891: 'The Waihi doughy [baker]⁴⁷² attends church regularly now. He evidently means business. Get the cans ready, boys',⁴⁷³ 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'.⁴⁷⁴ 'E.W. should be a little more attentive in church, or was it

⁴⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

⁴⁶⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁴⁶⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 September 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁶⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 June 1882, p. 201.

⁴⁶⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 August 1889, p. 18.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁴⁷⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 September 1890, p. 17.

⁴⁷¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 July 1891, p. 13.

⁴⁷² Partridge, p. 335.

⁴⁷³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 June 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁷⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

the inamorata (H.W.) that caused the grinning?’⁴⁷⁵ ‘F.P. looked charming with the two little maids from school after church’.⁴⁷⁶ 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?’⁴⁷⁷

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’.⁴⁷⁸ In the following year, ‘who are the young ladies that leave home to go to Bible Class and go to the dance instead?’⁴⁷⁹ ‘What makes all the young men go to the Bible Class? Do they think the world is coming to an end?’⁴⁸⁰

Four snippets of gossip implied flirtation 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’.⁴⁸¹ In March 1891 ‘Our unfledged parson and the organist are doing a great amount of spooning’, and the ‘Presbyterian “Meenister” has serious thoughts of matrimony. It would be so convenient for all parties’.⁴⁸² The following year, ‘Our Presbyterian parson is a long time in tying the fatal knot. Miss C. thinks he is too slow’.⁴⁸³ He was the popular Thomas Allan Norrie,⁴⁸⁴ who married Clara Cochrane in 1893.⁴⁸⁵ Also in 1893, ‘why did a certain young lady go out of church the other evening when the local preacher came in?’:⁴⁸⁶ a hint about a mutual attraction turned sour?

Band of Hope Meetings: This Protestant temperance movement also provided a useful venue. ‘Why has H. deserted Miss L.C.? He does not

⁴⁷⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 January 1895, p. 22.

⁴⁷⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 May 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 October 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁴⁷⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 July 1891, p. 17.

⁴⁸⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

⁴⁸¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 24 January 1885, p. 10.

⁴⁸² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 March 1891, p. 18.

⁴⁸³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁴ 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.

⁴⁸⁵ Marriage Certificate of Thomas Allan Norrie, 1893/3041, BDM.

⁴⁸⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 May 1893, p. 17.

attend the Band of Hope meeting now'.⁴⁸⁷ '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',⁴⁸⁸ probably a Maori or part Maori. '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'.⁴⁸⁹

Dances were a particularly useful method 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'.⁴⁹⁰ At Waiorongomai in the following month, 'was Tom studying botany at the late ball, that he hugged that armful of moss so close?'⁴⁹¹ 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'⁴⁹² (as compared with a sweetheart?). As few men attended the first of the Quadrille Assembly's dances in April 1889, 'there was not much mashing done, several of the dancing men being conspicuous by their absence'. The O.M. asked 'who were the young ladies who would not come into the dance, but stopped outside? Did their mamma forbid them to go?'⁴⁹³

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?'⁴⁹⁴ 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.

⁴⁸⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

⁴⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 November 1882, p. 121.

⁴⁹¹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 23 December 1882, p. 234.

⁴⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁴⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 May 1889, p. 17.

⁴⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 December 1892, p. 24.

and F.E. didn't care about dancing when the corner was available.⁴⁹⁵

And 'H.L.'s foot promises to be well for the Catholic concert and dance. His best girl is delighted'.⁴⁹⁶ 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'.⁴⁹⁷ 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'.⁴⁹⁸ 'C.G. and "A" were going it heavily at the dance the other night'.⁴⁹⁹

Race meetings were also places to flirt: 'Our medicine man had a happy time coming from the races' in 1882.⁵⁰⁰ In 1895, L.P. was 'doing the heavy between the races with the dark complexioned jockey' (a Maori or part Maori?).⁵⁰¹

Hotels: 'When a hungry young man groped his way in the darkness to Q's dining-room [in Paddy Quinlan's hotel]⁵⁰² the other night in search of provender, he found it occupied by a loving couple, and had to retire with appetite unappeased'.⁵⁰³ 'The telegraphist likes a cup of afternoon tea amongst the ladies at the [Hot] Springs [Hotel]. What's his game?'⁵⁰⁴ 'Does T.P. purpose taking over that hotel, or is it the magnetic attraction of L.P. that draws you in that direction so often, T.?'⁵⁰⁵

Out of town, during the daytime: 'M.L. was doing a big spoon under the willow with E.D. Bai Jove!'.⁵⁰⁶ 'What took May out towards the racecourse on Sunday afternoon? Was it to meet that stock-driver whom she

⁴⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

⁴⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁴⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁴⁹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 May 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁰ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 23 December 1882, p. 234.

⁵⁰¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁰² See paper on his life.

⁵⁰³ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 30 June 1883, p. 233.

⁵⁰⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 July 1892, p. 19.

⁵⁰⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁶ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

terms handsome?’⁵⁰⁷ ‘Bob says the reason he took Minnie for a ride was because the doctor ordered it’.⁵⁰⁸ J.R. was ‘often’ taking a trip to the old racecourse: ‘What is the attraction, is there a pansy down there J.’⁵⁰⁹ It made ‘a fellow feel envious to see the number of loving couples gathering ferns up the hill-side, on Sunday afternoons’.⁵¹⁰ ‘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.’⁵¹¹ ‘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.’⁵¹² ‘Did A.D. and Miss Mc. find mashing in the rain last Sunday not quite the thing? Waikino every time!’.⁵¹³ ‘What is the attraction for the young men at the railway bridge?’⁵¹⁴ ‘G.J. and A.L. looked very loving going to the Thames on the morning of Queen’s Birthday’.⁵¹⁵

Two men were attracted to travel the short distance to Waihou. 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’.⁵¹⁶ Seven years later, ‘E.J. seems very fond of walking to Waihou. Is E.R. the attraction?’⁵¹⁷

Bicycles aided the flirtatious. ‘Wanted – Two nice-looking young gentlemen who can ride “bikes.” Apply at public school’,⁵¹⁸ a reference to unmarried female teachers. ‘I hope W.M. and C.G. enjoyed that little ride on their bikes on Sunday’.⁵¹⁹ 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’.⁵²⁰ As

⁵⁰⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 6 September 1890, p. 18.

⁵⁰⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 January 1891, p. 18.

⁵⁰⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁵¹⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁵¹¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

⁵¹² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 June 1898, p. 21.

⁵¹³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

⁵¹⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 13 May 1899, p. 22.

⁵¹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵¹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 August 1891, p. 17.

⁵¹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁵¹⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 May 1898, p. 22.

⁵¹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

⁵²⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

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'.⁵²¹

Outdoors, in the evenings: 'Moonlight flirting seems to agree with the grocer and Jessie'.⁵²² It was 'too bad of Jack to take the widow out on Sunday night to get her hat spoilt'.⁵²³ 'Who are the two young men who promenaded the railway bridge nightly, waiting for Emma of Te Aroha West?'.⁵²⁴ 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'.⁵²⁵ 'Who was the young lady W.C. had out driving the other evening?'.⁵²⁶

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)'.⁵²⁷ 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.?'.⁵²⁸

In the domain, at any time of day or night: 'V.P. looked well up in the domain last Sunday with W.C.'.⁵²⁹ 'Miss F. says she likes a stroll round the domain on Sunday evening with her best man'.⁵³⁰ 'A Te Aroha West lady was making herself rather conspicuous in the Domain on Sunday evening with the dudes from Paeroa'.⁵³¹ 'S.C. was promenading the grounds in great style the other evening. The O.M. would like to know who the other party was'.⁵³²

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

⁵²¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 March 1899, p. 22.

⁵²² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁵²³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 March 1885, p. 10.

⁵²⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁵²⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁵²⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁵²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15.

⁵²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

⁵²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 October 1895, p. 21.

⁵³⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 February 1893, p. 17.

⁵³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁵³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 March 1899, p. 22.

doing?’⁵³³ ‘What a tale the drinking spring could tell it if could only speak! Would-be spooners, beware!’⁵³⁴ ‘What takes G.S. to the drinking fountain, is it to carry the little blue kettle or to see M.R.?’⁵³⁵

On the tennis court: ‘H.P. and G.P. should find a more suitable place to spoon than the tennis court in the Domain’.⁵³⁶ In 1898, in consequence of tennis being ‘all the go at present’, a second court was ‘needed badly’.⁵³⁷ ‘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’.⁵³⁸ A week later, F.W. was ‘still seen on the tennis court, and we all hope to see him in double harness before long’.⁵³⁹ The following month, ‘Cupid’s darts have been busy on the tennis court. What about the latest engagement?’⁵⁴⁰

L.F.’s flirtations on the tennis court were recorded. ‘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’.⁵⁴¹ A month later, ‘G.D. is quite energetic with L.F. on the tennis court. Don’t you miss the others, G.?’⁵⁴² 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’.⁵⁴³ 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.’,⁵⁴⁴ 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’.⁵⁴⁵ Soon an unnamed ‘young man’ was ‘eagerly

⁵³³ ‘Te Aroha Twists’, *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁵³⁴ ‘Te Aroha Twinkles’, *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁵³⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

⁵³⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1894, p. 21.

⁵³⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 26 November 1898, p. 21.

⁵³⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵³⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁴⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁴¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

⁵⁴² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 12 November 1898, p. 22.

⁵⁴³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 26 November 1898, p. 21.

⁵⁴⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁵⁴⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 May 1899, p. 21.

wending his way down Bridge Street' to see L.F.'⁵⁴⁶ In the following column, 'Get your tins cans ready, boys, for F.L. says G.D. is going to tie the knot.... They say Miss W. is anxious to know if L.F. has consented'.⁵⁴⁷ One month later the 'boys' were urged to get their tin cans together, because 'G.D. and L.F. look more loving than ever'.⁵⁴⁸

At family gatherings: 'Miss H. did a bit of flirting at the golden wedding, but I suppose she was thinking of her own'.⁵⁴⁹

When horse riding: 'G. arrived safe home on Sunday after his ride to Piako with Maggie'.⁵⁵⁰

On the river:

Who were the young couple that went out for a sail, and ran their boat into the bank, and has 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 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.⁵⁵¹

Presumably another couple, more competent on the water, were referred to in the following month: 'G.W. and Miss M. were doing a big spoon on the river on Sunday afternoon'.⁵⁵² 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'.⁵⁵³ Ten years later, 'C.W. and Miss G. evidently enjoyed their pull in the "Flirt" last week. What a charming water-nymph you made, C.G.'.⁵⁵⁴

Rinking: 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

⁵⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

⁵⁵¹ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁵⁵² 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁵⁵³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 November 1888, p. 17.

⁵⁵⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 October 1898, p. 21.

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’.⁵⁵⁵ In May 1894, ‘roller skating started. S.H. and L.C. were most noticeable on the opening night in the porch’,⁵⁵⁶ rather than inside rinking. There were two references in July 1895 to 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” ’.⁵⁵⁷ 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.... 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’.⁵⁵⁸

WEDDINGS

Engagements were regularly mentioned,⁵⁵⁹ 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’.⁵⁶⁰ In the following year, ‘how bashful George looked after that very quiet wedding, going down to work as usual’.⁵⁶¹ 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.⁵⁶²

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

⁵⁵⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 August 1889, p. 18.

⁵⁵⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

⁵⁵⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁵⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

⁵⁵⁹ For example, *Observer*, 9 December 1882, p. 196.

⁵⁶⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 July 1882, p. 313.

⁵⁶¹ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 9 June 1883, p. 185.

⁵⁶² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

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.⁵⁶³

The mention of tin cans referred to the 'rough music' performed for newly-weds;⁵⁶⁴ in response to thus being 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.'⁵⁶⁵ 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'.⁵⁶⁶ This referred to the marriage two weeks later of a labourer, Walter Edward Beresford, to Edith Sarah, daughter of James Gerrish,⁵⁶⁷ local dealer and bellman.⁵⁶⁸ In 1893, 'W.McL. and L.W. will soon be running in double harness. Get the tin cans ready, boys'.⁵⁶⁹ 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'.⁵⁷⁰ 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'.⁵⁷¹

Others were slow to marry and 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'.⁵⁷²

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'.⁵⁷³ 'Our boys are always called a smart lot, but the

⁵⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 June 1899, p. 22.

⁵⁶⁴ 'Waiorongomai Wrinkles', *Observer*, 20 March 1886, p. 23.

⁵⁶⁵ 'Waiorongomai Wirings', *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 16.

⁵⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 December 1888, p. 17.

⁵⁶⁷ See paper on his life.

⁵⁶⁸ Marriage Certificate of Walter Edward Beresford, 29 December 1888, 1888/2787, BDM.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

⁵⁷⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 November 1893, p. 21.

⁵⁷¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

⁵⁷² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

⁵⁷³ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

O.M. doesn't think so when the allowed the newly-married couple to escape tin-canning'.⁵⁷⁴

MARRIAGES UNDER STRAIN

The O.M. was interested in the sometimes tortuous road to matrimony, not what happened next. Although unavoidably aware that some people did not live happily ever after, the O.M. averted his eyes (or at least did not record these developments). Being married to a drunk did not automatically destroy marriages, especially if the drinking bouts were intermittent, but must have damaged them. 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.⁵⁷⁵ 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

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.⁵⁷⁶ 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', which presumably indicated his drunken ways.⁵⁷⁷ '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'.⁵⁷⁸ In 1888, 'Who were those boys that made such a noise coming home from the ball on the 9th?'⁵⁷⁹ 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.⁵⁸⁰ At another dance, 'F.

⁵⁷⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁵⁷⁵ See papers on women's lives in the Te Aroha district and on the drink problem in this district.

⁵⁷⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 November 1882, p. 121.

⁵⁷⁷ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 30 June 1883, p. 233.

⁵⁷⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁵⁷⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁵⁸⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 January 1889, p. 17.

appeared to fancy N. was his private property, which that young lady seemed to object to very much'.⁵⁸¹

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'.⁵⁸² As there was no such building in Te Aroha, it 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'.⁵⁸³

SEXUAL MISBEHAVIOUR

Rarely were serious 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,⁵⁸⁴ 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 dishabille'.⁵⁸⁵ 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?'⁵⁸⁶

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?'⁵⁸⁷ 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

⁵⁸¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

⁵⁸² 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁵⁸³ 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁵⁸⁴ See paper on his life.

⁵⁸⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 May 1883, p. 122.

⁵⁸⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

⁵⁸⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 July 1890, p. 18.

House looks since Percy's recovery. Will it be a match, Mid?'⁵⁸⁸ And in September 1892, 'Mid says she will die for Peter yet'.⁵⁸⁹

Were girls being warned to beware by the information that 'a certain schoolteacher says he does not believe in matrimony'.⁵⁹⁰

Undesired attentions: '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 in the same gossip column, 'what was L.P. about when she hurriedly jumped into the coach and left her charge on the station platform? Slightly perceptible, eh L.?'⁵⁹¹ 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'.⁵⁹²

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'.⁵⁹³ Just over three months later, did the report that 'H.J. and C.B. are talking about going to church again to fix things'⁵⁹⁴ 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'.⁵⁹⁵

Adultery: In one case when adultery was implied, no initials were used: 'How quietly that gay Lothario at Te Aroha stole through the window when the husband returned home unexpectedly'.⁵⁹⁶ 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.?'⁵⁹⁷ 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'.⁵⁹⁸ In 1890 it was discovered 'that the handsomest man in Te Aroha has a wife and family down South. I feel like

⁵⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 January 1891, p. 18.

⁵⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 September 1892, p. 18.

⁵⁹⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 2 March 1895, p. 21.

⁵⁹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁵⁹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 August 1905, p. 22.

⁵⁹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

⁵⁹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 May 1894, p. 17.

⁵⁹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 April 1899, p. 21.

⁵⁹⁶ *Observer*, 22 September 1883, p. 4.

⁵⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 October 1883, p. 8.

⁵⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 February 1885, p. 10.

weeping. What will the effect be on a certain lady?’⁵⁹⁹ Three years later ‘the little barman looked quite happy at the circus with the grass widow’,⁶⁰⁰ meaning a married woman whose husband was away.⁶⁰¹ In 1895, the Waiorongomai O.M. wondered what H.W.P. did ‘now since Mrs Joe left for Paeroa’.⁶⁰² He was Harold Welsby Pennington, an unmarried storekeeper, who would remain unmarried;⁶⁰³ 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,⁶⁰⁴ nothing has survived to indicate excessive amorousness. ‘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 year,⁶⁰⁵ the suggestion that Miss H. should dress up as Judy, implying a close friendship, was rather peculiar.⁶⁰⁶

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’.⁶⁰⁷ At the end of the month, the Te Aroha O.M. asked: ‘Why don’t you marry the girl Tim?’⁶⁰⁸ Local residents would have understood the significance of this reference to Timothy Donovan, a contractor who later became a farmer,⁶⁰⁹ and who had some

⁵⁹⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 February 1890, p. 15.

⁶⁰⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 16 July 1892, p. 19.

⁶⁰¹ Partridge, p. 496.

⁶⁰² ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁶⁰³ 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.

⁶⁰⁴ 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.

⁶⁰⁵ *Waikato Electoral Roll, June 1884*; Marriage Certificate of Daniel James Frazer [recorded as Frazier], 3 January 1882, 1882/200, BDM.

⁶⁰⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 October 1883, p. 8.

⁶⁰⁷ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 12.

⁶⁰⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 September 1883, p. 16.

⁶⁰⁹ 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.

investments in Waiorongomai mining.⁶¹⁰ He would not marry Alice Maud Brumby until March the following year, when he was 27 and she was 19; their first child was born 16 days later.⁶¹¹ (This apparent reluctance to marry was the prelude to almost 45 years of marriage and ten children.)⁶¹²

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'.⁶¹³ 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'.⁶¹⁴ They were Gregory Goiss, son of a Trieste sculptor, a miner aged 35 who had participated in the Te Aroha rush,⁶¹⁵ and Norah Burke, aged 23, an illiterate domestic servant born in Australia who, judging from the wording, worked in the Premier Hotel at Waiorongomai. Their marriage did not in fact take place until mid-December.⁶¹⁶ 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.⁶¹⁷ (Being simple-minded, in 1912 he would be admitted to the Auckland asylum.)⁶¹⁸

In this example, the outcome was not a long and happy marriage. They experienced two fires, the first, just after the birth of their second child,

⁶¹⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folios 28, 118, 132, 172, 173, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A.

⁶¹¹ Marriage Certificate of Timothy Donovan, 9 March 1884, 1884/249; Birth Certificate of Mary Ellen Donovan, 25 March 1884, 1884/9100, BDM.

⁶¹² Death Certificate of Timothy Donovan, 16 January 1929, 1929/8843, BDM.

⁶¹³ *Te Aroha News*, 26 April 1884, p. 2.

⁶¹⁴ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 30 June 1883, p. 229.

⁶¹⁵ 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.

⁶¹⁶ Marriage Certificate of Gregory Goiss, 16 December 1883, 1883/2694, BDM.

⁶¹⁷ Birth Certificate of Louis John Goiss, 10 May 1884, 1884/9098, BDM.

⁶¹⁸ Avondale Asylum, Case File on Louis Goiss, YCAA 1026/22, file 4512, ANZ-A.

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.⁶¹⁹

They moved to Karangahake where, early one morning 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.⁶²⁰

Their other children were born in June 1885, August 1887, November 1888, May 1890, October 1891, and January 1893.⁶²¹ In July 1893, Goiss was ordered to pay the £1 10s 3d he owed.⁶²² One month after he had left Karangahake, in March 1894, 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'.⁶²³ He would die in an Australian gaol in 1897.⁶²⁴

⁶¹⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 30 June 1885, p. 2.

⁶²⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 2 January 1886, p. 2.

⁶²¹ 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 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.

⁶²² Magistrate's Court, *Thames Star*, 16 June 1893, p. 2.

⁶²³ *New Zealand Police Gazette*, 18 April 1894, p. 61.

⁶²⁴ Research by John Robson, University of Waikato Library.

Norah's last child, born in April 1898, was registered as illegitimate, with the father's name being unrecorded.⁶²⁵ 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 them 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'.⁶²⁶ She had had no other children, nor had she killed any; her illegitimate (and unmarried) daughter died in 1960, aged 62.⁶²⁷ Norah herself died in the asylum when aged 80.⁶²⁸

A delayed marriage: On 10 September 1892, William Gathercole King, an unmarried fruiterer aged 58,⁶²⁹ died of heart disease and bronchitis.⁶³⁰ His will, made on the day he died, left all his estate (£12 12s 8d) to his unmarried sister.⁶³¹ 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'.⁶³² On 6 November, when aged 35, this sister, Anna Maria Gathercole King, married John Williams,⁶³³ a 49-year-old grocer;⁶³⁴ clearly previously 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

⁶²⁵ Birth Certificate of Elizabeth Gertrude Goiss, 24 April 1898, 1898/14189, BDM.

⁶²⁶ Avondale Asylum, Case Files, YCAA 1026/219, file 9695, ANZ-A.

⁶²⁷ Death Certificate of Elizabeth Gertrude Goiss, 1960/22885, BDM; Probates, BBAE 1570, P1445/1960, ANZ-A.

⁶²⁸ Death Certificate of Norah Goiss, 21 June 1941, 1941/18820, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 23 June 1941, p. 1.

⁶²⁹ See *Te Aroha News*, 2 July 1887, p. 3.

⁶³⁰ Death Certificate of William Gathercole King, 10 September 1892, 1892/3442, BDM.

⁶³¹ Probates, BBAE 1569/1292; Testamentary Register 1892-1896, folio 34, BBCB 4208/3, ANZ-A.

⁶³² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 September 1892, p. 23.

⁶³³ Marriage Certificate of Anna Maria Gathercole King, 6 November 1892, 1892/2933, BDM.

⁶³⁴ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 831-832; *Te Aroha News*, 17 October 1917, p. 2.

moved into her house and transferred much of his merchandise to her shop.⁶³⁵

A scandalously prompt remarriage: David Samson, the son and grandson of miners,⁶³⁶ arrived with his family in New Zealand in 1864, when 12 years old.⁶³⁷ 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’.⁶³⁸ 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’.⁶³⁹ On the last day of 1877, when he recorded his age as 23, he married Agnes Little, aged 19.⁶⁴⁰ Two daughters were born, in March 1879 and November 1880, while he mined at Huntly, and a third in Thames in June 1883.⁶⁴¹ By the early 1880s the family had moved to Waiorongomai, where his last child, another daughter, was born in 1886, dying after 16 hours because of ‘fits from birth’.⁶⁴² Last recorded living at Waiorongomai in October 1889,⁶⁴³ in the following year he was mining at Waihi.⁶⁴⁴ In August 1888 he had sold his residence site to a man who sold it to Agnes Samson in June the following year. In paying the rent during the following decade she gave her address as ‘c/o T. Hill, Waiorongomai’.⁶⁴⁵ When Samson died at Waihi on 27 March 1899, his father, not his wife, informed the registrar.⁶⁴⁶

⁶³⁵ *Waikato Times*, 10 November 1892, p. 2.

⁶³⁶ See Death Certificate of James Samson, 1 October 1914, 1914/7414, BDM.

⁶³⁷ Lands and Survey Department, Land Grants for Immigrants, Register of Grantees 1863-1868, folios 107-108, ‘Helenslee’, from Glasgow, BAIE 4115/1c, ANZ-A.

⁶³⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 September 1873, p. 3, 23 September 1873, p. 3.

⁶³⁹ Police Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 September 1873, p. 3.

⁶⁴⁰ Marriage Certificate of David Samson, 31 December 1877, 1877/2362, BDM.

⁶⁴¹ 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.

⁶⁴² Birth Certificate of Agnes Anne Samson, 3 April 1886, 1886/5847; Death Certificate of Agnes Anne Samson, 3 April 1886, 1886/44, BDM.

⁶⁴³ *Te Aroha News*, 23 October 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁴ *Thames Star*, 6 November 1890, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁵ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Rent Ledger 1881-1900, folio 125, BBAV 11492/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁴⁶ Death Certificate of David Samson, 27 March 1899, 1899/665, BDM.

On 16 April, his widow, now aged 39, married Thomas Hill, a miner aged 29, at Te Aroha.⁶⁴⁷

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 was removed by death. But the reality was less romantic. On 12 July 1899, after 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 it was granted.⁶⁴⁸ Just over another three months later, she sought sureties from him to preserve the peace, but not appearing in court this case was struck out.⁶⁴⁹ At the end of October 1901 she sought a separation order but then withdrew it.⁶⁵⁰ One month later, she charged him with assault: he was found not guilty.⁶⁵¹ At this hearing, Hill sought a prohibition order against her and the police sought one against him; both were granted.⁶⁵²

That was the last time they came before the courts. Probably because of Agnes' age, they had no children, but 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.⁶⁵³ She had another 17 years to live.⁶⁵⁴

Illegitimate births were rarely mentioned in the press unless maintenance was sought or the child died in suspicious circumstances. Only

⁶⁴⁷ Marriage Certificate of Agnes Samson, 16 April 1899, 1899/1732, BDM.

⁶⁴⁸ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 19, 25/1899, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶⁴⁹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 11/1900, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶⁵⁰ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 54/1901, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶⁵¹ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 65/1901, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶⁵² Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 66, 67/1901, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶⁵³ 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.

⁶⁵⁴ Death Certificate of Agnes Hill, 10 December 1937, 1937/18612, BDM.

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.⁶⁵⁵

At Thames, one of the most persistent producers of illegitimate children was a prominent resident. David Rickard Gellion, a leading sharebroker there since 1872,⁶⁵⁶ would be briefly associated with the Te Aroha rush.⁶⁵⁷ 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, having married a widow with six children, and I do not think will ever be sorry for the step he has taken'.⁶⁵⁸ This was an inaccurate forecast: when he died in 1896, aged 53, he was still unmarried.⁶⁵⁹ 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'.⁶⁶⁰ Later that year, the O.M. reported that the rumour that Amy was engaged was false.⁶⁶¹ 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'.⁶⁶² One week later, he reported that, at the rink dance, 'Gelly couldn't quite manage to

⁶⁵⁵ 'Our Thames Letter', *Observer*, 5 October 1889, p. 18.

⁶⁵⁶ 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.

⁶⁵⁷ 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.

⁶⁵⁸ 'Robert Smythe', 'A Peep into the Future', *Thames Star*, 4 March 1881, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁹ Death Certificate of David Rickard Gellion, 14 May 1896, 8581/1896, Victorian BDM.

⁶⁶⁰ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 5 March 1881, p. 259.

⁶⁶¹ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 23 July 1881, p. 507.

⁶⁶² 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 30 July 1881, p. 523.

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'.⁶⁶³

Five months later, it was claimed that 'the favourite amongst the ladies is D.R.G.'.⁶⁶⁴ 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' 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*?⁶⁶⁵

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 Court; but the lady ... is standing out for better terms, and hence the probability of a public *expose*'.⁶⁶⁶ Clearly this concerned an affiliation case, but a satisfactory maintenance agreement must have been reached because there was no public *expose*. As he was not recorded as the father in any births registered at Thames in that year (or later in that decade),⁶⁶⁷ it is not possible to confirm that the reference was to him, but it seems likely; but the child would have been given his mother's name. Having settled this complication, Gellion continued his philandering ways, being probably the object of a snippet four months later: 'Ask that sharebroker what he meant by kissing the housemaid of the ____ Hotel at the public entrance, and in broad daylight'.⁶⁶⁸

Gellion was probably being referred to 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

⁶⁶³ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 6 August 1881, p. 536.

⁶⁶⁴ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 14 January 1882, p. 278.

⁶⁶⁵ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 18 March 1882, p. 9.

⁶⁶⁶ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 22 April 1882, p. 84.

⁶⁶⁷ Register of Births, 1882, Thames BDM; Index of Births 1880-1890, BDM.

⁶⁶⁸ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 5 August 1882, p. 324.

and down the river'.⁶⁶⁹ Two months later, Agnes Blanche Smith, aged 22, made it quite clear who was the father of her illegitimate child: although no father's name was recorded, she named her son Frederick David Gellion.⁶⁷⁰ 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',⁶⁷¹ indicated that he had agreed to pay maintenance. In August he was named as one of the local ladykillers.⁶⁷²

In 1885 Gellion's behaviour became public knowledge. Agnes Blanche Friend, formerly Smith (five months after her son to Gellion was born she had married George William Friend,⁶⁷³ a general agent aged 28),⁶⁷⁴ charged him with 'Refusing to support his illegitimate male child born 20/4/83'.⁶⁷⁵ On the application of both counsels, the hearing was heard in 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.⁶⁷⁶ The O.M. gave details of the decision, naming Gellion and describing his son as 'a young sharebroker'.⁶⁷⁷ (Agnes would have two sons by her husband, the first of them dying shortly after birth).⁶⁷⁸

Gellion's sex life then stayed out of the public eye until July 1891, when the O.M. appeared to refer to him. 'Some of our mining gentlemen have not a very strict code of morality. It is said that a gay Lothario has

⁶⁶⁹ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 10 February 1883, p. 342.

⁶⁷⁰ Birth Certificate of Frederick David Gellion Smith, 20 April 1883, 1883/5888, BDM.

⁶⁷¹ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 19 May 1883, p. 134.

⁶⁷² *Observer*, 4 August 1883, p. 14.

⁶⁷³ Marriage Certificate of Agnes Blanche Smith, 19 September 1883, 1883/1711, BDM.

⁶⁷⁴ 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.

⁶⁷⁵ Thames Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1883-1886, 96/1885, BACL 13736/36a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁷⁶ Thames Magistrate's Court, Magistrate's Notebook 1883-1885, Hearing of 1 August 1885, BACL 13830/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁷⁷ 'Thames', *Observer*, 8 August 1885, p. 16.

⁶⁷⁸ Birth Certificates of George Friend, 24 July 1884, 1884/9029; George Spears Friend, 1886/9402; Death Certificate of George Friend, 1884/5546, BDM.

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'.⁶⁷⁹ Three months later, Gellion announced that he would travel to Australia to visit relatives and to inspect mines.⁶⁸⁰ He died there five years later.⁶⁸¹

At Te Aroha, James Gordon produced the most illegitimate children.⁶⁸² 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'.⁶⁸³ There were scandals that the O.M. could have recorded had he a mind to, as for instance when the 15-year-old daughter of a miner and mine manager, Thomas Scott,⁶⁸⁴ had an illegitimate son.⁶⁸⁵

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'.⁶⁸⁶ The O.M. had published no gossip about their relationship, Ebert's initials not appearing in any column after he arrived in Te Aroha in mid-1888.⁶⁸⁷ Hers appeared twice, although someone else

⁶⁷⁹ 'Thames', *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 17.

⁶⁸⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 10 October 1891, p. 2.

⁶⁸¹ Death Certificate of David Rickard Gellion, 14 May 1896, 8581/1896, Victorian BDM.

⁶⁸² See paper on his life.

⁶⁸³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 April 1893, p. 17.

⁶⁸⁴ 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.

⁶⁸⁵ Birth Certificate of James Albert Scott, 20 June 1892, 1892/9672, BDM.

⁶⁸⁶ 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.

⁶⁸⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Publicans' Licenses 1882-1892, folio 17, BBAV 11493/1a, ANZ-A.

may have been referred to. In May 1887 F.A. was mentioned as being likely to marry G.F.⁶⁸⁸ 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'.⁶⁸⁹ If this was the right F.A., 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; certainly Ebert denied paternity.⁶⁹⁰ 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 in 1906 and she also did, in 1915.⁶⁹¹

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,⁶⁹² his evidence must have been considered 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?'⁶⁹³ 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.⁶⁹⁴ The clerk of court recorded: 'Summons not Served – Def cannot be found – Case adjourned sine die'.⁶⁹⁵ As the police never traced Morgan, he evaded his responsibilities. He could have been traced, for he became a farmer at Gordon, upriver from Waiorongomai, dying there in 1905, aged 45; and

⁶⁸⁸ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁶⁸⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 November 1888, p. 17.

⁶⁹⁰ 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.

⁶⁹¹ Marriage Certificates of George Ebert, 1906/1515; Florence Allen, 1915/4497, BDM.

⁶⁹² Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 16/1897, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁶⁹³ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁶⁹⁴ Birth Certificate of Martin Charles Morgan Brumby, 21 November 1887, 1887/19901, BDM.

⁶⁹⁵ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 29/1887, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

unmarried.⁶⁹⁶ Despite having a child, two years later Hannah Maria was married, to the curiously named Violet Wells Barker (he preferred V. Wells Barker),⁶⁹⁷ 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.⁶⁹⁸ Soon afterwards, the couple left New Zealand.⁶⁹⁹ (Delayed 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. Where paternity was determined, the father was required to pay maintenance each week until the child was 14.⁷⁰⁰

DISGUIISING EMBARRASSING FACTS

When community norms were breached, some people went to considerable trouble to disguise the facts. For example, Charles James Longhurst,⁷⁰¹ a labourer and miner with only the briefest involvement with Waiorongomai,⁷⁰² providing details in birth certificates suggesting a son with the same name was born in both 1890 and 1897. As the boy had not died between 1890 and 1897, removing one possible explanation, why use the same name twice?

Longhurst married in 1875, when aged 24 and his bride, Mary Elizabeth Cooper, was 21.⁷⁰³ They had 11 children, of whom seven died.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁶ Death Certificate of Martin Joseph Morgan, 1 June 1905, 1905/2312, BDM; Death Notice, *Auckland Star*, 21 June 1905, p. 6.

⁶⁹⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 30 January 1882, p. 6.

⁶⁹⁸ 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.

⁶⁹⁹ Index of Deaths, 1890-1940, BDM.

⁷⁰⁰ For example, Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 55/1901, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁷⁰¹ 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

⁷⁰² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1913, 34/1913, BBAV 11289/22a, ANZ-A.

⁷⁰³ Marriage of Charles James Longhurst, 20 November 1875, 1875/2229, BDM.

⁷⁰⁴ Divorce Court, *Evening Post* (Wellington), 22 October 1889, p. 3.

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 threatened her life, she was granted the divorce and custody of the children.⁷⁰⁵ (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.)⁷⁰⁶ 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.⁷⁰⁷ In October 1890, when she was 17, she had a son whose birth was not registered until 1958.⁷⁰⁸ After their marriage they had a daughter,⁷⁰⁹ 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 do this 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.⁷¹⁰ 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.⁷¹¹ 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.⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁵ Divorce Court, *Evening Post*, 22 October 1889, p. 3; Supreme Court, Divorce Register 1868-1897, folio 221, no. 144, AAOM 6042/1, ANZ-W.

⁷⁰⁶ *New Zealand Police Gazette*, 20 September 1893, p. 153, 30 May 1894, p. 88.

⁷⁰⁷ Marriage Certificate of Charles James Longhurst, 1895/4167, BDM.

⁷⁰⁸ Birth Certificate of Charles Archibald Longhurst, 7 October 1890, 1958/108985, BDM.

⁷⁰⁹ Birth Certificate of Emily Mabel Longhurst, 6 August 1896, 1896/11250, BDM.

⁷¹⁰ 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.

⁷¹¹ Marriage Certificate of Charles Archibald Longhurst, 9 September 1914, 1914/1258; Birth Certificate of Charles Archibald Longhurst, 7 October 1890, 1958/108985, BDM.

⁷¹² Death Certificate of Charles James Longhurst, 20 January 1929, 1929/483, BDM.

This was a more elaborate charade than most, but others also tried to hide their indiscretions. James Don, for instance, who for part of the 1880s was licensee of the Hot Springs Hotel,⁷¹³ and invested in some local mines,⁷¹⁴ when registering the birth of his last son, Robert, in 1897, stated that he had married Bridget Coffey in Auckland in 1887.⁷¹⁵ 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 were already married, which would have been an obvious reason preventing their marrying. His death certificate stated that he had married Bridget Hogan in Auckland in about 1886; her death certificate stated she had married there in about 1889 to James Stewart Don (one of her sons' names).⁷¹⁶ Their first child, Agnes Jane Coffey, born in 1887, was registered as Agnes Jane Don when she died nine months later.⁷¹⁷ They then had twin sons, both registered as Coffey, as was one who died 21 months later.⁷¹⁸ They registered their last three children as Don,⁷¹⁹ and their death certificates recorded a non-existent marriage.⁷²⁰

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

⁷¹³ *Te Aroha News*, 28 May 1887, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 2 July 1889, p. 2.

⁷¹⁴ 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.

⁷¹⁵ Birth Certificate of Robert Don, 15 July 1897, 1897/8335, BDM.

⁷¹⁶ Death Certificates of James Don, 9 May 1904, 1904/2946; Bridget Don, 7 June 1918, 1918/2906, BDM.

⁷¹⁷ Birth Certificate of Agnes Jane Coffey, 1887/14445; Death Certificate of Agnes Jane Don, 1888/2347, BDM.

⁷¹⁸ Birth Certificates of John Thomas Coffey, 1889/12589; William Saunders Coffey, 1889/12590; Death Certificate of John Thomas Coffey, 1891/2593, BDM.

⁷¹⁹ Birth Certificates of James Stewart Don, 1893/10460; Margaret Ellen Don, 1895/10934; Robert Don, 15 July 1897, 1897/8335, BDM.

⁷²⁰ Death Certificates of James Don, 9 May 1904, 1904/2946; Bridget Don, 7 June 1918, 1918/2906, BDM.

the best looking fellow in the Hauraki district, and Miss C., of Waihi'.⁷²¹ He was William James Hyde, a miner who became a milkman, contractor, and butcher with a brother and a brother-in-law at Te Aroha,⁷²² and she was Margaret Frances Cornes, eldest daughter of Clem Cornes.⁷²³ As they would marry two years later, when he was aged 25 and she was about to turn 19,⁷²⁴ the wedding had been anticipated when she was 16. As was common, within a year their first child was born; they had 11 children in all,⁷²⁵ but only seven were alive when he died.⁷²⁶ One daughter died after six days of life from 'debility from birth', being in convulsions during her last eight hours.⁷²⁷ Another daughter died of pneumonia, aged four.⁷²⁸

Hyde participated in sports from 1881 onwards; in that year he was reported as a 'well-known amateur pedestrian', meaning runner.⁷²⁹ 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

⁷²¹ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 8 October 1881, p. 60.

⁷²² 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.

⁷²³ See paper on Clement Augustus Cornes.

⁷²⁴ 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.

⁷²⁵ 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.

⁷²⁶ Death Certificate of William [James] Hyde, 21 November 1904, 1904/6521, BDM.

⁷²⁷ Death Certificate of Silvia May Hyde, 21 January 1893, 1893/364, BDM.

⁷²⁸ Death Certificate of Harrietta Perrin Hyde, 25 September 1902, 1902/4568, BDM.

⁷²⁹ *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'.⁷³⁰ He left his family £404 3s 10d.⁷³¹ Margaret was a widow for almost 28 years until her death in 1931, aged 65.⁷³²

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,⁷³³ was married in Thames in 1874 to Annie Isabella Rattray.⁷³⁴ 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.⁷³⁵ One month later, Annie died from 'persistent oozing of blood from fibroid of uterus'.⁷³⁶ 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.⁷³⁷ 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'.⁷³⁸

Although no similar comment was published about the impact of deaths in the family of his brother Christopher, these can be assumed. In 1879, when aged 25, he married Tryphena Jane Wood, two years his junior.⁷³⁹ Their first child was not born until November 1890, and their second and last, another boy, in January 1895.⁷⁴⁰ The latter died at the age

⁷³⁰ 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.

⁷³¹ Testamentary Register 1903-1906, folio 133, BBCB 4208/5, ANZ-A.

⁷³² *Te Aroha News*, 20 March 1931, p. 8.

⁷³³ See testimonials in Mines Department, MD 1, 92/663, ANZ-W.

⁷³⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 December 1874, p. 2.

⁷³⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 June 1891, p. 1.

⁷³⁶ Death Certificate of Annie Guy, 13 July 1891, 1891/3280, BDM.

⁷³⁷ Death Certificate of Robert Guy, 1 October 1894, 1894/697, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 5 October 1894, Monthly Survey, p. 4.

⁷³⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 October 1894, p. 10.

⁷³⁹ Marriage Certificate of Christopher Guy, 2 April 1879, 1879/2915, BDM; *Thames Advertiser*, 7 April 1879, p. 2.

⁷⁴⁰ 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.⁷⁴¹ Three months later, Christopher was dead, aged 47, after a year of ill health caused by fibroid phthisis,⁷⁴² probably meaning miners' complaint. There was a large attendance at his funeral, and flags were lowered as his cortege passed.⁷⁴³ Long periods of widowhood were common: Tryphena was 69 when she died after 25 years alone, having had chronic bronchitis during her last ten years. Her other son had predeceased her, and she was living with her sister-in-law at the time of her death.⁷⁴⁴

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.',⁷⁴⁵ meaning this hotel.

She was first noted in March 1894. 'F.P. and A.P. should not talk so loud when billing and cooing in the domain.... A.P. says the little boy is the nicest little fellow in Te Aroha'.⁷⁴⁶ 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'.⁷⁴⁷ 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?'⁷⁴⁸ Two weeks later, 'S.W. and A.P. are friendly rivals and no mistake. Ask P.P.'⁷⁴⁹ 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

⁷⁴¹ Death Certificate of Robert Leslie Guy, 26 March 1900, 1900/118, BDM.

⁷⁴² Death Certificate of Christopher Guy, 28 June 1900, 1900/4051, BDM.

⁷⁴³ *Thames Star*, 2 July 1900, p. 2.

⁷⁴⁴ Death Certificate of Tryphena Jane Guy, 26 July 1925, 1925/3458, BDM; *New Zealand Herald*, 28 January 1925, pp. 1, 10.

⁷⁴⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁷⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

⁷⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 September 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

singing “We never know we love them till they are gone”’.⁷⁵⁰ Three weeks later, ‘A.P. is looking anxiously forward to Christmas. Why? G.P.’s return of course’.⁷⁵¹

For four months, she was not mentioned; when she was, it seemed that she and G.P. were no longer interested in each other. In the one column 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’.⁷⁵² 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’.⁷⁵³ 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.’⁷⁵⁴ 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.’⁷⁵⁵ 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’.⁷⁵⁶ The following month, at a fancy dress ball, P.P. and A.P. were ‘at loggerheads owing to V.P. taking up the running’,⁷⁵⁷ 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’.⁷⁵⁸ Two months later, she had left: ‘The boys are all lamenting the loss of A.P., and hope to see her behind the new bar before long’.⁷⁵⁹ 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’.⁷⁶⁰ She never returned.

⁷⁵⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

⁷⁵¹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 December 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁵² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁵³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 18 May 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁵⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁵⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁵⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

⁷⁵⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁵⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁵⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

⁷⁶⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

MIMA/M.E.

Jemima Duke Edwards, sister of Alexander Watson Edwards,⁷⁶¹ was born in 1872.⁷⁶² She preferred to Mima to Jemima.⁷⁶³ Possibly she was the M.E. mentioned by the O.M. in 1887, when she was 15. 'T.H. [Thomas Hotchin]⁷⁶⁴ 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'.⁷⁶⁵ 'T.H. and M.E. start spooning very early as they may be seen together at half-past seven in the morning'.⁷⁶⁶ But in the same issue, 'M. looked very lonely on Monday night down at the landing; where was T.H.?'⁷⁶⁷ If that was her first flirtation, it did not last long.

Mima was first mentioned in December 1890: 'Mima and the photo canvasser were doing a big spoon in the Domain the other night. Look out, Jack; George will hear of it', when she was aged 18.⁷⁶⁸ 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',⁷⁶⁹ who was never referred to again. In July 1892, 'Mima looks quite young again since she came back from town. The ivories make a wonderful difference'.⁷⁷⁰ A month later, 'Mima says she rather likes the mashers to admire how the ivories shine if they would not be so personal'.⁷⁷¹ 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?'⁷⁷² 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'.⁷⁷³ The following month, a

⁷⁶¹ See paper on Ani Lispey and Alexander Watson Edwards.

⁷⁶² Birth Certificate of Jamima Duke Edwards, 1872/17465, BDM.

⁷⁶³ Death Notice, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 9 April 1898, p. 2.

⁷⁶⁴ See later in this paper.

⁷⁶⁵ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁶⁷ 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁶⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 13 December 1890, p. 18.

⁷⁶⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 June 1891, p. 17.

⁷⁷⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 July 1892, p. 20.

⁷⁷¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

⁷⁷² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 6 August 1892, p. 19.

⁷⁷³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

'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'.⁷⁷⁴ Clearly having their private life exposed for public amusement was offensive.

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 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?',⁷⁷⁵ possibly a reference to false teeth. So there could 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 lost him'.⁷⁷⁶ In early September, 'M.E. looked the belle of the jam-tarts dance last Friday'.⁷⁷⁷ Later that month, one of those attending 'the pretty boy's ball' was 'Mr Macnicol, Ghost in the Garden', and 'Miss Edwards, 'Maori Girl', was one of the three people who provided the supper.⁷⁷⁸ No link between them was implied by the O.M.; David Duncan Macnicol was two years her senior.⁷⁷⁹ In November, 'J.W. and M.E. seem very gone on each other',⁷⁸⁰ 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'.⁷⁸¹ But three months later 'M. is still bachelorizing. M.E. will get tired of waiting'.⁷⁸² In early June, at a ball 'M.E. clung to the stage splendidly. Company not good enough, eh?'; perhaps Macnicol was not there. 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?'⁷⁸³ Probably this was the other M.E., for, at the end of July, 'Toff dance all the rage for the last

⁷⁷⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 17.

⁷⁷⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 September 1892, p. 17.

⁷⁷⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 21.

⁷⁷⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 September 1893, p. 21.

⁷⁷⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

⁷⁷⁹ Birth Certificate of David Duncan Macnicol, 1870/13190, BDM.

⁷⁸⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 November 1893, p. 21.

⁷⁸¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁸² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 May 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁸³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

week. D.M. and M.E. were very noticeable. They keep well together'.⁷⁸⁴ In mid-September, 'On dit that M. and M.E. will shortly tie the fatal knot. Get the cans ready, boys'.⁷⁸⁵ The following February, 'We are likely to have a number of marriages here shortly including (so they say) D.M. and M.E.'.⁷⁸⁶ In September, the O.M. announced 'Several weddings before Christmas; amongst others, M.E. and D.M.'.⁷⁸⁷ Finally, in mid-October 1895, 'D.D.M. and M.E. are at last united', in a 'very quiet' wedding'.⁷⁸⁸ It 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'.⁷⁸⁹ His father was a leading Presbyterian minister.⁷⁹⁰

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.⁷⁹¹ 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.⁷⁹²

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.

⁷⁸⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁸⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 September 1894, p. 21.

⁷⁸⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 23 February 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁸⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 21 September 1895, p. 22.

⁷⁸⁸ Marriage Certificate of David Duncan Macnicol, 3 October 1895, 1895/1727, BDM; 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 October 1895, p. 21.

⁷⁸⁹ 'The Social Sphere', *Observer*, 12 October 1895, p. 8.

⁷⁹⁰ *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 223.

⁷⁹¹ Birth Certificates of Robert David Macnicol, 1896/16011; Lorne Aroha Macnicol, 24 March 1898, 1898/4352, BDM.

⁷⁹² 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.

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 community'.⁷⁹³ Seven years later, Macnicol would remarry.⁷⁹⁴ His second wife died in 1904, aged 70, and he died six years later, aged 77.⁷⁹⁵

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'.⁷⁹⁶ The following month, she was one of two women who 'had to escort themselves out in the evening' because they lacked partners.⁷⁹⁷ 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'.⁷⁹⁸ 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'.⁷⁹⁹ 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'.⁸⁰⁰

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'.⁸⁰¹ He was Albert Edwards, who in March that year had become postmaster at Quartzville, a position he held until August the following

⁷⁹³ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 9 April 1898, p. 3.

⁷⁹⁴ Marriage Certificate of David Duncan Macnicol, 1905/157, BDM.

⁷⁹⁵ Death Certificates of Mary Ellen Macnicol, 1942/23196; David Duncan Macnicol, 1948/16408, BDM.

⁷⁹⁶ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁷⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁷⁹⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 February 1889, p. 17.

⁸⁰⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

⁸⁰¹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 5 September 1885, p. 4.

year and again briefly in 1888.⁸⁰² He combined this position with running the Hill Store there for several owners until 1888, after which he was a storeman at Waiorongomai.⁸⁰³ In the early 1890s he was a draper and grocer there,⁸⁰⁴ and took up his only interest in a mine.⁸⁰⁵ From 1898 until his death he was in charge of the county tramway.⁸⁰⁶

Why a 'dusky' storekeeper? This was contemporary shorthand for being part Maori, presumably seen as more polite usage than the common expression 'half-caste'. He was the second son of John Edwards, a Raglan farmer married Rakapa (Rachel) Te Taroto, otherwise Rakapa Te Tarete and Rakaka Mere.⁸⁰⁷ Like himself, both his sisters married Pakeha: one a farmer and the other a future mayor of Tauranga.⁸⁰⁸

Edwards participated fully in Waiorongomai's social life. Involved with the Wesleyan Sunday School at from its founding in 1884, he was elected its secretary in 1887, when he was also the secretary of a 'Service of Song, entitled Uncle Tom', performed for it.⁸⁰⁹ In the mid-1880s he assisted the Band of Hope by selling tickets for concerts to raise money for their organ

⁸⁰² *New Zealand Gazette*, 12 March 1885, p. 334, 16 September 1886, p. 1142, 12 April 1888, p. 448, 14 June 1888, p. 683.

⁸⁰³ *Te Aroha News*, 21 March 1885, p. 2, 2 May 1888, p. 7; *Waikato Times*, 8 October 1889, p. 2.

⁸⁰⁴ *Te Aroha Electoral Roll, 1890*, p. 10; *Waikato Electoral Roll, 1893*, p. 11; *Cleaves Auckland Directory, 1893*, p. 304.

⁸⁰⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 338, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

⁸⁰⁶ 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.

⁸⁰⁷ 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.

⁸⁰⁸ Marriage Certificates of Helen Edwards, 4 July 1882, 1882/1807; Sarah Edwards, 27 December 1897, 1897/2518, BDM; *Bay of Plenty Times*, 12 November 1915, p. 2.

⁸⁰⁹ 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.

fund.⁸¹⁰ In 1888 he was treasurer of the Rinking Club and of a Fancy Dress Carnival (which he attended dressed as ‘Minstrel’).⁸¹¹ The following year he was secretary of a ‘Grand Fancy Dress and Skating Carnival’.⁸¹² Gaps in the local newspaper mean he cannot be traced for much of the 1890s, but in April 1898 he was elected to the school committee, being re-elected every year until his death.⁸¹³

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?’⁸¹⁴ 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’.⁸¹⁵ A sarcastic comment, for Edwards was popular with young women, as noted by Te Aroha’s O.M. in the next issue: ‘The ladies of this place have taken quite a fancy to A.E.’⁸¹⁶ 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’.⁸¹⁷ In April 1895, the Waiorongomai O.M. asked: ‘Where did you get that hat, A.E.’⁸¹⁸ Six months later, when he was aged 30 and his bride 22, he married Margaret Jane Scott, the daughter of a Thames miner.⁸¹⁹ Eleven months later a son was born and another 13 months afterwards a daughter.⁸²⁰ The marriage was not a long one: when only 37, he died of pneumonia and hyperpyrexia (extreme fever, usually caused by infection) in 1902.⁸²¹ An ‘In Memoriam’

⁸¹⁰ Waiorongomai Band of Hope, Minute Book 1883-1889, 3050/916, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁸¹¹ *Te Aroha News*, 5 May 1888, p. 2, 22 September 1888, p. 2.

⁸¹² *Te Aroha News*, 3 August 1889, p. 7.

⁸¹³ *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.

⁸¹⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁸¹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

⁸¹⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 7 September 1889, p. 18.

⁸¹⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 27 August 1892, p. 19.

⁸¹⁸ ‘Waiorongomai’, *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁸¹⁹ Marriage Certificate of Albert Edwards, 21 October 1895, 1895/1683, BDM.

⁸²⁰ Birth Certificates of David Vyvyan Edwards, 14 September 1896, 1896/8269; Jessie Edwards, 25 October 1897, 1897/12370, BDM.

⁸²¹ 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.

notice published a year after his death indicated that theirs 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'.⁸²²

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!'⁸²³ 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'.⁸²⁴ 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 about 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?'⁸²⁵ 'W.C. is coming back to Te Aroha again; great rejoicing among the girls; M.S. will be happy once again'.⁸²⁶ 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?'⁸²⁷ Eighteen months later, when again recorded, 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'.⁸²⁸ 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?'⁸²⁹ Two months later, 'I see that M.S. and R.F. have made it up

⁸²² 'In Memoriam', *New Zealand Herald*, 16 September 1903, p. 1.

⁸²³ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 2 April 1887, p. 18.

⁸²⁴ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

⁸²⁵ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁸²⁶ 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁸²⁷ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁸²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 December 1888, p. 17.

⁸²⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 December 1888, p. 17.

again. M.S. says she don't like to be bad friends with anyone'.⁸³⁰ 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?'⁸³¹ 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',⁸³² 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?'⁸³³ This was the last reported about M.S.; presumably she left the district when the *Observer* Man was no longer interested in her life.

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'.⁸³⁴ He was a visitor, not on the staff of the Hot Springs Hotel, and C.'s jealous 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?"'.⁸³⁵ Two months later, 'F.E. seems to be going to the park still. Knocking at the door is out of fashion, F. Tapping at the window and whistling is coming in'.⁸³⁶ 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'.⁸³⁷ 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?'⁸³⁸

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.,

⁸³⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 February 1889, p. 17.

⁸³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 March 1889, p. 17.

⁸³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 1 June 1889, p. 18.

⁸³³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 September 1889, p. 18.

⁸³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1893, p. 21.

⁸³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

⁸³⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 July 1893, p. 23.

⁸³⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 July 1893, p. 21.

⁸³⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 5 August 1893, p. 21.

some day she'll wander back again'.⁸³⁹ He did not cheer up, for another two months later 'F.E. is often seen at the Domain fate whistling "only to see thy face again." Is it M.K.'s face he means?'⁸⁴⁰ 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?'⁸⁴¹ 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?'⁸⁴²

In January 1894, 'What takes A.F. down to the train so often now, is it to meet F.E. should he return?'.⁸⁴³ The following month, 'the engagement of A.F. and E.R.' was 'reported',⁸⁴⁴ 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 speaks⁸⁴⁵ since M.L. left Te Aroha?'⁸⁴⁶ All the gossiping about him prompted F.E. to threaten that if he caught the O.M. he would 'make mince-meat of him'.⁸⁴⁷ In the same column the O.M. recommended him as a 'respectable' masher for a masherless woman.⁸⁴⁸ The following month, it seemed that he was 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'.⁸⁴⁹ In the following issue, 'F.E. did a moonlight slope to Tauranga so that he would not pass the Flat'.⁸⁵⁰ As a 'slope' meant running away or decamping,⁸⁵¹ clearly his relationship with whomsoever lived on 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'.⁸⁵² Perhaps she lived on the 'Flat', for the following

⁸³⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 September 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 November 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁴¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

⁸⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 October 1893, p. 21.

⁸⁴³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 January 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁴⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 February 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁴⁵ Not traced in dictionaries of slang.

⁸⁴⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁴⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁸⁴⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁸⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

⁸⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 May 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁵¹ Partridge, p. 1090.

⁸⁵² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 June 1894, p. 17.

issue announced that 'F.E. is still very fond of the Flat'.⁸⁵³ The following month, 'A.F. looks very down-hearted since F.E. went away. But cheer up, A., absence makes the heart grow fonder'.⁸⁵⁴ He spent the next month of so 'doing the block' in Auckland,⁸⁵⁵ meaning promenading around the centre of the city.⁸⁵⁶

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?'⁸⁵⁷ 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?'⁸⁵⁸ Clearly their relationship had ended. The following month the O.M. wondered why she had left a dance 'so early'.⁸⁵⁹ After that date, they were no longer mentioned: had both left the district?

P.P.

Reports about P.P., a fervent but fickle lover, commenced in March 1894. 'What takes P.P. to the Hot Springs so often? Is the pretty little woman the attraction? Who was the lady that gave F.W. the go-bye for the sake of P.P. on Sunday night?'⁸⁶⁰ 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'.⁸⁶¹ A month later, 'Since S.W. returned from Franklin P.P. looks inches taller'.⁸⁶² Two months later, 'P.P. says it's sweet to love, but oh how bitter, etc'.⁸⁶³ Six weeks later, 'P.P. says he loves them all, bless 'em. He refers to the girls, of

⁸⁵³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 June 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 July 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁶ Partridge, p. 96.

⁸⁵⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 May 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁵⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁶⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 10 March 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁶¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 March 1894, p. 19.

⁸⁶² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 April 1894, p. 17.

⁸⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 June 1894, p. 21.

course'.⁸⁶⁴ The following issue, 'On dit that P.P. was in town to see one of the parsons',⁸⁶⁵ by implication about getting married. A month later 'P.P. is heard whistling now "Linger Longer Loo;" that accounts for his loving glances'.⁸⁶⁶ Two weeks later, 'S.W. and A.P. are friendly rivals and no mistake. Ask P.P.'.⁸⁶⁷ Two-timing had its perils: a month later 'P.P. says he is between two fires, and no mistake'.⁸⁶⁸ His problem was quickly solved: a month later, 'P.P. says one fire is out entirely. So it is'.⁸⁶⁹

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?'⁸⁷⁰ 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?'⁸⁷¹ The following month, 'P.P. looked well walking between the two sisters from over the river'.⁸⁷² Two weeks later, 'Didn't the tonsorial artist's lip hang when P.P. took A.P. home from the rink'.⁸⁷³ A month later, 'P.P. and A.P. are at loggerheads owing to V.P. taking up the running'.⁸⁷⁴ Another month later, 'P.P. says he likes waltzing with N.O'G. What's the attraction?'⁸⁷⁵ 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'.⁸⁷⁶

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'.⁸⁷⁷ The following week, he attended a Volunteer Social, and it was reported that 'P.P. has transferred his affections. He evidently thinks that fair exchange is no

⁸⁶⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 July 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁶⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁶⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 September 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁶⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁶⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 October 1894, p. 21.

⁸⁶⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 November 1894, p. 22.

⁸⁷⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 April 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 July 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 August 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 31 August 1895, p. 22.

⁸⁷⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 September 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 October 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 28 December 1895, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 February 1896, p. 21.

robbery'.⁸⁷⁸ As the O.M. did not contribute any columns between August 1896 and May 1898, his 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'.⁸⁷⁹ 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.?'⁸⁸⁰ He 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 is terrible. But L.S. doesn't seem to think so'.⁸⁸¹ 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 or that of others 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,⁸⁸² who had arrived in Te Aroha in 1894 at the age of 16 with her sister Clara to live with her aunt, Emma Blencowe.⁸⁸³ But this P.P. seemed to be discreet and respectable, no gossip linking him to an E.S. Neither E.S. nor C.S. caught the O.M.'s eye, Clara possibly because she had no admirers: she never married.⁸⁸⁴

The other P.P. was Patrick Page, a coach driver.⁸⁸⁵ In September 1893, 'Mr Page, Dummy', attended a fancy dress ball.⁸⁸⁶ Three years later, Mary Ann Everitt, aged 19, took him to court for failing to maintain his illegitimate child Albert Henry;⁸⁸⁷ presumably because he agreed to

⁸⁷⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 22 February 1896, p. 21.

⁸⁷⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 11 June 1898, p. 22.

⁸⁸⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 June 1898, p. 21.

⁸⁸¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 17 December 1898, p. 22.

⁸⁸² Marriage Certificate of Peter Owen Pilkington, 1900/3528, BDM.

⁸⁸³ *Te Aroha News*, 24 July 1956, p. 4; Probate of Emma Blencowe, Hamilton Probates, BCDG 4420/1730, ANZ-A.

⁸⁸⁴ Probate of Emma Blencowe, Hamilton Probates, BCDG 4420/1730, ANZ-A.

⁸⁸⁵ See *Ohinemuri Electoral Rolls, 1899*, p. 88; *1900*, p. 73.

⁸⁸⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 September 1893, p. 22.

⁸⁸⁷ Birth Certificates of Mary Ann Everitt, 1877/17125; Albert Henry Everitt, 1896/4419, BDM.

contribute, at the hearing she made no plea and the case was withdrawn.⁸⁸⁸ 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 1910.⁸⁸⁹ Mary Ann Everett did not marry in New Zealand either.⁸⁹⁰

T.H.

In April 1887, 'T.H. seemed to be slightly in it on Saturday night with F.M. hanging on his arm'.⁸⁹¹ He was Thomas Hotchin, a local blacksmith, aged 19.⁸⁹² 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'.⁸⁹³ This potential rival was Robert Kelly Cannell, another blacksmith,⁸⁹⁴ and secretary of the Bachelor's Ball in October that year.⁸⁹⁵ Two months later Cannell was 'about to travel to Waiorongomai in search of a girl', but he would not marry J.E., or anyone else.⁸⁹⁶

At the end of April '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

⁸⁸⁸ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 21/1896, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁸⁸⁹ Marriage Certificate of Patrick John Page, 1910/3880; Indexes to Marriages 1896-1920, BDM.

⁸⁹⁰ Indexes to Marriages, 1896-1920, BDM.

⁸⁹¹ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 2 April 1887, p. 18.

⁸⁹² 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.

⁸⁹³ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 16 April 1887, p. 18.

⁸⁹⁴ 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.

⁸⁹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 15 October 1887, p. 3.

⁸⁹⁶ '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.

so loud, as people opposite have ears'.⁸⁹⁷ 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?'⁸⁹⁸ 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'.⁸⁹⁹ But then 'M. looked very lonely on Monday night down at the landing; where was T.H.?'⁹⁰⁰

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.⁹⁰¹ He returned ten years later, having visited most Australian goldfields.⁹⁰² Despite all this flirting, Hotchin did not marry in either New Zealand or New South Wales.⁹⁰³

W.W.W.

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 come to Auckland, got drunk, and been arrested at 2 o'clock in the morning for singing in the street. He was described as 'a good-looking young bushman'.⁹⁰⁴ Five months later he gave evidence in an Auckland assault case.⁹⁰⁵ During 1881 he participated in the Tiki rush, near Coromandel.⁹⁰⁶ In July the *Observer* announced that 'Bill' Wiggins had been elected foreman of a coroner's inquest because he looked so respectable, 'so

⁸⁹⁷ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 30 April 1887, p. 18.

⁸⁹⁸ 'Te Aroha Twinkles', *Observer*, 7 May 1887, p. 18.

⁸⁹⁹ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁹⁰⁰ 'Te Aroha Tips', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁹⁰¹ *Te Aroha News*, 3 March 1888, p. 2.

⁹⁰² *Te Aroha News*, 27 January 1898, p. 2.

⁹⁰³ Indexes to Marriages, BDM and New South Wales BDM.

⁹⁰⁴ *Observer*, 18 September 1880, p. 4.

⁹⁰⁵ Police Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 10 February 1881, p. 3.

⁹⁰⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 11 April 1881, p. 6, 19 April 1881, p. 6, 23 September 1881, p. 5.

he says himself.⁹⁰⁷ 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’.⁹⁰⁸ 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’.⁹⁰⁹ The next issue stated that another man ‘(bar Bill Wiggins) is in all respects one of the best fellows on the field’.⁹¹⁰ Five weeks later, he was reportedly ‘a great acquisition at the Coromandel Rink Club. Several ladies have tried to copy his style’.⁹¹¹ 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” ’.⁹¹² Shortly afterwards, he ‘was the hero of the recent Rink Dance at Coromandel’.⁹¹³ He also defeated a sharebroker at ‘throwing the cricket ball’.⁹¹⁴ When canvassing during an election, he was also ‘in town for the Melbourne cup “burst,” and looked blooming’.⁹¹⁵ Presumably a flirtation was behind the comment that ‘Georgie Grey has gone to Tiki to interview Bill Wiggins on a matrimonial subject’.⁹¹⁶ At that time ‘Bill Wiggins and Miss Rayner are the champion croquet players at Coromandel’.⁹¹⁷

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’.⁹¹⁸ He did not. An entanglement seems a likely explanation about 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?’⁹¹⁹ ‘Bill Wiggins has now to play

⁹⁰⁷ ‘Personal’, *Observer*, 16 July 1881, p. 488.

⁹⁰⁸ ‘Brief Mention’, *Observer*, 16 July 1881, p. 487.

⁹⁰⁹ ‘Personal’, *Observer*, 13 August 1881, p. 548.

⁹¹⁰ ‘Personal’, *Observer*, 20 August 1881, p. 570.

⁹¹¹ ‘Coromandel’, *Observer*, 1 October 1881, p. 44.

⁹¹² ‘Brief Mention’, *Observer*, 1 October 1881, p. 44.

⁹¹³ ‘Society’, *Observer*, 22 October 1881, p. 44.

⁹¹⁴ ‘Coromandel’, *Observer*, 29 October 1881, p. 105.

⁹¹⁵ ‘Brief Mention’, *Observer*, 12 November 1881, p. 218.

⁹¹⁶ ‘Personal’, *Observer*, 17 December 1881, p. 218.

⁹¹⁷ ‘Brief Mention’, *Observer*, 17 December 1881, p. 220.

⁹¹⁸ ‘Personal’, *Observer*, 28 January 1882, p. 310.

⁹¹⁹ ‘Coromandel’, *Observer*, 18 March 1882, p. 9.

second fiddle to our German friend'.⁹²⁰ Other women remained interested in him: 'The young ladies of Coromandel want to know why the trucker of the Home Rule, W.W.W., shaved'.⁹²¹ Three weeks later, in late April, the Coromandel O.M. asked: 'Where is Wiggins? His friends are anxious about his health'.⁹²² Next month, when sued for £8 6s 6d, the clerk of the court recorded that he had left for Te Aroha.⁹²³

He had gone 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.⁹²⁴ He continued to appear in gossip columns, the first mention being of him living at Waiorongomai in December: 'Wiggins in the garden, pumpkins sprouting'.⁹²⁵ The following April, 'the Wiggins is a walking gentleman'.⁹²⁶ 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'.⁹²⁷ Equally puzzling was the following question: 'What were the apostle and Wig about not to save their own dunnage? Rather careless: keep cool in times of emergency'.⁹²⁸ 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'.⁹²⁹ 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!'⁹³⁰ The following month, the Te Aroha O.M. suggested that 'W.W.W.' should be 'The Rainbow' at a fancy dress ball,⁹³¹ for reasons no longer apparent. In December, 'W.W.W. and Alice G. are passing friends. Pheasants sent in brown paper parcels, alike slippers,

⁹²⁰ 'Coromandel', *Observer*, 25 March 1882, p. 25.

⁹²¹ 'Coromandel', *Observer*, 1 April 1882, p. 41.

⁹²² 'Coromandel', *Observer*, 22 April 1882, p. 89.

⁹²³ Coromandel Magistrate's Court, Foreign Process Receipt Book 1881-1896, entries for 2 May 1882, 15 May 1882, ZAAAN 14047/1a, ANZ-A.

⁹²⁴ 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.

⁹²⁵ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 2 December 1882, p. 182.

⁹²⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Observer*, 21 April 1883, p. 76.

⁹²⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 12 May 1883, p. 122.

⁹²⁸ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 May 1883, p. 154.

⁹²⁹ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 22 September 1883, p. 12.

⁹³⁰ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 29 September 1883, p. 8.

⁹³¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 October 1883, p. 8.

are forbidden topics. W. thinks English society would be unbearable with Alice',⁹³² a possibly snobbish reason for the end of their friendship.

In February 1884 he was a member of the committee that organized the Bachelor's Ball at Te Aroha,⁹³³ 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,⁹³⁴ but then disappeared from the newspapers until October 1886,⁹³⁵ 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'.⁹³⁶

In July 1888, the *Thames Advertiser* published a letter from an old Thamesite about a meeting in Broken Hill:

I was startled to hear the Maori word "Tenajuo" uttered close to my ear in a voice having a strong Italian accent. Turning quickly who should stand before me but Wiggins – the immortal Wiggins of old, whose cheery laugh all the dust and discomfort of Broken Hill cannot alter.⁹³⁷

The following year he was on the committee of a rugby club there,⁹³⁸ when 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 1898.⁹³⁹

THE COLONEL AND MISS C.

⁹³² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 December 1883, p. 16.

⁹³³ *Te Aroha News*, 23 February 1884, p. 2.

⁹³⁴ *New Zealand Gazette*, 8 January 1885, p. 30; *Te Aroha News*, 17 January 1885, p. 2.

⁹³⁵ He was not the William Wiggins who worked in the Whangarei area: see *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 December 1884, p. 13.

⁹³⁶ Supreme Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 14 October 1886, p. 6.

⁹³⁷ Letter from 'Young Dodd', *Thames Advertiser*, 26 July 1888, p. 3.

⁹³⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 March 1889, p. 2.

⁹³⁹ Marriage Indexes, BDM and New South Wales BDM; Marriage Certificate of William Wiggins, 1898/2438, BDM; *Auckland Star*, 4 August 1898, p. 8.

The 'colonel' may have been a nickname rather than someone with that rank who featured in some gossip columns in the early 1880s before, presumably, leaving the district. The O.M. 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'.⁹⁴⁰ 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?'⁹⁴¹ 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 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.⁹⁴²

In the next issue, 'The Colonel, at Te Aroha, has lost his dignity together with his "tin." 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'.⁹⁴³ 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

⁹⁴⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 November 1882, p. 121.

⁹⁴¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 18 November 1882, p. 153.

⁹⁴² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 3 March 1883, p. 395.

⁹⁴³ 'Personal', *Observer*, 10 March 1883, p. 412.

shovel'.⁹⁴⁴ 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?'.⁹⁴⁵ This was an anticipation of a marriage with Martha Clarke, daughter of James, a grocer and general storekeeper whose family had settled in August 1882.⁹⁴⁶ In November, the Waiorongomai O.M. asked whether the Colonel had 'squared with Martha',⁹⁴⁷ 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).⁹⁴⁸

Martha Clarke was regularly praised in gossip columns, a 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'.⁹⁴⁹ Three months 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'.⁹⁵⁰ The following month, 'Miss C. looked well in a dark-green riding-habit at the Te Aroha Races'.⁹⁵¹ 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'.⁹⁵² When presented with an elegant silver flower stand at a concert 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

⁹⁴⁴ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 30 June 1883, p. 233.

⁹⁴⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁹⁴⁶ 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.

⁹⁴⁷ 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 24 November 1883, p. 12.

⁹⁴⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 27 October 1883, p. 2; Marriage Certificate of Martha Clarke, 4 September 1884, 1884/3230, BDM.

⁹⁴⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 November 1882, p. 153.

⁹⁵⁰ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 170.

⁹⁵¹ *Observer*, 16 December 1882, p. 214.

⁹⁵² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 2 June 1883, p. 170.

two years'.⁹⁵³ The O.M. provided a much more flamboyant tribute when 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.⁹⁵⁴

The following month, he suggested that Miss C. should go to a fancy dress ball as 'Mother Hubbard (in blue goggles)', the latter being another reference to her candlepower. Miss R. would be appropriate as 'Electric Light'.⁹⁵⁵

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'.⁹⁵⁶ By December he had 'resigned his post in the English Army and has taken to dancing'.⁹⁵⁷

RICHARD THOMAS JANSEN AND HIS FAMILY TROUBLES

Richard Thomas Jansen, a labourer and, for a time, miner,⁹⁵⁸ had to cope not only with his aging parents but also stepchildren. His father, Peter Thomas, born in Denmark in 1832, was naturalized in 1890.⁹⁵⁹ Peter farmed 97 acres of 'very good land' in the High School Endowment at

⁹⁵³ *Waikato Times*, 4 September 1884, p. 3.

⁹⁵⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 29 September 1883, p. 8.

⁹⁵⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 20 October 1883, p. 8.

⁹⁵⁶ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 September 1883, p. 12.

⁹⁵⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 8 December 1883, p. 16.

⁹⁵⁸ 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.

⁹⁵⁹ 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.

Waiorongomai until the mortgagee sold his farm in 1894.⁹⁶⁰ An indication of his poor finances was that he had not paid the rates.⁹⁶¹ In the mid-1880s, briefly, and unsuccessfully, he had attempted to be a roading contractor with his son.⁹⁶² Also in the mid-1880s, his house burnt down;⁹⁶³ rebuilding it led to 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'. Peter was ordered to pay.⁹⁶⁴

Despite his financial problems, Peter was of sufficient repute to be elected to the Waiorongomai school committee, as was his son in 1900 and 1901.⁹⁶⁵ In 1892, he 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 he was in a 'most critical state',⁹⁶⁶ he recovered. He did not die until 1909, aged 73, of a heart attack; for an unrecorded time he had suffered from senile decay.⁹⁶⁷

Peter Jansen and his only child were Anglicans; Bridget Mallard or Malliard or Mallin, an Irishwoman whom Peter married in Auckland when aged 25, was a Roman Catholic.⁹⁶⁸ She did not receive any publicity 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

⁹⁶⁰ *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.

⁹⁶¹ Piako County Council, Letterbook 1893-1899, p. 225, Matamata-Piako District Council, Te Aroha.

⁹⁶² Piako Country Council, *Waikato Times*, 2 April 1885, p. 2.

⁹⁶³ *Te Aroha News*, 1 November 1884, p. 2.

⁹⁶⁴ Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 7 March 1885, p. 7.

⁹⁶⁵ *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.

⁹⁶⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 31 August 1892, p. 2; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 3 September 1892, p. 4; *Auckland Weekly News*, 3 September 1892, p. 20.

⁹⁶⁷ Death Certificate of Peter Thomas Jansen, 8 June 1909, 1909/4051, BDM.

⁹⁶⁸ 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.

accompanied her and her husband to a hotel, where she left him in charge of their horse and trap and 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 the house and his 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.

The magistrate doubted he intended to return the shawl, and imprisoned him for 24 hours.⁹⁶⁹

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 asylum in Auckland.⁹⁷⁰ Then aged 50, her sub-acute mania was diagnosed as caused by the 'climacteric', otherwise menopause.⁹⁷¹ 'First attack of five years duration supposed to be due to change of life not epileptic or suicidal – dangerous'.

⁹⁶⁹ Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 26 June 1886, p. 2.

⁹⁷⁰ Armed Constabulary Force, Return of Charges taken at Te Aroha Lock-Up 1880-1903, 5/1892, in private possession.

⁹⁷¹ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1767, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

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 lazy and reluctant to eat the food provided; 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'.⁹⁷² Her husband paid 7s 6d towards her upkeep until June, when he stated he could not pay any more and requested her return.⁹⁷³ Being in good bodily health, she was discharged on his bond as 'relieved' in October.⁹⁷⁴

Two years later, when travelling by coach to Thames, because her behaviour 'was rather peculiar' the coachman telephoned the police. She was 'under the impression that her relations and friends are continually attempting to murder her by putting poison in her tea, etc'.⁹⁷⁵ 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.⁹⁷⁶

⁹⁷² Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 713, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁷³ Avondale Asylum, Record Book of Investigation into Relatives' Ability to Pay Maintenance 1890-1899, folio 57, YCAA 1044/1, ANZ-A.

⁹⁷⁴ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1767, YCAA 1021/2; Case Book 1853-1892, folio 713, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁷⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 October 1894, p. 2.

⁹⁷⁶ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 714, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

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'.⁹⁷⁷ Her husband stated that she had spent four years at the Cape of Good Hope and then 30 years in New Zealand:

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.⁹⁷⁸

Diagnosed as suffering from recurrent mania, she died in the asylum in 1913.⁹⁷⁹ Abusive and threatening, she never improved.⁹⁸⁰ 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'. He continued not to contribute.⁹⁸¹ Nor did her son; his financial state was indicated when in the following year a shopkeeper sued him for goods supplied and he agreed to pay £1 per month: in default, he would be imprisoned for seven days.⁹⁸²

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.⁹⁸³ Six years later he was charged with assault, but the charge was withdrawn.⁹⁸⁴ He participated in a foot race 'for a small stake',⁹⁸⁵ and

⁹⁷⁷ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 714, YCAA 1048/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁷⁸ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 714, YCAA 1049/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁷⁹ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1995, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

⁹⁸⁰ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1853-1892, folio 714, YCAA 1049/5, ANZ-A.

⁹⁸¹ Avondale Asylum, Record Book of Investigation into Relatives' Ability to Pay Maintenance 1890-1899, folio 57, YCAA 1044/1, ANZ-A.

⁹⁸² Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 4 May 1895, p. 2.

⁹⁸³ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 5/1891, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

⁹⁸⁴ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 6/1897, BCDG 11220/1b, ANZ-A.

⁹⁸⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 11 May 1889, p. 2.

played cricket and football for the Waiorongomai teams.⁹⁸⁶ In 1887 he was secretary of the Waiorongomai Jubilee Minstrels' entertainment.⁹⁸⁷ He joined the Te Aroha Rifles in 1893, and two years later did badly in a Volunteer shooting competition.⁹⁸⁸

In April 1892, he was married, at the age of 30, to Alice Burchell, an Irishwoman two year older who had been widowed in August 1888.⁹⁸⁹ (According to his death certificate, he was 27 when married, and she was six years older.)⁹⁹⁰ 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 without medical assistance.⁹⁹¹ The *Te Aroha News* reported his death as coming after a 'lingering and painful illness of some weeks'. Although not living 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'.⁹⁹² He left two daughters, aged eight and five, and a son aged seven.⁹⁹³ To assist his destitute family, £35 was raised.⁹⁹⁴

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 the following year.⁹⁹⁵ His wife died three years later,⁹⁹⁶ and even though his stepson had neither died nor remarried, Jansen became guardian of the girl.⁹⁹⁷ In 1897, an unnamed stepdaughter was living in another family's house at Waiorongomai when it burnt down; she escaped

⁹⁸⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 10 October 1888, p. 7, 15 May 1889, p. 2, 28 August 1889, p. 2.

⁹⁸⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 2 July 1887, p. 3.

⁹⁸⁸ 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.

⁹⁸⁹ Marriage Certificate of Richard Thomas Jansen, 7 April 1892, 1892/982, BDM.

⁹⁹⁰ Death Certificate of Richard Thomas Jansen, 5 April 1911, 1911/2624, BDM.

⁹⁹¹ Death Certificate of Arthur Burchell, 25 August 1888, 1888/5408, BDM.

⁹⁹² *Te Aroha News*, 29 August 1888, p. 2.

⁹⁹³ Death Certificate of Arthur Burchell, 25 August 1888, 1888/5408, BDM.

⁹⁹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 29 August 1888, p. 5.

⁹⁹⁵ Marriage Certificate of Arthur John Burchell, 1902/4977; Birth Certificate of Vida Elvene Burchell, 11 September 1903, 1903/6580, BDM.

⁹⁹⁶ Death Certificate of Suzanna Eliza Burchell, 1906/6385, BDM.

⁹⁹⁷ Te Aroha School, Admissions Register no. 4 (1904-1918), no. 2267, School Archives, Te Aroha.

unharméd, and returned to live with her mother and stepfather.⁹⁹⁸ In February 1900, when aged 20, his stepdaughter Alice had an illegitimate son to Charles Thomas Young; her mother was present at the birth of a child who lived for only 11 weeks.⁹⁹⁹ Alice was a domestic servant.¹⁰⁰⁰ The following month, Jansen sued Young for maintenance, but as the magistrate considered the evidence to be unsatisfactory the case was ‘Dismissed for want of collaborative evidence’.¹⁰⁰¹ In June, ‘evidence was given at great length’, and the magistrate was convinced.¹⁰⁰² As Young failed to obey the maintenance order, he was taken to court again to enforce payment.¹⁰⁰³

After failing as a miner, Jansen became a labourer, working near Thames when admitted to hospital in March 1911.¹⁰⁰⁴ 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 46.¹⁰⁰⁵

CONCLUSION

The O.M.’s chatty voyeurism did not deal with the harsh realities of life, and sometimes his comments were meaningless to later readers. For instance, in 1891 ‘the £5,000 man has gone, also his lady friend, not forgetting the “skipper” ’.¹⁰⁰⁶ And sometimes gossip should not be believed, as in an example from the early days of the goldfield about the warden’s clerk:

⁹⁹⁸ ‘Te Aroha Notes’, *Waikato Argus*, 5 June 1897, p. 3.

⁹⁹⁹ Birth Certificate of Arnold George Burchell, 2 February 1900, 1900/3445; Death Certificate of Arnold George Burchell, 1900/2392, BDM.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Church of England, Te Aroha Register of Baptisms 1880-1908, no. 607, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁰⁰¹ 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.

¹⁰⁰² Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 June 1900, p. 38.

¹⁰⁰³ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1896-1907, 21/1900, BCDG 12200/1b, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Thames Hospital, Fees Register 1910-1912, entries for 29 March 1911, 5 April 1911, YCAH A431/73, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Death Certificate of Richard Thomas Jansen, 5 April 1911, 1911/2624, BDM.

¹⁰⁰⁶ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 February 1891, p. 18.

Some one 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.¹⁰⁰⁷

In this case, an innocent explanation was provided, but in other cases such explanations were not published, although the appearance 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,¹⁰⁰⁸ 'was the father of twins'.¹⁰⁰⁹ As Kalman was unmarried, and remained so,¹⁰¹⁰ this was scandalous; but the local newspaper was in a position to know whether it 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 local residents, but would hide their blushes from others.

Presumably the O.M. and his informants normally attempted to be accurate, but they appear to have exaggerated the 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 the interaction was quite 'innocent' and the old love remained constant. 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'.¹⁰¹¹ G. soon clarified her preferences: 'G. says she likes the little tailor better than all the "roses" '.¹⁰¹² 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)

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Te Aroha Miner*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 19 February 1881, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰⁸ See *New Zealand Gazette*, 18 October 1883, p. 1518, 14 August 1884, p. 1260; District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 4 February 1885, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 9 February 1884, p. 2.

¹⁰¹⁰ Index to Marriages, 1880-1920, BDM.

¹⁰¹¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 April 1893, p. 17.

¹⁰¹² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 May 1893, p. 21.

to be believed? That 'L.B. is getting the greatest lady-killer in Te Aroha'¹⁰¹³ may be how he or his friends portrayed 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'.¹⁰¹⁴ It was notable that he did not report the behaviour of married couples (unless hinting at 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 should be used with care, and cross-referenced with other sources wherever possible. And, after all the checking of sources to discover what was going on and who was who, nothing startling was revealed, just behaviour, both good and bad, common throughout the Western 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.

¹⁰¹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 June 1893, p. 22.

¹⁰¹⁴ 'Waiorongomia', *Observer*, 26 September 1891, p. 21.



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.