



DESPATCHES

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUEEN'S REDOUBT TRUST

ISSN 2324-5271

HISTORY AS A COMPULSORY SUBJECT ON THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM



Queen's Redoubt Trustee, Matthew Dean (a descendant of the Helenslee migrants) speaking to a group of students from Pokeno School. Behind them is part of the re-constructed West wall of the Redoubt



Pokeno School students looking over west wall of Queen's Redoubt. 2022.

Education Centre behind

INTRODUCTORY TALK TO VISITING GROUPS

The core of this article is the talk given to all groups who visit the Queen's Redoubt Education Centre. It is mostly aimed at the secondary student level but is revised when we speak to Primary students, or adults / overseas visitors.

The intention of this preliminary talk to visiting groups is not to tell them a lot about the detail of the New Zealand Wars, because the teachers and other leaders of the groups are usually a lot more qualified to do this. Instead we want to tell you why Queen's Redoubt is very important in this part of New Zealand's history.

You have come here today because you are studying the New Zealand Wars, why they occurred and their long term consequences. This is a good place to begin that study, for Queen's Redoubt was one of the most important sites during the wars. Our intent here is to summarise all the NZ Wars (1844-1872) but the emphasis is on, arguably, the most important part of that war, the invasion of the Waikato (1863-64). To do this, the Queen's Redoubt Trust has established this education centre so anyone -students, adults and overseas visitors can learn about the Wars and their impact on New Zealand history.

When it was built in 1862 the Redoubt was one of the earliest European structures in Pokeno and was probably the largest temporary construction built by the British Army while it was in New Zealand. The model in the centre of the displays is as accurate as the available information allows. The Redoubt was 100 yards square (91.4 x 91.4 metres). It contained 27 buildings and a parade ground. Buildings included barracks for up to 400 men, quarters for most officers, regimental offices, meeting rooms, commissariat stores and a hospital, divided into two wards. Queen's Redoubt was not only the launch point for the invasion of the Waikato, but also served as a transit camp, for both men and stores proceeding to the front. As they transited through large number of men were housed outside the redoubt in tents some of which can be seen in the large photograph over the door to this building. Also to be accommodated were the drays and waggons

to cart the supplies and the horses and oxen to pull them.

There had been discussions between Governor Grey, General Cameron and the settler government for many months before the invasion began. But when it did, it was rapid. On 9 July 1863 the governor issued an edict that all Maori, living north of the Waikato river at Mangatawhiri, must swear an oath of allegiance to Queen Victoria or move to the south of the line. Most went south, but the Governor and the army did not give them much time to decide, for the Waikato invasion began less than three days later, when men from the 12th and 14th Regiments of the British army marched out of the west gate of the redoubt, and crossed the Mangatawhiri Stream from the Naval Camp on the night of the 11/12 July.

We now understand that the invasion of the Waikato in 1863 was an unjustified land grab, mainly driven by the British settler's insatiable demand for land. So the focus at this Education Centre is on the Invasion of the Waikato (1863-64), in our opinion the most significant event of all the New Zealand wars, resulting as it did in the unjustified seizure of much of the Maori land in the Waikato. The invasion of the Waikato began from this redoubt and its impact is still being felt today. Although serious efforts have been made over the last few decades, through the Waitangi Tribunal, to make redress for the losses suffered by the Maori, the consequences of the invasion will be felt by all New Zealanders for a long time to come.

Queen's Redoubt is an important archaeological site and we have only just begun to uncover its secrets. One of these is the beginning of the cobbled road which ran from the west gate to east gate. We did not use a sophisticated method to locate it. Instead a combination of haymaking and dry weather revealed numerous rocks protruding through the soil surface, and these revealed its location.

If you look closely at the photograph over the entrance door you will notice that at the NW and SE corners of the Redoubt have a building on the projecting bastion. These are blockhouses built to shelter

soldiers defending the trenches along the two sides visible to those men. We are reconstructing one of these, which should be complete by the end of this year. Read about this on the next page.

We had begun receiving groups here in 2020, when the displays were more or less completed, but the onset of Covid stopped visits, and it was not until May this year that school groups could begin visiting again. We have been gratified with the response; since May about 1000 visitors have paid a visit to the Education Centre. While most of these have been school groups, others included people from Probus, Girl Guides, NZ Army, the NZ History Federation and casual groups. These non-school groups make up about 12% of the total visitors. While most visitors are from Auckland and Waikato, some have come from as far afield as Waiouru, Wellington and the South Island. To date we have not deliberately advertised the programme but, as it becomes more widely known, we expect numbers to dramatically increase. In fact this surge is likely to come next year for it is then that New Zealand history becomes a compulsory subject in our schools.

Which brings us to a real problem. The Trustees and a few other volunteers carry the burden of operating the Education Centre. We are few and getting older so more help is sorely needed. If you are interested in New Zealand history and can spare a few hours, especially on a Sunday, we would love to hear from you.

If you wish to bring a group to visit, there are a few things we would ask you to do. You can visit at any time but need to make arrangements to do so with Peter Moy, the Trustee who manages visits. Please make contact well in advance, to be sure you can arrange a date and time that suits you.

The Education Centre is not very large and will only accommodate a maximum of about 40 people, so if your group is larger, they may have to be split, half inside and half out; discuss how this might be done with Peter. We are a voluntary group so there is no charge but we do appreciate a koha. The amount is over to you but for your guidance we suggest about \$2.00 for each person. You can leave this with Peter at the end of your visit.

Peter Moy & Ian Barton

Peter Moy's contact details are:

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RECONSTRUCTION OF A BLOCKHOUSE ON THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF QUEEN'S REDOUBT

THE QUEEN'S REDOUBT BLOCKHOUSE PROJECT

An integral part of the defences of Queen's Redoubt were two timber blockhouses built on the protruding bastions in the NW and SE corners of the redoubt. They would have enabled the soldiers on guard duty to fire along the ditches in the unlikely event of a direct attack. The main evidence of their form and construction is in the 1863 D.M Beere photograph of the redoubt. (below right) They were roofed with corrugated iron and clad with vertically placed boards in which hatches and loopholes were cut. Loop-holes are small angled slots in a wall to allow defenders to fire out while not exposing themselves to fire. The other essential element of a blockhouse is 'bullet-proofing'. This was achieved by filling the wall cavities filled with rammed earth, sand or rock to increase their bullet stopping capability. Only one of the two original corner bastions, viz. the SE one is within the Queen's Redoubt property. Judging from the D M Beere photo, it occupied most the extent of the bastion- an area of c 7.5 x 3.5m, and was c4m high at the gable-ridge. There are no records of what happened to the blockhouses after the military left. They were not among the buildings listed for sale and removal in March 1867 (Barton and Ritchie) Most likely they were demolished by later landowners and the materials reused



in other buildings. There is no evidence that the Queen's Redoubt bastion blockhouses were lived in. but only three, and very different, blockhouses, survive in New Zealand; the Queen's Redoubt Trust decided to build a replica to 'fill the gap' in the SE corner, and to interpret their role. Two archaeological investigations (1999, 2009) revealed no signs of any post holes, so it is assumed the Queen's Redoubt blockhouses rested on bearers sitting on the ground (Barton and Ritchie 2021, p 118) The replica also sits on bearers.

When completed the replica will have some features found in blockhouses including a water barrel, a firing step, and shutters to cover the loopholes. A paper, "The Social History of Blockhouses in New Zealand" (N Ritchie -in press) is being prepared for publication. Information from this research will be used to create interpretive material about blockhouses. The interpretative devices in the blockhouse will include five panels (in the cavities between the studs and the noggins) showing the materials commonly used for bullet-proofing viz. bricks, sand, rock, rammed earth and timber. Most blockhouses had vertical loopholes but some were horizontal. The QR blockhouse will have examples of both types .

N Ritchie



TOP: Blockhouse, almost complete, Nov 2022

MIDDLE: Trench and footprint of blockhouse. 2008.

BOTTOM: Photograph of Queen's Redoubt, 1863. (Beere) SE blockhouse is pale building at end of dark redoubt wall in mid centre of photo.

References (both articles)

Barton & Ritchie 2021. History of Queen's Redoubt and the Invasion of the Waikato. Atuanui Press.

Ritchie (*In press*) The Social History of Blockhouses in New Zealand"

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PURPOSE OF THE TRUST

The Queen's Redoubt Trust was established in February 1999 with the intention of acquiring this nationally significant historic place and ensuring its protection; with the long term vision to restore and develop the site into a nationally recognised visitor attraction and education centre. In February 2001 the Trust completed the first major phase of the project, raising the funds to acquire the property in Pokeno which contains much of the site of the Queen's Redoubt.

OBJECTIVES of the TRUST

1. To acquire the Queen's Redoubt site at Pokeno to preserve it for future generations.
2. To make Queen's Redoubt accessible to the public by development and interpretation of the site as appropriate.
3. To restore the massive earthwork 'ditch and bank' walls of the fort (they were leveled after the war) as a key interpretive feature.
4. To promote education about the Queen's Redoubt and all the New Zealand Wars between Maori and European.
5. To establish a premier visitor and educational facility on the Queen's Redoubt site. This will be carried out in conjunction with an archaeological excavation programme to maximize knowledge of the site for future exhibition and interpretation purposes, and to promote public participation in the project. At the same time, historical research will continue into Queen's Redoubt itself, the Pokeno District, the Waikato Campaign of 1863-64 and the New Zealand Wars as a whole.

F r i e n d s o f Q u e e n ' s R e d o u b t

Early in 2013 the Trust resolved to formally set up a group to be known as the "Friends of Queen's Redoubt". A membership database has been set up and anyone with an interest in the work of the Trust is invited to join.

Current membership fees are \$25 for individuals, \$35 for families, \$40 for Historical organizations and \$60 for Commercial organizations; all inclusive of GST.

Please post a completed application form and deposit the amount in our bank account:- **12 3022 0397102 00** with your Surname as reference.

**I Barton, Queen's Redoubt Trust
P O Box 26
POKENO 2440**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Given Name:

Surname:

Address:

Telephone:

Email address

Membership Category:

Individual \$25

Family \$35

Historic
Organization \$40

Commercial
Organization \$60

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EDUCATION CENTRE -OPENING TIMES

Every Sunday 10 am until 2 pm, OR by arrangement

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