

EIGHTY-FIRST
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATIONS



*Celebrating the Re-union
of
Players and Supporters*

From

1876—1957

81 Years

P I R O N G I A F O O T B A L L C L U B

PIRONGIA FOOTBALL CLUB

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Acknowledgements

It is a great pity that, like many local clubs, a more comprehensive and detailed account has not been kept, of the activities and records of Rugby Football.

We are indebted to the very retentive memories of some of the "Old Timers"—and those not so old—and to Mr Arthur C. Swan's, "History of New Zealand Rugby Football", for the information supplied. We trust that this small souvenir booklet, though in no sense complete, will bring back happy memories to many.

R. I. BELL,
G. LYNCH

*They came from every calling,
Every creed, and every class;
Drawn by love of Rugby
Which we hope will never pass.
From the farm, from the factory,
From the school and from the store;
All were represented there—
Churches, medicine and law.*

Anniversary

Programme

Saturday, July 20th

COMMENCING AT 10 a.m.

—:—

- 10.00 a.m.: Pirongia 8th Grade Match.
- 10.30 a.m.: Pirongia 7th Grade Match.
- 11.10 a.m.: Pirongia 6th Grade Match.
During the day, in keeping with the occasion, a hangi will be prepared on the grounds.
- 12.30 p.m.: Pirongia Juniors v. St. Pat's Juniors.
- 1.35 p.m.: Parade of all Past and Present Players, Members and Supporters, led by the Te Awamutu and District Highland Pipe Band.
- 2.00 p.m.: Pirongia Seniors versus Chaupo.
- 7.00 p.m.: Grand Dinner to be followed by a Social and Dance.

SUNDAY, JULY 21st

- 12.30 p.m.: Pirongia Juniors v. Karamu Juniors.
- 2.00 p.m.: Harlequins v. Te Awamutu.

+ Rugby in the Early Days

Organised Rugby Football in Alexandra, now Pirongia, had its birth in the year 1876 according to an extract from "The History of New Zealand Rugby Football" by A. C. Swan—

"During May, Alexandra Club was founded at Alexandra. Alexandra is the old name of Pirongia; the club changed its name to Pirongia in 1895."

"Alexandra and Te Awamutu clubs met at Alexandra on September 2nd, 1876, Te Awamutu club winning by two goals to nil. The report of the match in The Waikato Times dated September 5th included—

"The ball being kicked off the struggle began in earnest. Te Awamutu playing well and keeping the ball close to Alexandra's goal line. Heels were put where heads ought to be and many had the pleasure of a shower bath in the pools of water."

"The return match between the Alexandra Club and Te Awamutu Club took place at Te Awamutu on September 16th. Te Awamutu again winning, this time by one goal and three tries to nil.

"Waikato fielded a representative side—the first in Waikato history—in July, 1876, a team being sent to Auckland to play two matches. Drawn games with Auckland combined clubs on July 15th and Grafton-Ponsonby on July 17th, provided Waikato immense satisfaction."

The Waikato XV was as follows—

C. C. WOOD (Hamilton)	J. H. W. WOOD (Hamilton)
E. B. COX (Hamilton)	A. E. WHITTAKER (Hamilton)
A. E. COX (Hamilton)	— BEAUCHAMP (Hamilton)
— FORBES (Alexandra)	A. BEALE (Hamilton)
N. J. HUNT (Hamilton)	— CULPAN (Te Awamutu)
— PARKER (Cambridge)	O. F. PILLING (Hamilton)
	— FERGUSON (Cambridge)

Hamilton, Cambridge, Te Awamutu, and Alexandra were the only Waikato clubs in existence at this time.

WHEN WE CONQUERED . . .

To the best of our knowledge, the first Pirongia team to win the Championship was the 1923 team. Then came an era which could be called the most successful in the field of play. 1924 saw Pirongia again annex the Championship trophy.

During the 1925 season we won the Championship for the third time with the Insurance and Ballastite Cups also falling to our lot. 1926 was another triumphant season, the Championship, Nation Trophy and Binnie Cup being won. During this period we could boast of as many as nine of our players at one time taking the field for the Waipa Representative team.

It was in 1935 whilst playing as Suburbs, with Ohaupo and Kihikibi districts included, that the Championship was once again won.

1938 saw only a junior team in the competition. They were successful in not only winning the Championship, but also the Doyle Cup.

The following season, 1939, we were back in the senior grade and won the Championship. During this year, however, two of the Union's top teams, Rovers and Te Awamutu, played in the Hamilton Stag Trophy.

Following World War II, in 1945 we fielded a junior team which won both the Championship and Doyle Cup.

The year 1947 saw an amalgamation with Rovers Club, which terminated at the commencement of the 1951 season. During this period the junior team of 1947 was successful in winning the Championship and Doyle Cup. The senior team of 1949 won the Championship. Of this side nine represented Te Awamutu Sub-Union in Finlay Cup teams and four played in the Waikato side. We were also represented in the North Island team in the annual inter-Island fixture.

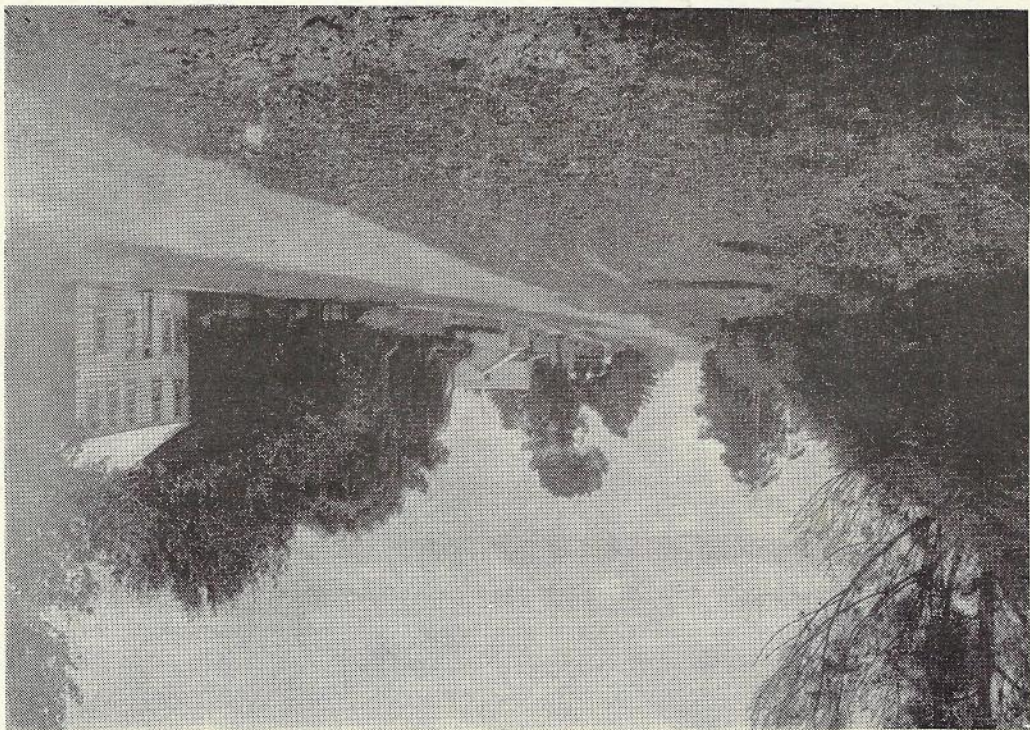
In 1953 season, we again won the Championship together with the Knock-out and Brown Cups.

This is a somewhat incomplete survey owing to the fact that records are not available and we offer our apologies to any team that won a trophy throughout the seasons but failed to receive recognition here.

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"25" Line or Goal Line?

It was only a few years ago when the last line of defence took a high ball on his twenty-five yard line in the face of the oncoming forwards. Did he waver? NO! He touched down for a drop out.



ALEXANDRA — (Pirongia) 1870

(Foreground) — ROYAL EXCHANGE HOTEL (Mr Asmuss)

STEPPED IN HISTORY

Pirongia nestles at the foot of the bush-clad mountain of that name, cut off from the lower slopes by the picturesque Waipa river. The visitor entering Pirongia by the Te Awamutu road, cannot fail to be greatly impressed by the tranquility and beauty of this historical township.

This early frontier post at one stage was the largest settlement in the Waikato, boasting during the 1870 to 1880 period no

fewer than three hotels, court-house, bank, resident doctor, baker, butcher, two general stores, gunsmith, blacksmith, shoemaker, saddler, churches, public hall, public library and Masonic Lodge.

The township sections were surveyed in 1864 over a wide area taking in both sides of the river. Originally the Main Trunk railway was surveyed to run through Alexandra. However, for reasons best known to the then authorities, it was re-surveyed to run through Te Awamutu.

Alexandra was made memorable in history by such stirring episodes as Mahuki's Raid in 1883; King Tawhiao's surrender of arms to Major Mair in 1883; Major Heaphy earned the first V.C. awarded to a colonial soldier; General Cameron laid siege to Paterangi Pa and Sir George Grey's meeting with King Tawhiao whose settlement comprising approximately three thousand natives was situated across the river at Whatiwathioe.

Following the cessation of hostilities between Maori and Pakeha, the armed constabulary was no longer necessary and was disbanded. This fact, together with the railway re-survey going through Te Awamutu, brought about a steady decline in the once thriving township. It is only in recent years that Pirongia has begun to make progress again, more steady than spectacular.

Though robbed of most of its commercial importance, nothing can steal away the charm of its setting or blot out the pages of its romance.

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"Sixty Years Ago"

*We rode to Karanu to Otorohanga
 Thirty-five miles if not a bit longer,
 To play on a patch of moulded potatoes
 Invaded by a batch of Wahine spectators.
 "Pork and Puhā" those barrackers cried,
 And banged kerosene tins to help their side
 And drown the whistle of the referee,
 Who was renowned for his diplomacy.
 From Opatau to Kihikihi we played
 And often with victory's accolade.*

—: :—

Team Spirit of Yesteryear

The player, who many years ago when in possession on half-way, stepped out of a tackle only to lose his trousers, then carried on undaunted to score under the posts, really earnt those three points. Acknowledgement

To Kawhia in the 'Nineties

Before the turn of the century, a Pirongia team and supporters left for Kawhia on horse-back, to ride over trackless country and ford many streams.

Following the game, a dinner was partaken of in the boarding house overlooking a steep bluff, during which a local school master renowned for his fiery temper made a speech extolling the virtues of rugby as a game of true sportsmanship where man was taught to control his temper. Within minutes of completing his speech, our schoolmaster reformer saw fit to disapprove the presence of one of the guests and a wholesale brawl developed.

Many contestants, full of good cheer no doubt, ended up rolling over the bluff to the beach below. Being in no state to scramble back up, they were eliminated from the contest. About daybreak one of the party happened to go outside and beheld the housemaid astride one end of a keg, with a full glass in each hand, enjoying life to the full. Opposite her was a Pirongia player sharing her pleasure (s) ???

Impartial Line Umpire!

We remember not so very long ago at Albert Park, when one of our players, relegated to line umpire for the day through a former injury, became rather involved with the referee and a section of opposing supporters, not to mention the opposing players. The score was very close and tempers were at times rather more than strained, when a heated ruck formed near the sideline. It was too much for our linesman, who charged in as the sixteenth man, brandishing the flags. The results were a broken flag, one of our opponents with a sore head, a series of loud, long whistle blasts from the referee and the replacement of one line umpire.

Impartiality is a pre-requisite of a good line umpire, they tell us.

It's a Goal!

He was playing in his first match and trying to impress the "locals". The forwards drove down the centre of the field and kicked ahead. Ten yards from the goalline "he" swooped on the ball with an open paddock, and steadying himself, punted over the bar.

The day the opposing winger tore down the touch-line, looking a certainty, only to be brought down by one of the dear old ladies with her umbrella handle, proves the maxim that we are always tough to beat on the home track.

Staunch Support

The boys were playing on the home track. It was wet.

"Let me see," said the short lady to the large man in front.

However, the large man was oblivious to her presence and shouted: "Drop the b—. Drop the b—."

"I'll drop you if you don't let me see," hissed the lady. The umbrella swung high to descend squarely on the large man's head; he staggered sideways and the lady shot through the gap just in time to see the boys cross for a try.

"They're over," she screamed.

"No credit to her I am not too," grumbled the large man as he shuffled off to locate a more peaceful spot on the ground.

Famous Last Words

Have you heard this before? "They are no friends of ours, kick 'em off the paddock. If you can see THAT much of the ball (holding the butt end of the lace between thumb and fore-finger) boot the Rake! rake! rake! rake! Drive! drive! More life Black!

She Sacrificed in the Cause!

We believe that during the mid-twenties the home side was playing a match during which the opposing half-back had his trousers torn so badly that a replacement pair was required. Unfortunately, gear that day was very scarce, but our visiting half was not to be denied. Hastily he left the field to return shortly afterwards resplendent in a vivid red garment belonging to a member of the fairer sex.

He Made the Extra Man

Hori was selected to play in the forwards, but spent all his time roaming among the backs. The skipper's eye lit on him.

"What the blazes are you doing out there?" he snarled.

"She right, boy, I play third five-eighths," replied Hori.

AUTOGRAPHS



A TEAM AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Back row: R. CARNACHAN, R. EDWARDS, J. PAPESCH, W. SMITH, H. HODGSON
Second row: J. HARPER, W. ROBINSON, D. BRUCE (captain), M. SUTHERLAND,
 T. MANUKAU, J. MAWHINNEY
In front: K. TAMAKI, E. ROBINSON
Standing: A. SMITH, R. STEELE

