

**IN
GOOD
FAITH**

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MARIE READ

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FOREWORD

This book has been a joy and a challenge to write. My journey of discovery into the times and lives of these real people has been a roller-coaster ride between heartbreak at their setbacks and celebration of their achievements. It was also a revelation to discover just how much they were at the mercy of not only the harsh conditions, but also governmental bureaucracy throughout their lives, particularly those who were indentured migrants.

Charles Ernest Peters' death whilst still in Trentham Military Camp (about a month after World War One's end), was probably the most distressing event to write about. The impression I was left with was how under-valued these four hundred precious young men were and the dreadful impacts their loss had on families. They were not 'cannon-fodder' – they died on home soil as completely preventable deaths.

My objective initially was to find out more about my own heritage. In doing so, I began to see these forebears as real people, facing challenges and dilemmas I could only imagine. It was a privilege to bring to life those folk who were brave enough to journey to New Zealand and to write about their daily lives as realistically as possible.

Accuracy of events, place names and characters are for the most part real. Some things, however, just could not be confirmed, thus a scenario was created in order to provide believable links to what was known. An example is that there is no evidence that Rossetta Harrietta Wells worked in a florist shop at the Port of Lyttleton, but Richard Groombridge Butt did have a daily coastal run to O'Kains Bay. Thus, a meeting place was created which provided opportunity for these two people to form a friendship leading to real-life marriage.

Suzanne from CopyPress, summed it up beautifully by describing this book as a 'fact-based historical novel'. She was spot-on. I also

am indebted to her for the lay-out and cover design. She has given it the exact sympathetic treatment I envisaged and I feel it portrays the content excellently.

Finally, I want to say again, how indebted we are to those who undertook the task of leaving established homes, villages and cities in societies they were familiar with (and which were for the most part civilised) and set out on a journey of discovery and hardship.

They showed admirable fortitude and courage and passed on these attributes to subsequent generations. New Zealanders have, in general, a number 8 wire mentality, a can-do, D.I.Y. attitude for which we are well known.

This is my story. I am confident that many readers will have their own that is very, very similar. Maybe some will be inspired to sit down and trace their ancestors' footsteps, and enjoy the sense of discovery and delight in turning their journeys into wonderful novels.

Marie Read

April 2024

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I decided to write this book in four parts in order to define the backgrounds and origins of each family group of settlers, and to enable readers to flip back as they progressed through the novel to re-establish the relationships and connections between the main characters. Each part deals primarily with a central character, their achievements (or otherwise), their families and the challenges faced as settlers of New Zealand in the nineteenth century.

Some helpful criticism from readers of the draft has drawn my attention to the fact that each part in itself did not leave them with a satisfactory conclusion, and they met new families who did not appear to have a relationship with prior people or events. Where possible I maintained a thread to lead you into meeting your new main characters. I wanted to illustrate the difference in backgrounds of these pioneers to provide in some way an understanding of the enormity of the transition they experienced. I also wanted to draw attention to the impact industrialisation had on working people in Europe and Great Britain during the Industrial Revolution. My advice is, keep reading, look back at how the lives of these characters and families are all inter-woven, and, when you reach the almost present day, it will all make sense. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION

A short story relating to the arrival of the first horse in New Zealand

Wellington Harbour, Circa 1805

The Captain, pipe clenched between his teeth, peered into the churning water below.

“Christ!” he thought. “I hope the bloody thing can swim!” He turned back to the activity on the deck, removed his pipe, and barked an order. “Lower away boys! Steady! Steady with those ropes! Don’t wanna lose the gang-way at this stage!”

Charlie Burns held a frayed piece of rope, one end knotted around a neck. He cajoled the animal closer to the narrow gang-plank hatch, an opening on the port side of the upper deck.

The plank slid away steeply into the sea, steadied in the tumult as best as could be by skivvies on either side. The animal balked. It feebly attempted to sidestep the small opening. Charlie lined him up with the narrow gap.

“C’mon, you dogs!” yelled the Captain to those gawping. “Give ’im a push. Naw! Not too ’ard. We want ’im alive, after all!”

Unable to resist, the horse was shoved through the gap, lost its footing on the steep, slippery planks and rolled off under the side ropes, plunging into the surf.

The impressive reception committee emerged from the bush on the foreshore just as this terrifying, plunging creature emerged from the depths. Driven by instinct, it half-swam, half-leapt towards them.

They dropped their taiaha and fled in fear, terrified.

Shouts of “Te Taniwha! Te Taniwha!” carried back to the trading

vessel as the horse struggled from the water and lay down on the beach.

The Captain was rowed ashore through the choppy sea. A rower cast his oar aside, leaped from the dinghy and secured the horse by the rope still attached to his neck. The exhausted animal struggled to its feet and stood; skinny, shivering, and dripping rivulets of seawater, beside him.

The Chief and his escorts, observing the control the man had over the beast, recovered from their terror and emerged from the bush again. Embarrassed, they picked up their abandoned weapons and stood in ranked formation.

“Kaore Te Taniwha,” the Chief intoned. The Trader Captain exclaimed at this new word and held up his hands. “Horse.” He waved his arms towards the bedraggled animal. “This is a horse. For you. A gift from England ... to an honoured Chief.”

“Aaahh. Hoiho,” echoed the Chief, and in a show of bravado approached and tremulously touched the beast. With a burst of confidence he indicated with much arm-waving that he’d like a closer look.

Charlie Burns, who’d tried to keep his distance from the fearsome warriors, was pulled forward to assist with looking at the features of the horse. His mouth and ears were inspected, his hooves and feet were lifted and hands explored his legs. Finally satisfied, the chief wanted to see some action.

Again Charlie, the lad who had cared for the horse on the voyage, was summoned forward. He easily vaulted onto the horse’s back and loped a little way along the beach. When he returned, it was time for the chief to have a go. He had waited long enough. He had something to prove, to restore his ‘mana’.

The Chief started sedately, but within a few minutes discovered that kicking increased the speed. With greater acceleration came

greater daring and fun. Soon the chief's supporters also wanted a turn and also enjoyed the thrill of galloping on a beach. The horse staggered and resisted as best he could. A stick was produced for renewed encouragement.

It did not end well. The horse did not have the physical reserves for this level of exercise after his arduous three months and seventeen days voyage from Plymouth, England.

As the almost last rider was about to mount him for his gallop, the horse gave a tremendous bray-like scream and reared over backwards. He lay on the sand, lifeless.

The onlookers were aghast. The Captain could not believe this turn of events. They had had a difficult task keeping it alive during the dangerous trip, especially when they were becalmed for three weeks in the Doldrums. Food and water for it had been carefully managed, but it had still lost weight.

The Captain knelt in the sand at the horse's head. He passed an open palm over the big brown eye. Nothing. He did it again. Unblinking.

"He's dead," he said. "Your horse is dead."

"Aww. Kamate?" queried the Chief. "Te hoiho kamate?"

He looked down at the inert beast. The warriors shuffled in the sand, waiting for his decision.

Abruptly he made a move. Stepping forward, the Chief saluted the Captain and seamen by raising and shaking his Taiaha. Unceremoniously, he turned away and with his escort, disappeared back into the bush.

Charlie Burns, who, at just twelve years old, had fed, watered and groomed the horse in preparation for this auspicious event, sat on the sand with the horse's heavy head in his lap. Gently he closed the eyelids and swept the forelock neatly between the ears, enjoying the feel of the soft mane one last time. A fat tear rolled down his grimy cheek.

“I’m sorry,” he murmured. “Dinna know that was gonna hap ... forgive Charlie ... Charlie sorry ... ”

“Charlie!” Broke through his musing ... “Charlie! We’re waiting! Can’t wait any longer in this God-forsaken place!” commanded the Captain.

Thus the first horse in New Zealand arrived and died on the same day, the carcass being left to rot on the sands of a Petone beach.

PART ONE



CHAPTER ONE

The Scots

1840

“**L**a-a-and A-Hoy! La-a-aand A-Hoy!” came the long-awaited cry from the crow’s nest. “And thank the Good Lord for small mercies,” the lookout muttered to himself, rubbing the feeling back into his arms and legs. “Me bits and pieces are about to blutty fall orf after bein’ crumpled in this wee pot!”

Below him excitement blossomed into frenzied activity. Women lifted their kiddies up to the rail hoping to get a glimpse of landfall. Although they could not sight Port Nicholson yet, some passengers began to wave their scarves or hankies towards where they expected it to be. Others took off their bonnets and held them up into the wind by their ribbons. Anticipation made the women breathless, amid a floating field of colour.

Those in steerage were alerted to all the tramping and bustling on deck, and felt an enormous surge of relief at the thought of deliverance from the stinking, stale, cramped and cluttered space below decks.

The barque *Blenheim* sailed on.

Its sturdy but somewhat rough and ready oaken and pine timbers creaked under the weight of the rigging and the bustling activity of those on board, so eager to get off. They had embarked on the 24th of August, 1840, and now it was late December, 1840.

They celebrated Christmas early as landfall was scheduled for Christmas Eve and they would be dispersed far and wide. The

women set about to mark the occasion with as much cheer as could be mustered. Small hand-made gifts, trinkets, scarves and samplers of stitchery with mottoes picked out in an array of bold red and yellow yarns were exchanged with great excitement. Some of the young men had passed their time whittling little figurines as mementos and even models of the barque. These proved to be well-received as gifts.

A feast was another matter. A haggis was attempted with oats, linseed oil, salted mutton and boiled potato peelings spiced with whatever could be filched from the almost empty pantry. The soggy mess was wrapped in a floured cotton cloth, tied tightly into a ball and dropped into a pot of salty boiling water.

Three hours later it had assumed a sort of caramel colour and stiffened into a steamed – pudding like consistency. The piper, Euan McIntyre, played ‘Flower of Scotland’ behind it as it was paraded on a steaming platter around the foredeck. Captain Grey called on Neil Campbell, the ship’s surgeon to address the haggis, a task he undertook in true Robbie Burns’ style, with reverence.

A butcher knife was produced. The Captain deftly sliced the string, the flour-sack bag fell away revealing a shiny orb with a tantalising aroma. Vessels and dishes appeared miraculously, held out so Cook could ladle a portion of this crumbly treat into each bowl.

Mildly lacking in flavour due to the omission of the fresh offal, everyone made the best of it, the adults washing theirs down with a dram of good Whisky downed in one gulp. It was a celebration enjoyed by all the passengers and crew; the differences in their circumstances forgotten in the shared merriment.

They were, however, still some distance from landfall.

None were more eager to arrive than those on short rations and uncomfortable, dark conditions down below decks. It was a tedious voyage for those who were bonded to the New Zealand Company,