

# Whakarewarewa

## Living a Guided Life

Synopsis - Liberec 2022



### Background:

The exhibitor has a familial relationship with the subject and collected the material to provide knowledge to his children and other family members. With the Maori community not having a history of portraiture sometimes the only image available of tupuna (ancestors) are those that appeared as postcards; this is particularly true of those who deceased prior to the 1950's.

The entry comprises approx. 160 postcards and other related material which outlines the development of tourism and associated community within the Whakarewarewa geothermal area near Rotorua, New Zealand.

Postcards bearing images of the region, its Maori community and their culture were produced almost as soon as they became a legal postal media in New Zealand (1902). They have continued to be produced to the current day. **The exhibit deliberately ends its coverage in the 1950's when images associated with Whakarewarewa began to be more commonly marketed under the generic themes of "Maori" or "Rotorua".**

There were a number of photographers and printers associated with the trade in these cards, including (for a number of years at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century) a group who based themselves in shared premises at Whakarewarewa. They produced a large range of commercial images on postcard but were also engaged in producing cards that captured special events (ie Royal tours, important guests) or personalised photos sold to tourists.

Postcards were important publicity for key individuals, particularly the women who acted as guides in the scenic reserve, and the sale of them also augmented their income.

### Treatment:

The social nature of the exhibit covers the history of the community and tourism development at Whakarewarewa, the geothermal wonders, the cultural activities and the key personnel (the guides) involved in showing tourist groups safely through the whole experience.

**Where known, when a particular image was used in more than the basic postcard form, or by more than one producer, this information is recorded. Additional media (principally cigarette cards or collectable vignettes) are shown in the exhibit when the image is also used on a postcard.**

In total the non-philatelic material comprises;

4 non-postcard related photos, 5 vignettes (postcard images printed in a smaller collectable card size and sold as souvenirs in packets of 8 – 10), 2 stereoscope cards, 4 cigarette cards and 1 QSL card.

### Card Knowledge:

The knowledge of card printing methodology, the photographer (where known), the printer and an estimate of production date are captured for all cards. This is printed in a blue font.

The exhibitor, despite extensive efforts, has been unable to locate any information on print numbers, a major factor in this being the loss of the Rotorua Council building and local archives to fire in the 1960's.

## **Subject Knowledge**

The exhibitor has been able to draw on a number of sources in developing their subject knowledge.

There are surprisingly few books written about the subject, so the exhibitor has drawn their knowledge from

- papers submitted as part of *Tiriti o Waitangi* grievance settlement claims,
- newspapers (NZ's *Papers Past* & Australia's *Trove* online publications),
- Makereti's (Guide "Maggie") personal archive in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford and
- interviews with Maori elders (especially Guides "Bubbles" Mihinui, Chris Gardiner, Bella Gray, Rangirauaka Puku and Karangi Daniels) and the management of Whakarewarewa Village Tours.

## **Research:**

The exhibitor has written an article on the specially commissioned postcards issued in association with the Coronation Tour of 1911 (published in *Postcard Pillar*) and has recently had an article on a similar series commissioned in association with an earlier tour to Sydney accepted for publication in *Postcard Pillar* in 2021 - 2022.

He has also supported the author of *The Hot Lakes Guides*, with images and critique of his book pre publishing.

## **Condition:**

The material is fine to very fine, often being best available.

## **Rarity:**

The exhibitor has arguably one of the two largest and most complete collections that focus specifically on this subject, so considers rare cards as being those where they have recorded less than 5 examples in 30+ years of collecting.

Additionally, cards signed on the image by the person shown or with personal messages from Makereti (Guide Maggie), a leading figure in the development of guiding at Whakarewarewa, are treated as rare. Makereti signed a lot of cards but only occasionally would write personalised messages.

The exhibit highlights are:

- 3 sample prints, produced by postcard photographers to market an image. These include one where no postcard was ever produced as the image was adjudged to be inappropriate.
- 3 cards commissioned by Makereti to support the marketing of groups touring Australia and the UK (the subject of articles by the exhibitor)
- 6 personalised cards, where very limited numbers (usually 6 – 12 cards) were produced, and
- 20 cards, which are the only examples recorded by the exhibitor in 30+ years of collecting.

Rare items are highlighted with an off-gold matt.

Please enjoy the exhibit.

# Whakarewarewa

## Living a guided life

**PURPOSE:** This exhibit seeks to guide the viewer through the development of tourism at Whakarewarewa, a village in New Zealand. It utilises postcards to show the development and the people involved in this successful Maori business, from it's infancy in the 1880's through to the mid 1950's.

In the 1880's tourism in the Bay of Plenty region of New Zealand was largely centred on Tarawera and the world famous Pink & White Terraces, where the local Maori had an offering for visitors including guided tours, food and a cultural experience. The 1886 eruption of the Tarawera volcano changed all that. The Pink & White Terraces and tourism infrastructure were destroyed, buried under volcanic ash.

Experienced guides from Tarawera moved to the nearby Whakarewarewa village and thermal reserve which was unaffected by the eruption enhancing the development of tours there. Whakarewarewa quickly became the number one tourist attraction of the region. However, tourists weren't just drawn to the thermal wonders - the opportunity to view daily 'native' life proved irresistible for many.

Tourism became a staple of the village economy, remaining so until today. It was an *iwi* (tribal) and *whanau* (family) business, developed prior to NZ Government involvement, employing mainly women of the Tuhourangi and Ngati Wahiao *iwi* who passed on their skills and knowledge to their daughters.

The early period of its tourism development took place during the early 1900's, when postcards were a cheap and effective way of advertising and communicating with friends and family. Events and personalities at Whakarewarewa continued to be so recorded throughout the period, although by the 1950's Whakarewarewa's unique identity was becoming lost within that of "Rotorua" or wider Maoridom.

Much of the knowledge exhibited is derived from personal research including interviews with *kaumatua* and *kuia* (male and female elders). The exhibitor has written articles on the subject, published in NZ's *Postcard Pillar*, and has supplied images for use by *Whakarewarewa – the Living Maori Village* (the tourism arm of Tuhourangi-Ngati Wahiao) and in John Cresswell's book *The Hot Lakes Guides*.

**PHILATELIC TREATMENT:** Rare items (privately produced cards, commercial cards where <5 copies are known by the exhibitor or signed cards with a personal message) have a red matt. Social info is recorded in a blue font.

### PLAN

Frame/Page No.

- |    |                               |      |
|----|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. | TARAWERA – the forerunner     | 1/2  |
| 2. | EARLY DAYS AT WHAKAREWAREWA   | 1/9  |
| 3. | VILLAGE ON THE NATIVE RESERVE | 2/5  |
| 4. | MAORI CULTURE                 | 2/9  |
| 5. | THE THERMAL RESERVE           | 2/14 |
| 6. | PAKEHA INVOLVEMENT            | 3/6  |
| 7. | THE PRINCIPLES OF GUIDING     | 4/1  |
| 8. | THE GUIDES                    | 4/9  |
| 9. | PUBLICITY AND PROSPERITY      | 5/11 |



A collector's card showing a scene also commonly available as a postcard from Whakarewarewa  
Tanner Couch Ltd. series, c 1940

### Bibliography

- The Hot Lakes Guides*, John Cresswell, MF Printer & L. Ion (2008)
- Makereti: taking Maori to the world*, Paul Diamond, Random House New Zealand (2007)
- Maori and Tourism (Taupo – Rotorua), 1840 – 1970*, Cybele Locke, C.F.R.Trust (2004)
- "Wish You Were Here" – The Story of NZ Postcards*, Main & Jackson, NZ Postcard Society (2004)
- Carved Histories*, Roger Neich, Auckland University Press (2001)
- Guide Rangi of Rotorua*, Rangitihia Denny, Whitcombe & Tombs (1968)