

*Buller's
Butterflies
of*



New Zealand

by Ian St George

Buller's Butterflies

*—Arthur Percival Buller, his times,
his friends and his paintings.*

by Ian St George

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A. P. Duller

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Cover: *Vanessa gonerilla* (New Zealand Red admiral butterfly, kahukura). Watercolour by Arthur Percival Buller. ATL E-088-q-022.

Frontispiece: Percy Buller with his dog Nap;
from CG Pottinger 1995. *Portraits and precedents.*
100 years of Buddle Findlay. Buddle Findlay,
Wellington; page 5.

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Introduction

This is about Percy Buller. For many years Kristy McDonald KC's Edwardian kauri locker in the old Wellington Law Library housed a rather battered lawyer's wig tin, black with gold trim and inscription, "A.P. BULLER Esq.^{re}" When the library was gutted she couldn't find an owner so brought it home and it sat in our attic for years. There I stumbled across it again and I wondered about that name and found it was Percy Buller's: he practised law only briefly, but he was a founder of Buddle Findlay.

Percy Buller's forebears were famous – Walter Lawry Buller¹ (*Buller's Birds*) was his father and Charlotte Mair² his mother. Some of his close friends were famous too – Alexander Turnbull³ notably, but others also of the Wellington well to do. They formed a small clique of wealthy or professional young men who could pretend to the status of colonial gentry.

Is Percy famous? not so much, though he was said to be one of the most amiable and genial of men, gentle, with not a single enemy, a man of great enthusiasms. An anglophile, a fly fisherman, a singing banjo player, an automobile lover when cars were a rare luxury, an entomologist, a painter of beautiful miniature watercolours of butterflies and moths.

Egalitarian? good heavens, no: deeply conservative. Independent. A man of leisure. A gentleman. A gentle man.

A dapper man? yes indeed: eloquent, elegant, of refined tastes and expensive lifestyle, a carefully chic dresser (boater, high collars and the widest tie of all the Wellington lawyers). A

1 Ross Galbreath 1989. *Walter Buller: the reluctant conservationist*. GP Books, Wellington.

2 JC Andersen, GC Petersen 1956. *The Mair family*. AH & AW Reed, Wellington.

3 EH McCormick 1974. *Alexander Turnbull. His life. His circle. His collections*. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

dandy? oh yes, he matches the definition nicely. Camp? more than likely, judging from his use of language in the few letters that have survived. Gay? that is an issue about which I can say almost nothing useful.

And a dilettante? Perhaps so. He was, however, recognised as an entomologist. His papers in the *Transactions* are slight things (though often quoted), but his butterfly and moth paintings deserve an appreciative audience.

Fastidious? obsessional? perfectionist? I don't think he could have painted with such precision if he weren't.

Not famous, then, but emphatically notable. These are the skimmings of his story – as much as I have been able to find.

Many people promptly and obligingly answered my questions: Pip Dellabarca of Dogs 101; Tony Rippin at South Canterbury Museum; Jane Teal at Christ's College; Oliver Stead and Anthony Tedeschi at the National Library; Alison Massy at the National Library of Australia; Alastair Sherriff and Rosemarie Rogers of Buddle Findlay; Dr Rob Payne, College Archivist at Jesus College, Cambridge; Emma Cullen at Victoria University of Wellington; Steph Kane at Wellington College Old Boys' Association; Richard Bourne at Wanganui Collegiate Museum; Jennifer Twist, Carolyn McGill and Phil Sirvid at Te Papa; Katherine Doig of the Methodist Church of NZ Archives; Gabriel Meyer stellv. Archivleiter at the University of Heidelberg; Helen Bolton, Modern and Historic Records Officer at the Portsmouth History Centre; Elaine Bell of the NZ Society of Genealogists Research Services; Kevin Miles, Heritage Room and Historical Society, Te Takare Levin; Rosemary Pearson, Librarian & Archivist, Royal Entomological Society; Celia Pilkington for the Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple; Helena Lunt at Auckland War Memorial Museum; Alice Tyson and Clare Cowling, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London; Pam Hyde, Wellington.

I am especially indebted to Robert Hoare, entomologist at Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, who went to a great deal of trouble to identify the moths in Percy's paintings and to George Gibbs (grandson of entomologist George Vernon Hudson) for identifying the butterflies.

I also wish to acknowledge John Madocks Wright, great grandson of Laura (Buller) Madocks; and Roger Haybittle, Buller descendant and family historian.

In the footnotes Alexander Turnbull Library is abbreviated to "ATL", the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to "Te Papa". "Galbreath" and "McCormick" refer to the biographies by those authors of Walter Buller and Alexander Turnbull respectively.



Chapter 1: Roots

The Bullers 1

On Sunday 11 February 1844, William Colenso and his companions were on their way back to Pahia from Hawke's Bay and Tairāwhiti. They had crossed the Kaipara Harbour and were paddling with the incoming tide up the Wairoa river from Te Wharau, just north of modern Dargaville. He wrote in his diary,

11th. ... at 2 p.m., the tide flowing, we proceeded up the river. At 5 we were opposite to Mr. Buller's Station, (W.M.,⁴) which I passed by, intending not to land, not wishing to disturb the tranquillity of their Sabbath, but Mr. B. and his natives, hearing of me, ran after me and obliged me to do so. Held Service at the Station, at Mr. Buller's request, expounding a portion of 2nd. Less.

12th. Left Mr. B's. most hospitable mansion, and gained the landing place at the top of the Wairua river by nightfall, where we passed the night.

13th. Starting early we soon saw the high land around Wāngarei Bay

He had spent the sabbath at Tangiteroria and this "most hospitable" man was Percy Buller's grandfather, the Wesleyan missionary James Buller with his wife Jane Martin and their five children (she was still recovering from the birth of the difficult fifth of, eventually, eleven). Their second, born 9 October 1838 was Percy's father Walter Lawry Buller.

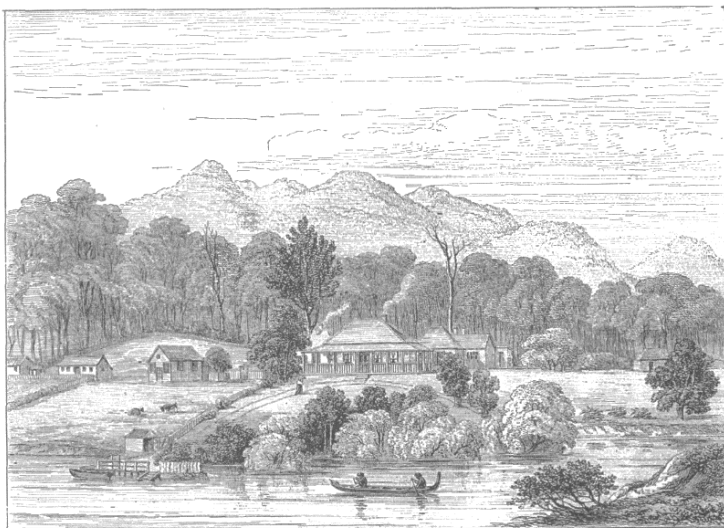
James Buller had named Walter after Walter Lawry, the Wesleyan minister in Cornwall who had inspired him to

4 Wesleyan Mission.

become a missionary. He and Jane were married before he left England.

The local Northland chief was Te Tirarau: James was “Tirarau’s pakeha”. Years later James wrote,

He, and his people, were glad to have a missionary near them, but did not care to listen to his teaching. Only a few of them would come to the services.



Tangiteroria Mission Station.

Print facing page 61 of James Buller 1878. *Forty years in New Zealand.*

He vividly pictured their life,

On the Wairoa river, in the Kaipara district, the tide flows with great force, sending back the stream to the source of the river. In the narrow reaches it rose and fell from fourteen to twenty feet. Eels abound in the muddy banks. To capture these, the Maories used large weirs. Rushing

by the long poles, the tide produced an audible vibration. This was notably the case in a certain place. The natives compared it to the sound of the large conch shell, which was their war trumpet. Hence the name of Tangiteroria (sound of the trumpet).

It was at this place where a purchase of a hundred and fifty acres of forest land was effected, in 1838, as the site of a new station. Before anything could be done in the way of building, large trees had to be felled and cleared away. Of one of those trees, a Kauri pine, the natives made a big canoe, which for years did good service for the transit of goods. It held as much cargo as a small schooner.... For three years I had been studying the language, and could now talk it with fluency....

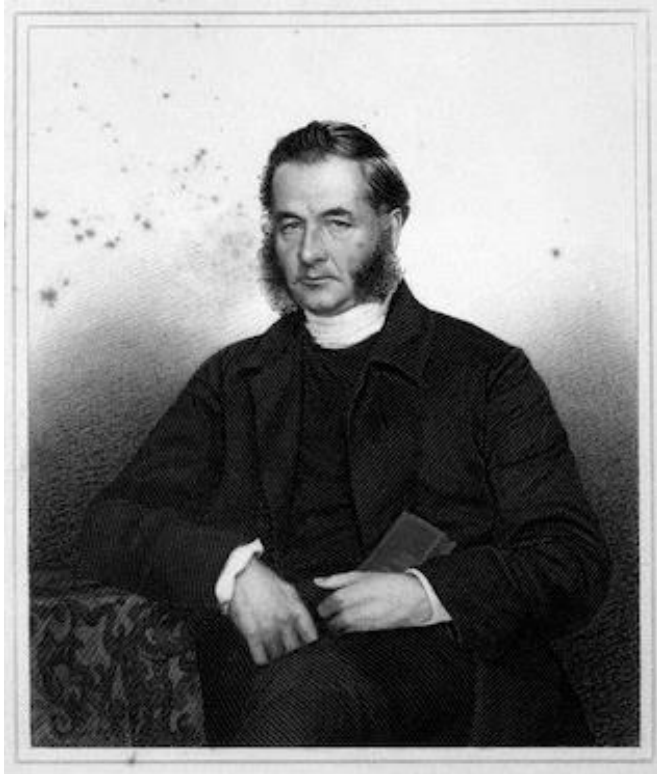
Our barque dropped anchor about twenty miles up the river. There we landed, on an afternoon. A large hut gave us shelter for the night, but the mosquitoes deprived us of sleep. We proceeded to our new home on the following day, in the large canoe of which I have written. When we reached our destination, it wore a desolate look. The framework of a wooden house was standing, and a few acres of the forest felled: the huge logs, and the blackened stumps, made a picture of ugliness. Flocks of the kaka (parrot) were cawing among the trees. Their grating, hollow sound, together with the cooing of the dove and the screaming of the owl, had a depressing effect....

Occasionally I went to Wangarei, on the eastern coast. It is about twenty miles across-land, over moor, wood, and plain. Stunted fern and koromiko grow in the open, till within a few miles of the coast. There the soil is volcanic, and the scenery enchanting. It is a good and well-sheltered harbour. When I first went there, no white settlers had located themselves within its limits, except a

few pairs of sawyers, whose mode of life was little better than that of the natives.

For more than fifteen years this solitude was my home. During that time many changes took place. There, nine of my children were born, and two of them were buried. We were far away from any other missionary, and seldom saw the face of a Christian friend.

With two exceptions, my children were baptized by their own father. When death came, it was his mournful office to read the solemn funeral service at the grave-side. Their little tomb is under the shadow of an acacia; there they sleep “in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It was at such times – times of sickness, of sorrow, of separation – that we most felt how precious would be the voice, the sympathy, the presence of a friend! I was once laid aside by acute inflammation, caused by an unavoidable chill on one of my journeys. It seemed likely to end in death; certainly I thought so. We had no doctor; but what was worse, there was no one, out of my own family, to kneel by my bedside and offer words of prayer, but a pious native teacher: it was, perhaps, in answer to his fervent petitions, that I was raised up again. At another time, three of my children were down together with typhus fever. No medical adviser was at hand, nor any kind counsellor. With trembling hands, we used remedies we knew of; and it pleased God, in His great mercy, to give them the desired effect. More than once, my wife seemed to be at death’s door. One of my little ones, by a fall, had a fractured arm; more by accident than by skill I set it right, and it was made whole.



Rev. James Buller c. 1850. ATL A-039-017.

That remote and solitary spot is linked in our memories with many scenes. We had our seasons of sorrow and of joy, of fear and of hope, of trial and of mercy. God was with us. We did not “labour in vain.” Although often cast down, we fainted not. The doctrine of the Gospel distilled on the minds of the people: many of them yielded to its power. It was my privilege to baptize most

of them, to join them in holy matrimony, and to “see the grace of God and be glad.”⁵

Such were Percy Buller’s paternal grandparents.

Young Walter would go with his father on his pastoral rounds, occasionally to Whangarei, where at first no white settlers had located themselves, except a few pairs of sawyers. Eventually he was sent away to the Wesleyan College in Auckland.

In 1842 the Mair family moved to Whangarei from the Bay of Islands and increased the white population.

The Mairs

Nine years earlier, in December 1833, William Colenso had arrived off the Bay of Islands aboard the schooner *Blackbird*. She was becalmed and he wrote in his diary,

Dec. 29. Wind contrary and light—Cavalle Islands in sight—this evening we saw Pocock ahead.

Dec. 30 Pt. Pocock & Cape Brim the 2 points of the Bay in sight at 5 P.M. entered the heads—land appeared very broken & high. At 6 a boat came alongside with Mr. Mears, a merchant, & 5 natives. At 7 we left the Blackbird and, after 2 hours hard rowing agt. wind & tide, we arrived at Mr. W. Williams, Pahia—were (sic) we were most kindly recd.—we saw Mr. and Mrs. W.—Mr. Brown, Mr. & Mrs. Baker, Mr. H. Williams—& Miss Colman & several N. Zealand girls—we were carried ashore thro’ the surf by natives—Praise & honour ascribe to our God.—

5 Abridged from James Buller 1878. *Forty years in New Zealand*.

“Mr Mears” was Gilbert Mair and Colenso was to know him well, telling his friend Coupland Harding in 1885,

M(air) & wife were among my best friends in Bay of Islands – and he in his whale-boat brought me on shore this night from our little craft, becalmed many miles away, out in the offing.

Mair was a Scot who had arrived in the Bay of Islands in 1824. He helped Henry Williams build the schooner *Herald*, which he later commanded in mission service until it was wrecked on the Hokianga bar.

Gilbert Mair and Elizabeth, daughter of the Kaitaia missionary William Puckey, were married in Sydney in 1827.

After their marriage Mair obtained land in Te Wahapu Inlet, in the Bay of Islands, where he built up a flourishing trading station, exported kauri gum, timber and flax. He petitioned the British government to have New Zealand declared a British colony and was involved in the formation of the Kororareka Association. In 1842 he sold his trading station and moved his family to Whangarei, where he called their home Deveron, for his northeast Scotland home town.

These were Percy Buller’s maternal grandparents, for their sixth child (Charlotte: “Lottie” born 1838) would marry Walter Buller (born 1838).

The Mairs had twelve children – Percy Buller’s aunts and uncles – of whom the third born (William 1832), the eighth (Gilbert: “Tawa” 1841) and the ninth (Matilda: “Tillie” 1845) also feature in this account. All were fluent in te reo and aware of (if not always sensitive to) maoritanga, as were the Bullers.

Major William Mair became soldier, resident magistrate, and judge of the Native Land Court. During his 50 years in Government offices he rendered most valuable service to his country. In the military forces he was noted for his calmness, courage, and sound judgment, and he led his forces with

spectacular success. The Maori, friendly and rebel alike, had great respect for him and confidence in his sense of justice, and this, more than any other factor, made possible the successful outcome of his patient and tactful negotiations with the Maori King, resulting in the opening of the King Country to European settlement.⁶

Captain Gilbert (Tawa) Mair was surveyor, interpreter, soldier, public servant. When he was a child local Māori called him Tawatawhiti (after the name of the site of Mair's Landing) and thenceforth he was known as Tawa (there were already a lot of Gilberts⁷ and tawa is also a tough light coloured wood, called "New Zealand oak" by joiners and cabinetmakers).

He was a celebrated soldier, serving in the East Coast and Te Kooti campaigns with the Arawa Flying Column.



Gilbert ("Tawa") Mair.
ATL 1/1-017971-G.

⁶ GC Petersen 1966. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/1966/mair-william-gilbert>.

⁷ His grandfather William Gilbert Puckey, his mother Elizabeth Gilbert (Puckey) Mair, his father Gilbert Mair, his brother William Gilbert Mair.

In his later years,

Mair acted as official guide, interpreter and host to royalty and notable visitors to the Hot Lakes District, and in 1901 he organised the official celebrations in Rotorua for the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and of York. He maintained his unique association with Te Arawa, enjoying close personal friendships with many of the chiefs he had fought alongside. His intuitive understanding of Māori culture and values and his command of Māori language earned him the mana of a Rangatira....

Mair was a keen and not always completely ethical collector of Māori artefacts. His collection was deposited in and later purchased by the Auckland Institute and Museum. As an agent for Alexander Turnbull, Sir Walter Buller and the Auckland and Dominion museums, Mair assisted in the purchase and removal of many valuable Te Arawa carvings from the Rotorua district. These activities did not seem to diminish his standing with Te Arawa.⁸

Matilda Mair (Aunt Tillie) married widower Richard Sisson MRCS LSA in 1868. They had no children but took care of Walter and Lottie's three when their parents went to England in 1871. Dr Sissons was a much loved and respected general practitioner and lay reader in the church in Kamo.

⁸ <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m4/mair-gilbert>.

The Bullers 2

The first volume of Gilbert (Tawa) Mair's diaries has a dedication on the first page: "Gilbert Mair, from his sincere friend, Walter Buller, January 26, 1861. Dux Faemina Facti".⁹

Tawa's 18th birthday was 10 January. Walter was visiting and Tawa recorded,

Nothing happened till Jessie & Charlotte & William & Walter Buller rode to Oweru. Stayed at Jems one night and at Watson's the other. Feby 4th. Walter and I went to the lake but did not get any thing. 5th. Walter and I went to the caves, and had a good look, he was very much delighted with them.

A couple of pages later, on 12 February, Mair revealed,

Charlotte and Walter are confirmed convicts, he popped the question on January 23. They are to be spliced on the 9th of October. Feby 13th. Walter went away this morning by the Petrel. I sent a Box of peaches by him to Mrs A Sinclair. William and I went down in the boat with him, he had stayed a month.

Rev CS Volkner¹⁰ married Walter and Charlotte on 24 May 1862.

The romantic young Tawa would miss his 23 year old sister. This New Zealand oak, this future soldier, leader of men, this tough country kid wrote these soft rhymes,

Who loves me best? my sister fair,
With her laughing eyes and clustering hair!
Who flowers around my head doth twine,
Who presseth her rosy lips to mine.
Who singeth me songs in witless glee,

9 Which Merriam-Webster translates as "a woman was the author of the achievement" – Virgil, referring to Dido's founding of Carthage – and Walter Buller, referring to Charlotte's part in his friendship with Tawa.

10 On 2 March 1865 Carl Sylvius Völkner was hanged at Ōpōtiki by Pai Marire fanatics, one of whom swallowed his eyeball.

Can any love be better than she?
Yet, when I asked, that sister confessed,
Of all she did not love me best!

And now my sister's gone away,
Far from our happy hearth.
We've lost her voice that was so gay,
So full of joyous mirth.

The bright smile that lit her face,
It made our heart rejoice,
Sadly we mourn such vanished grace
But most of all her voice.

For oh! her voice, it is so sweet,
When utter'd forth in words
Such tunes it had as heard repeat
It echoes on their chords.

Then, now we are severed wide,
You are still so good and kind,
Tho' you are with your "pride!"
You'll not forget those far behind.

And may you happy be,
Through all the paths of life,
May Walter always see,
In you a faithful wife.

"Sunny memories of an absent Friend"

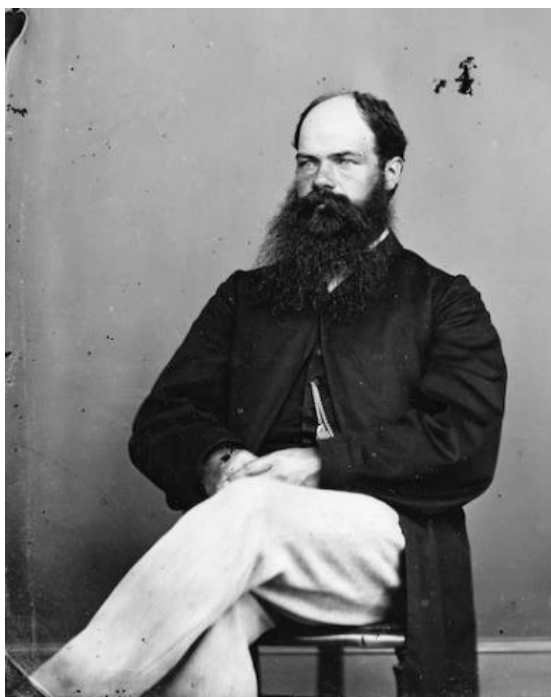
Oh! while we mourn the absent friends
From us so far away
Oh! grant that they may come again
A short time with us to stay.

And when we bade them adieu
Altho' it gave us pain
Let us live on in hope
That they may come again.

When Deveron was your home
It's halls with laughter rung
For oh! your voice, it was so gay
And sweet were the songs you sung.

By the time of his marriage Walter Buller had been rising in status in the Native Department so that in 1862 he would become a resident magistrate based in the Manawatu, moving to Wanganui in 1865. He had for years been collecting birds – quite mercilessly by today’s mores, but his aim at least purported to be altruistic: they had to be understood, illustrated, described, placed in museums, before they inevitably became extinct. Only thus could future generations know about them.

He was not tall. In 1895 William Mair would refer to him as “the little man” in a letter to Tawa.¹¹ But he was nakedly ambitious, elected FLS at nineteen years of age, writing his first scientific paper in 1865, hungry for recognition and honours.



Walter Lawry
Buller c. 1870
Photograph by
WJ Harding,
Wanganui.
ATL 1/4-004505-
G.

11 William Mair to Gilbert Mair 26 June 1895: in Galbreath page 205.

Walter Leopold Buller (Leo) was born in 1863, Arthur Percival (Percy) in 1866, Laura (Kahurangi) in 1870.



Charlotte Buller in about 1865. Photograph by WJ Harding, Wanganui.
ATL 1/4-006196-G.

In 1871 Buller was ready to publish his great work on the birds of New Zealand and to do so he would have to go to London. He organised arrangements very much to his advantage: he would receive half his salary, would work in a nominal role as secretary for the Agent General, would study law at the Inner Temple – and would successfully publish the classic *A history of the birds of New Zealand*. He was awarded an honorary German doctorate and the CMG. He completed his legal studies and was admitted to the English Bar.

They had left the children with Aunt Tillie in Kamo and it cannot have been an easy time for any of them. Tillie found the boys a handful so they were sent to stay with their (Buller) grandparents, probably at first in Thames, then in Christchurch. All three suffered ill-health while their parents were away, though it is hard to be quite certain what they suffered from.

Walter and Lottie returned to New Zealand on 15 September 1874 and were in Christchurch by 2 October; Walter took Leo to Wanganui, arriving on 5 January 1875. That afternoon Leo was injured when a coach overturned, “Master Buller unfortunately having his arm broken at the shoulder, and being much cut and bruised about the head.”¹²

Our readers will regret to hear that Dr Buller’s son is still dangerously ill. Mrs Buller arrived in the p.s. Manawatu on Saturday. The little sufferer is lying at Mr Anderson’s private residence River Bank, near the Masonic Hotel. The nature of the injuries are such that the most perfect quiet gives the only chance of recovery, and we are sure we need not do more than state the circumstance to find a ready disposition to comply with the wishes of the medical “facility” and the little sufferer’s friends. Those driving traps and conveyances are requested not to pass the house for a few days. The little patient cannot be

12 *Wanganui Chronicle* 6 January 1875 page 2.

removed, and the slightest vibration from a passing vehicle causes the most fearful agony. We trust to be able to report more favorably in our next.¹³

Leo soon recovered, for he was enrolled at Wanganui Collegiate in 1874–1875. Later he would attend Wellington College.

They still had not collected Laura, for Walter wrote to his sister-in-law Tillie on 8 May 1875,

There seems some fatality about our little Laura, and Lottie sometimes despairs of seeing her again.

We shall be glad to have the dear little creature with us again, although I suppose we shall not recognize in her the baby we left behind. We cannot feel sufficiently thankful to you and the Doctor for all your kind care of her. I hope some day we may be able to make you some return for all your sisterly kindness and attention.

Our present plan is for me to run up to Auckland (where I have some other business on hand) as soon as I return from Canterbury.

I am going down there on Tuesday to bring up our poor little Percy, who has been lying on a sick bed for 11 months; and as Leo's face is still much distorted by paralysis, I am taking him with me for further medical advice.¹⁴

The boys may have developed paralytic poliomyelitis while they were in Christchurch with James and Jane Buller. Lottie blamed her mother-in-law for Percy's illness, saying, "She is a dreadful old party and tells fibs".¹⁵ There were sporadic cases in New Zealand in the 1870s and few other diseases would

¹³ *Wanganui Herald* 11 January 1875 page 2.

¹⁴ Walter Buller to Matilda Sisson 8 May 1875. ATL MS-Papers-8151.

¹⁵ Pamela Crimp 1995. The children of Elizabeth and Gilbert Mair page 25. ATL Ms-Papers-5757-17.

produce facial paralysis in one, Leo – and require eleven months bedrest in the other, Percy.

There is a further clue supporting that diagnosis. In 1883 Rev. James Buller wrote in support of a celebrated quack, the Australian faith healer Milner Stephen, whose effectiveness was being challenged in the more sceptical newspapers,

MR MILNER STEPHEN

SIR,—As many seem to doubt whether Mr Milner Stephen has effected any cures at all, I deem it right, in the interests of truth, to testify to one case, which is that of a grandson of mine at Wellington. As the sequel of a severe attack of rheumatic fever, which he had some years ago, one leg was nearly two inches shorter than the other. He applied to Mr Stephen, who succeeded in elongating the short leg, and when I last heard from him he said—“I took the cork out of my boot and now walk in an ordinary pair.”—I am, &c.,¹⁶

Rheumatic fever causes heart disease (a feature of Percy’s later life) but it doesn’t cause shortening of a leg: did he also have polio?¹⁷ The *Bay of Plenty Times* proudly continued,

The boy alluded to by the Rev. Mr. Buller was brought down to the Manupiria Springs at Te Rotoiti, and whilst there received great relief. He is a son of Dr Buller’s.¹⁸

Percy’s cure didn’t last, for his obituary in *Free Lance* states, “He was fond of healthy outdoor sports, but a crippled leg unfitted him to actively participate in them.”¹⁹

16 *Lyttelton Times* 10 March 1883 page 5.

17 Ratliff AHC. The short leg in poliomyelitis. *J Bone Joint Surg Br.* 1959; 41-B(1): 56-69. doi:10.1302/0301-620X.41B1.56.

18 *Bay of Plenty Times* 3 April 1883 page 2.

19 *Free Lance* 5 March 1910 page 4.

Rev. James Buller served at Thames 1870–1873 and Durham Street Methodist church in Christchurch 1873–1875, when he was involved with the Durham Street Wesleyan School. Leo (born 1863) and Percy (born 1866) presumably attended primary school in Thames and Christchurch during the years they were with their grandparents, 1871–1875, though no records of their schooling exist.

I can find no record, either, of Percy’s secondary schooling (1878–1883?), but his entry at Cambridge University in 1886 records, “Christchurch School, New Zealand”.²⁰

He may have felt some affinity with Christchurch over those years, for in 1876 and 1881 he donated specimens to the Canterbury Museum,

The following contributions were received by the Canterbury Museum during the quarter ending September 30th, 1876.... Master Percy Buller, Wellington—Specimen of kokowai, red paint of the Maoris, from Ohinemutu, North Island.²¹

... during the quarter ending March 31st, 1881.... Master Percy Buller, Wellington.—1 stone implement, polished, from Hokianga.²²

... during the quarter ending Sept 30, 1881.... Master A. Percy Buller, Wellington—One specimen of retinite enclosed in coal, from the Kawakawa coal mine, Bay of Islands.

... during the quarter ending Dec. 31, 1884.... Mr Leo Buller, Wellington.—Model of Fiji war canoe complete.

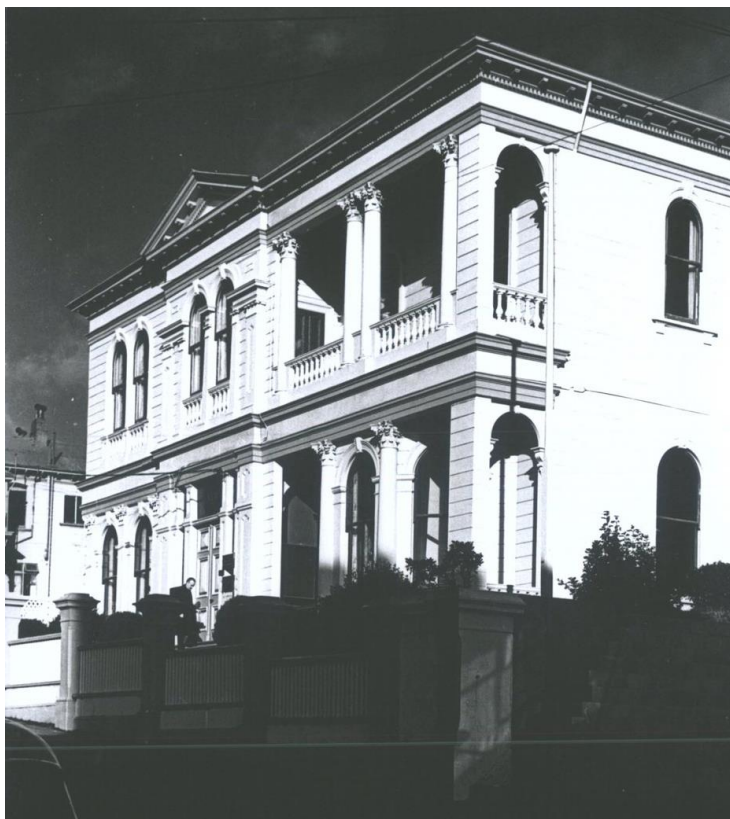
²⁰ <https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/search-2018.pl?sur=buller&suro=w&fir=arthur+percival&firo=w&cit=&cito=c&c=all&z=all&tex=&sy=&eye=&col=all&maxcount=50>.

²¹ *Press* 16 October 1876 page 3.

²² *Press* 27 April 1881 page 3.

James and Jane Buller went to Britain in 1876 before returning to Christchurch in 1880.²³

Walter Buller was practising as a barrister, specialising in Native Land Court business and becoming wealthy. They lived in a rented house in Wellington but in 1882 architect Christian Julius Toxwood designed a magnificent residence for them at 114 Wellington Terrace. They moved in in 1883.



23 <https://www.methodist.org.nz/assets/Whakapapa/Archives/4-Methodist-history/Methodist-Biography-A-Z-29-March-2021-with-introduction-corrected.pdf>.



External and internal views of the Buller house, 114 Wellington Terrace.

The young Masters Buller travelled to and from their parents over these years, as shipping reports recorded....

The *Phoebe* brought Mr and Master Buller to Wellington from Christchurch on 18 April 1876; the s.s. *Wellington* Mrs and Master Buller to Wellington from Christchurch on 13 June 76; the *Tui* Master Buller from Foxton to Wellington 9 November 76; the p.s. *Manawatu* Master Buller from Wanganui to Wellington 21 June 1877.

They went north in the summer. Arriving in the s.s. *Rotorua* in Auckland from the south on 9 December 1878 were Mr and Mrs Buller, Miss Buller, Master Buller (and Major Mair); Mrs Buller and her two children were reported as staying at the Hot Springs Hotel in Waiwera on the 15th: they were still there, according to reports, on the 22nd and on 12 and 19 January 1879 – taking the curative waters for most of the summer holidays.

Dr and Master Buller sailed in the s.s. *Rotorua* from Lyttelton to Auckland on 7 January 1881; Dr, Miss and Master Buller returned to Wellington in the *Rotomahana* on the 17th.

Including his speeches, Walter Buller had seen 55 of his papers published in the first seventeen volumes (1868–1884) of the *Transactions and Proceedings of the NZ Institute*. One of the earliest recounted the discovery of a new nocturnal moth in the Ruahine while he was hunting for huia with Gilbert Mair.²⁴ Now, in February 1881, in his position of Vice-President of the Institute, he communicated a paper by his fifteen year old son Percy, published in Volume 13: “Notes on some Species of Diurnal Moths”.²⁵

He also noted, of the white-fronted tern in his *History of the birds of New Zealand*,

My son Percy observed in December a vast crowd of them on a small rocky island near the Taranaki Sugar Loaves. This is a favourite breeding-ground, and the birds were so closely packed that from the deck of the steamer they presented the appearance of a fall of snow.

Just when the two boys finished secondary school and what they did next is unclear.

Leo’s entry at Cambridge University in 1887 would record, “School, St Paul’s College, Wellington, New Zealand”. There was a St Paul’s School in Thorndon near where the Bullers lived in Wellington, but not a St Paul’s College. Leo had returned to Wellington from Wanganui Collegiate and was attending Wellington College, at least in 1879 (perhaps his final year). He had won cups in handicap races and was unwilling to

24 WL Buller 1872. Notice of a new species of moth in New Zealand. *Trans Proc. Roy. Soc. NZ* 5: 279.

25 Percy Buller 1880. *Trans Proc. Roy. Soc. N.Z.* 13: 237–239.

return them in 1882; Asmodeus, a rather pretentious columnist in the *New Zealand Mail*, was sarcastically critical,

Here is a fine instance of school boy honor that has come to my knowledge. The Stewards of the College Athletic sports wrote, through their Secretary, to the holder of two challenge cups which he had won by long starts in handicaps at the last sports of the College, to remind him that the sports are to be held in September, and request him to return the cups; but the youth, who has dabbled a little in law, is better versed in legal technicalities (so he thinks) than in honor....²⁶

Of interest in that piece is that by 1879 Leo had “dabbled a little in law”, presumably in an apprentice position with a Wellington firm. There is no sign of Leo or Percy in the University of New Zealand records, but they may nonetheless have attended law lectures. Percy remembered Victoria College in his will, suggesting a connection.

Walter Buller was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1879. In January 1880 Dr Buller and Messrs Lewis and Gully founded the law firm now known as Bell Gully,

L E G A L N O T I C E .

Notice is hereby given that we, the Under-
signed, have entered into co-partnership as
Barristers and Solicitors. The firm of Buller
and Lewis will in future be carried on under
the style of Buller, Lewis, and Gully.

Dated the 16th January, 1880.

W. L. BULLER,
W. MILLER LEWIS,
HUGH GULLY.

Evening Post
19 January 1880
page 3.

26 *New Zealand Mail* 9 September 1882 page 13. The whole rather silly affair is traversed in Asmodeus's column on p13, *New Zealand Mail* of 16 September 1882. Leo's achievements at the College Sports at the Basin Reserve are listed on p2, *Evening Post* of 1 December 1879.

A month later Leo had lost his dogs, Rover and Crusoe,

£3 REWARD:

LOST or Stolen, Two Newfoundland Dogs, one black, answering to name of Rover, the other black and white, answering to the name of Crusoe.

The above reward will be paid to the finder, or any person giving such information as shall lead to the discovery of the same.

W. L. BULLER.

Lower Terrace, 24th February, 1880.

Evening Post 24 February 1880 page 3.

They must have come home, for in June 1882 Leo was fined 20s for not registering two dogs.²⁷ It happened again in 1884.²⁸

Leo was fishing later that year,

A fish remarkably like a salmon trout, and pronounced by several fishermen to be so, was caught at Wainui-o-mata on Friday by Mr. W. L. Buller. The fish was in very good condition, and gave a lot of sport before it could be landed. It measured 24in in length, 12½in in girth, and weighed a little over 5½lbs. No salmon trout have ever been put in the Wainui River, and it is surmised that the fish must have come round by sea from some other stream. We may add that on the same day Mr. Buller and a friend took four fish weighing altogether 12lbs. It is evident from this that the Wainui fish are increasing in size.²⁹

27 *New Zealand Mail* 3 June 1882 page 21.

28 *New Zealand Times* 17 July 1884 page 2.

29 *Evening Post* 15 December 1884 page 2.

Chapter 2: England

Dr Buller was now a wealthy man and in 1886 he returned to London as an assistant Commissioner for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. It was a contentious appointment, with accusations of political favour.

Lottie, Laura and Percy left Lyttelton before him, on 13 May 1885, in the RMS *Kaikoura* which made record time, arriving at Plymouth on 20 June.³⁰ Walter and Leo left for England on 11 March 1886 in the RMS *Tongariro*.³¹

Walter was a member of the Royal Societies' Club and the boys gave that as their London address.



The building that until 1941 housed the Royal Societies Club, 63 St James St, Westminster, as it was with London's grime.

The Club boasted, “No person, whatever his rank, could find admission to this circle without intellectual distinction, while with such distinction none was of origin too humble to fail of a welcome.”

³⁰ *British Australasian* 25 June 1885 page 17.

³¹ *New Zealand Times* 11 March 1886 page 2.

They mixed in high circles,

The following are the New Zealanders who were honoured with invitations to the Princess Louise's reception at Kensington last week, and who may be said to be going everywhere just now:— ... Dr and Mr Buller and Miss Buller....³²

Walter was knighted for his work at the Exhibition. Christchurch's *Press* carried a brutally protracted editorial,

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1886.

DR W. L BULLER has attained the summit of his ambition, and has become SIR WALTER BULLER, K.C.M.G. As we are rather inclined to be of Mr. HENRY LABOUCHERE'S opinion that it is as cruel to refuse a title to a snob who wants it as to refuse a thistle to a hungry donkey, we do not regret the bestowal of this honor. If it would do any good to them, we should not complain if all the WALTER BULLERS in creation were to be made Knights of the Garter, much less Knights Commander of the second rate order of St. Michael. We deprecate, therefore, the expressions of regret with which on all sides we hear this announcement respecting DR. BULLER received. That DR. BULLER should become SIR WALTER BULLER is a circumstance which need not grieve the people of New Zealand at all. It costs them nothing. In fact, DR. BULLER, as counsel for the Native Land Purchase Department was far more costly to the colony than is SIR WALTER BULLER, K.C.M.G., living in London at his own expense. But notwithstanding what we have said, there will be many persons who will be curious to know what DR. BULLER has done to deserve this mark of Royal favour. One gentleman who has recently been honoured in a similar way is said to have

32 *Evening Star* (Dunedin) 26 July 1886 page 2.

been peculiarly favoured by Royal notice – we know not how far this story is true – owing to the fact that he was educated at Bonn, and that one of his fellow students there was the late Prince Consort, whom he had the good fortune on one occasion to pull out of a duck pond, into which His Royal Highness had in some way or other most unfortunately managed to fall. But DR. BULLER was not educated at Bonn. He was educated in the New Zealand bush, and if he had any Royalties among his early play fellows they must have been Maori Royalties who not only have no power of conferring honours, but who, if they had fallen in the water would in all probability have been quite able to get out of it without the assistance of any embryo K.C.M.G. We cannot, therefore account for DR BULLER'S title by any services, real or imaginary, rendered to any Royal personage.

Honours are sometimes conferred upon men for their philanthropy. The word philanthropy, etymologically we believe, means the love of man, and is used to designate that large-hearted benevolence which leads some men to exert themselves for the benefit of their race as a whole. But DR. BULLER can hardly be called a philanthropist. Nor has DR. BULLER ever rendered any services to the State which we know of, except, of course, these services which have long since been amply paid for in hard cash. His patriotism has been ten guineas a day patriotism – the kind of patriotism of which any lawyer is capable. What lawyer is there who would not spend any number of hours speaking in the Native Land Court, or anywhere else, at the rate of £10 10s a day, or any larger sum. It is true that DR. BULLER has, on more than one occasion, offered his services to constituencies, but those services have never yet been accepted. Neither has any Ministry ever allowed DR. BULLER an opportunity of serving the public in the Legislative Council. His public services,

therefore, are nil. But he has claims, it may be said, as an ornithologist. Well, some ten or twelve years ago he published a book on the “Birds of New Zealand,” of some scientific value, we daresay, and of considerable value as a drawing-room ornament, owing to the numerous and very pretty pictures which it contains. It was understood that he got his C.M.G. for this, as no other reason could be discovered for conferring that honour upon him. It is true that he is about to publish a second edition of this book with more and prettier pictures, at the price of £10 10s instead of £3 3s. No doubt this will bring much profit and satisfaction to the author, but as the book is not yet published he can hardly have been knighted on that account. No, the fact is that DR. BULLER is a very shrewd self-assertive man, who has set his whole mind upon acquiring wealth and improving his social position. Having acquired a large fortune he saw in this Colonial Exhibition an excellent opportunity of getting a handle to his name. So he set to work, and spent several thousand pounds in adding to the attractions of the Exhibition by a tasteful arrangement of his unique collection of Maori curiosities, which made the New Zealand Court one of the most attractive features of the Exhibition. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.*³³ Hence the K.C.M.G. The gift of £5000 to the Imperial Institute – the first colonial subscription it is said to that object – may have had its effect also. However, the fact remains that at an outlay of a few thousand pounds DR. BULLER has become SIR WALTER BULLER, and is, it is to be hoped, now a completely happy man.

We have done with SIR WALTER BULLER. If his title has been comparatively cheaply earned, he has done something at least for the Colonial Exhibition and for the

33 Hence those tears.

Imperial Institute in return for the empty honour. Although we have not done him the injustice of representing his liberality towards these two enterprises as being the outcome of a patriotic desire to promote the welfare of the colonies in general and this colony in particular, yet it must be admitted that the practical effect to us is the same. Moreover, Sir WALTER will become his new title just as well as many an Alderman who is knighted because her Majesty does something during his year of office. But before we have finished with this subject we desire to make a suggestion. We will begin by stating two facts. There are many colonial plutocrats who would like to get a title, and who would be quite willing to purchase it, just as until a few years ago ranks in the army were purchased. Further, a fund is wanted for the purposes of the defence of these colonies. Now, why should not the Imperial Government procure this fund by the sale of titles? £10,000 would not be too much to charge for knighthood. Twenty-five knights per annum would produce £250,000 a year, and we have no doubt that twenty-five persons capable of paying this sum, and willing to pay it, could be found every year in Australasia. To prevent titles becoming too common, and thus falling in value, it might be provided that the recipients must be over sixty years of age, and in that case death would keep their number down. For a title has not the life preserving qualities of a pension. We commend this suggestion to the very serious consideration of her Majesty's Government.

Christchurch's *Star* was also dismissive,

SIR WALTER BULLER.

The news of Dr Buller's distinction was conveyed to him by the Prince of Wales in a congratulatory autograph letter. H.R.H. has a very high opinion of the new

Knight's abilities, as may be gathered from the fact that he specially invited Sir Walter to sketch out a scheme for the Imperial Institute, and to send it to him at Marlborough House. This was done, and the receipt of the document acknowledged with cordial thanks. The Prince expressed sincere satisfaction when he learnt that Sir Walter Buller contemplated remaining in England for some years, and remarked jocularly to Sir Philip Owen that they would find plenty for him to do in connection with the Institute. There are, indeed, unlikelier things than that Sir Walter will hold some official post at South Kensington eventually.

Sir Walter and Lady Buller leave town for Brighton on Monday next, and will spend about a month at London-super-Mare. Mr A. T. (*sic*) Buller is at Cambridge reading for his degree, and Mr Leopold Buller is studying at Heidelberg. Sir Walter's new edition of "New Zealand Birds" has been put in hand, but will take some time to complete. A copy of the original work (published at three guineas) realised £37 at a book-sale the other day.

Mr A. T. Buller, I must not forget to mention, has been elected a member of the Australasian Club at Cambridge.³⁴

Percy had joined Jesus College at Cambridge in October³⁵ 1886 as a pensioner, ie a student paying fees to his college for teaching and for board and lodging. He would be admitted at the Inner Temple in London on 21 November 1887.

34 *Star* (Christchurch) 3 January 1887 page 3.

35 The Michaelmas term, the first term of the academic year running from October to December.

Leo registered at Heidelberg University's Philosophy department.³⁶ His name appears in the student address book (at 15 Rohrbacher strasse) for the Winter 1886/87 semester (beginning 1 October) and the Summer 87 semester.³⁷ At the same time he was admitted at the Inner Temple on 8 November 1886.

He seems to have spent time at each, the Christchurch *Star's* London correspondent reporting in March 1887,

Mr Leopold Buller, who is studying at Heidelberg, has been over here for a week or two to eat some of the necessary dinners at the Temple.³⁸

Evidently he consulted Sir William Jenner – presumably for the residual effects of his polio – while he was in London, for in the summer he took to the healing waters,

During the coming long vacation Mr Buller (Sir Walter's eldest son), who is just about taking his degree at Cambridge, will visit Aix-les-Bains for a course of the waters and baths, which he has been ordered by Sir W. Jenner.³⁹

He would be admitted at Clare College, Cambridge in the Michaelmas term of 1887 – so was certainly not “just about taking his degree” in July!

36 Matrikel der Universität Heidelberg 1386-1936: UAH M12: 1872/73-1894/95 — Heidelberg, 1872/73-1894/95: <https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.47221#0822>.

37 Adreßbuch der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg im Winter-Halbjahr 1885/1886 bis Sommer-Halbjahr 1890.

38 *Star* (Christchurch) 23 March 1887 page 3.

39 *Auckland Star* 23 July 1887 page 2. Sir William Jenner was the most celebrated physician of his day but by 1887 was nearing the end of his practising life.

An interesting snippet appeared in 1888,

AN UNDERGRADUATE FINED

An undergraduate of Clare College, named Walter Leopold Buller, was summoned for extinguishing a lamp at a-quarter-to-twelve in Elm-street, on Wednesday night. – The defendant pleaded guilty, and was informed by the Mayor that the Justices had the power to send him to prison without the option of a fine for fourteen days. He would be fined, however, 20s and costs, amounting in all to £1 10 3d. The money was at once paid.⁴⁰

It was quite possible they were admitted to the Inner Temple while studying at university. Many joined the Inns of Court but did not begin to study for the Bar until later – in earlier times infants were admitted to the Inn, their family intending they should begin their studies between the ages of 16 and 20, or at least avail themselves of the wide networking possibilities at the Inns. It was not until the mid1900s that a degree was required to study at the Inns.

Following admission a person is called to the Bar and in the late nineteenth century that was usually after three years. The 1852 Consolidated Regulations required twelve terms to be kept which meant that a certain number of dinners had to be eaten in each of the four legal terms – a residue of early entrance requirements that involved dining in hall with other barristers to share professional expertise in a collegial style.

The 1852 Regulations were also the basis for the founding of the Council for Legal Education which took on the training for bar students.

Students were then required to attend lectures and to pass public examinations. The examinations were held thrice

⁴⁰ *Cambridge Independent Press* 20 January 1888.

yearly, in Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity terms. In 1872 a compulsory examination for Call to the Bar was introduced.⁴¹

So the Buller brothers probably attended university while admitted to the Inner Temple. They had to attend dinners and lectures in London and had to sit the Bar Examination, but they could live in Heidelberg or Cambridge at their colleges.

Sir Walter and Percy were at 52 Stanhope Gardens, South Kensington at the time of the 1888 electoral roll: Sir Walter a sitting room and a bedroom at £400 a year and Percy a furnished room at £3/8s a week: landlady Mrs Wilkinson at the same address.

The archive for the Council for Legal Education is held by the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies and its records show that in the Trinity term 1890 examination, Percy scored 73 in the Law of Real and Personal Property, 66 in Common Law, 91 in Equity and 84 in Roman Law: a pass mark of 314 (maximum 680, minimum 280). Leo scored 48, 38, 80 and 71 for a fail mark of 237. He tried again 18 months later in the Michaelmas term 1891 examination and scored 69, 45, 110 and 71: total 295. He was awarded a Pass Certificate in 1891.

Percy was thus called to the English bar in 1890 and Leo in 1891 (when Alex Turnbull wrote to his brother Rob, “Leo Buller has at last been made a member of the Junior Bar having passed his Exam a little while ago.”⁴² Neither practised in Britain.

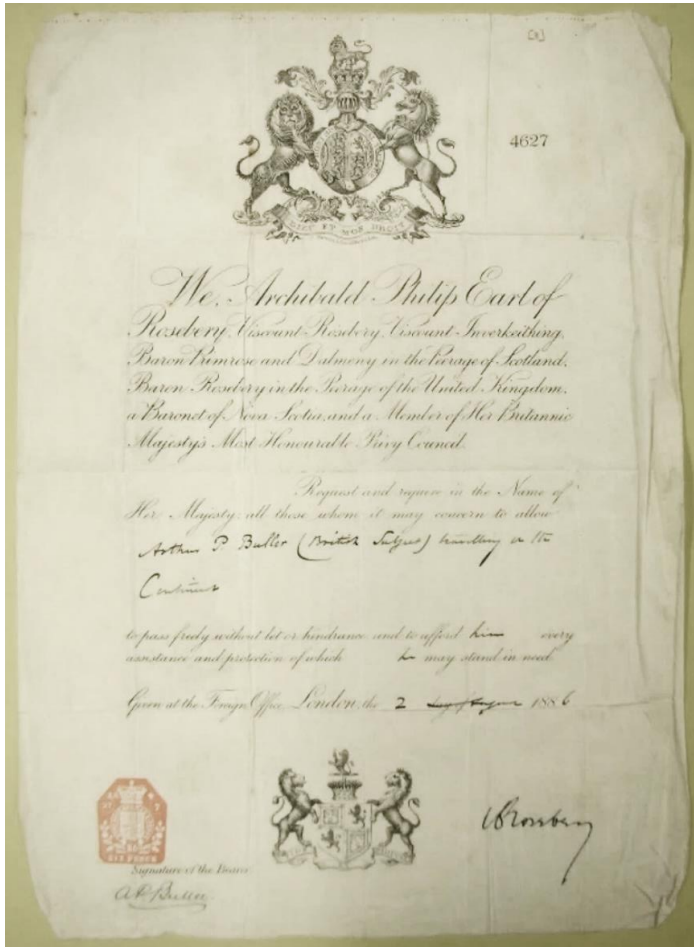
In June 1887, “Sir Walter Buller showed some of the absolutely perfect coloured plates of the forthcoming new edition of his ‘Birds of New Zealand’,”⁴³ and the new enlarged edition was published in 1888, with its celebrated chromolithographs by JG

41 *Pers. comm.* Celia Pilkington, Inner Temple.

42 AH Turnbull to RT Turnbull 22 January 1891. Alexander Turnbull Letterbook I Page 9.

43 *Evening Mail* 10 June 1887 page 8.

Keulemans. The background vegetation in some of Keulemans's images was "based in part on drawings provided by Buller's son Percy".⁴⁴



Percy Buller's passport. ATL Ms-Papers-0048.

⁴⁴ Galbreath page 160.

The family toured the continent from late July to October 1887. Walter, Laura and Leo attended the Fifteenth Annual *Conversazione* of the Royal Colonial Institute at the Albert Hall on 28 June 1888.⁴⁵

Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull 1868–1918 had briefly attended St Paul’s school in Sydney St, Thorndon, but had most of his schooling at Dulwich College in south London 1881–1884. After school he worked in London for a time during which he and his brother Robert and the Buller boys were friends. When the family firm in London was sold in 1888 he became “a young and wealthy man-about-town”, travelling, reading and collecting. He visited New Zealand in 1885 and 1886, returning permanently to Wellington in 1892: “a dandy and an aesthete” who enjoyed golf and yachting.⁴⁶

Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull, F.L.S., F.R.G.S. (1868–1918) might be considered the perfect exemplar of an atypical New Zealander. Born in Wellington of Scottish parents, at six this younger son was taken to England and there educated at a public school. In London he was a carefree young man-about-town, indulged by wealthy parents; on the fringe of the literary and artistic world, frequenting the Cafe Royal with his brother; fishing for salmon in Scotland, shooting game-birds on the moors; cruising the Mediterranean, where he ventured as far as Turkey one year, Algeria another. Returning to New Zealand, he might have passed as an authentic

45 *Colonies and India* 4 July 1888 page 26.

46 Largely derived from J. E. Traue. ‘Turnbull, Alexander Horsburgh’, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1993. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2t53/turnbull-alexander-horsburgh> (accessed 21 August 2023).

Englishman-exile, with his cigarettes suits and shirts hand-made in London.⁴⁷

The Bullers and the Turnbells were friends in Wellington and the four boys were connected in London. Alex wrote from London to his brother Robert in Wellington,

*I am pretty gay this week. On Tuesday I went to your Empire after dining with Percy at Kettner's and am sorry to say did not get home that night, at least not to Mount Henley (I told them I wasn't coming home).*⁴⁸

Kettner's Townhouse in Soho would become Oscar Wilde's favourite restaurant. Nearby, the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square was, on Tuesday 20 January 1891, showing at 9pm, DOLLY, a Grand Fairy Pantomime Ballet, in five Tableaux, by Madame Katti Lanner. Music specially composed by Mons. L. Wenzel, in which appeared the following artistes:– Signorina Emma Palladino, Mdlle. Ænea (the Flying Dancer), Signorina Bettina Dr Sortis, Signor Albertieri and Signorina Malvina Cavaltazzi. CECILE, at 10.45, Signorina Sazo, Christmas programme. Mdlle. Vanoni, the Eltons, Juana, Lucy Clarke, Ada Lundberg, Harry Freeman, Wilmot and Lester, Fred Harvey, Evalo and Roisso, Sam Torr, and Blennow's Troupe of Dogs.⁴⁹

Katti Lanner was a Viennese ballet dancer, choreographer, and ballet mistress, celebrated in Germany and England, where she staged many productions at the Empire Theatre.

On Thursday, "Tonight I am going with Percy to see your Lady Dunlo at Drury Lane they say she looks very nice." Belle Bilton (Lady Dunlo) was a music hall entertainer who secretly married into future nobility to become the Countess of Clancarty.

47 Anthony Murray-Oliver. <https://art-newzealand.com/9-merchant/>.

48 AH Turnbull to RT Turnbull 22 January 1891. Alexander Turnbull Letter Book I page 7.

49 *St James's Gazette* 21 January 1891 page 1.



Katti Lanner



Belle Bilton

THE MORNING POST.
 [ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 2, 1772.]

DRURY LANE THEATRE ROYAL.
 Augustus Harris, Lessee and Manager.

TWICE DAILY, at 1.30 and 7.30. BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:
 Mr. Harry Nicholls, Mr. Herbert Campbell, Mr. Dan Leno, Mr. John D'Auban, Mr. Charles Wallace, the Brothers Griffiths, Mr. Fred Walton, Mr. George Temple, the Original Leopold Troupe, Mr. Tom Pleon, Marinelli, and Mr. Whimsical Walker; Miss Vesta Tilley, Miss Florence Paltzer, Miss Sybil Grey, Miss Retta Walton, Miss Emma D'Auban, and Miss Belle Bilton (Lady Dunlop).

Morning Post Thursday 22 January 1891 page 4, the night Percy and Alex saw Belle Bilton at Drury Lane.

These were innocent enough shows, virtuous in comparison to what was on offer in London at the time.

Turnbull had hepatitis when Leo and Percy called to say goodbye before sailing for New Zealand. He wrote to his brother Rob,

*Everyone is well at home except your humble servant who has contracted a pestilent chill in his liver and is now confined to the house with Jaundice. I am as yellow as a guinea and look so funny when I am undressed the whole body being a brilliant saffron colour.... Leo & Percy were stopping here from Saturday till Monday. I was seedy with this Jaundice coming on & Leo had a bad cold so it was rather a slow time for Percy. They talk of going out to N.Z. sometime at the end of this month & they want you to meet them on the wharf with Kebbell's head on a charger!!!*⁵⁰

The *NZ Herald* anticipated their homecoming,

We notice in the file of The Times to hand by last mail, that Mr. Walter Leopold Buller, having passed his final examination in law, has been called to the Bar at the Inner Temple. Sir Walter Buller's other son was "called" a few months ago, and we understand that the two brothers are now on their way out to New Zealand with the intention of establishing themselves in practice. They will probably select Wellington as their sphere of action, their father's strong connection being of obvious advantage to them. Mr. Leo Buller has a knowledge of the Maori language, and will probably make native business his specialty. We wish them both every success.⁵¹

50 AH Turnbull to RT Turnbuill 5 February 1891. Alexander Turnbull Letterbook I page 13. This probably refers to FA Kebbell, prominent in Wellington tennis.

51 *New Zealand Herald* 8 April 1891 page 4.

Chapter 3: Wellington

Walter, Lottie and Laura returned to New Zealand, arriving in May 1890.

Buller purchased land in the Horowhenua from Major Kemp (Te Keepa Te Rangihiwini) and established a country estate at Lake Papaitonga, southeast of Levin.

Percy and Leo left England on 31 March 1891 in the RMS *Oruba*.⁵² Alex Turnbull wrote from London to Rob,

*19 March 1891: The Bullers left last Friday for N.Z. in the Orient Line Steamer "Oruba" so you will soon see them in Wellington. They were very sick at going and we bade each other a most affectionate farewell; there were seven other men seeing them off. Leo's departure is chronicled in the Man of the World.... I hope that the Hawk and the Man of the World reached you safely.*⁵³

2 April 1891: I have just had a letter from Percy posted from Port Said, they seem to be enjoying themselves immensely. Percy also wrote to me from Naples.

15 May 1891: Tell Percy Buller that I cannot write to him by this mail as I shall not have time, but I have posted him two papers which he must take as an expression of goodwill and

⁵² *New Zealand Times* 29 April 1891 page 2.

⁵³ This seems to refer to a paragraph in "The diary of a man of the world" in *The Man of the World* (a fashionable man's gossip magazine) 18 May 1891 page 128: "Dined with Joskyn at Long's Hotel... a rendezvous... for bachelors.... Seems to me there is a great craze just now for young men to travel round the world. One of Joskyn's guests tonight was off to New Zealand to-morrow morning, and both had been indulging in farewell dinners earlier in the week given to and by Messrs. Campbell and Hugo de Burg who are also off on a long tour via India and Japan." These letters are from AH Turnbull to RT Turnbuill. Alexander Turnbull Letterbook I. ATL.

an evidence that I have not forgotten him. Don't forget to tell him this or he will think that he is neglected.

10 June 1891: Have the pure and gentle Bullers arrived yet, if they have heap maledictions on their heads, on Percy's especially, for not having written to me for many moons.... I am marking a paragraph in this week's Man of the World which I want you to show to Leo & Percy; it is about the Gardenia Club. Benzom & Marmy Wood are going to resuscitate this haunt of vice; it has been closed for some time, whilst the Corinthian flourishes like a green bay tree.

25 June 1891: So the gay and festive Bullers have at length arrived. I received a long letter from your Percy along with your epistle, in which he gives me much news and much humour. I learned from Kebbell about their telegraphing for money; but there is nothing in that. We all run short of money occasionally (I am very short at present) and those are the lucky ones who have fathers to whom they may telegraph for supplies.... Mind you inform me how the cigars and cigarettes turn out and what you think of my choice. Give a cigar to Percy and when he lights it tell him to think of me, to think, but not to speak.

The Bullers were soon in the social whirl of Wellington.

His Excellency the Governor held a levee at Government House on Tuesday afternoon.... The following gentlemen were also presented:—Messrs... P. Buller, Walter Buller...⁵⁴

At a concert in the Tinakori-road churchroom in aid of the St Paul's Kindergarten School,

A very good programme was arranged, and taken part in by several of our prominent amateur vocalists. The

⁵⁴ *New Zealand Mail* 29 May 1891 page 36.

singing was good, and several encores were demanded
.... Mr. P. Buller sang a solo, with banjo accompaniment,
and had to respond to an encore....⁵⁵

Alex Turnbull wrote to Rob,

22 July 1891: I have received a fine long letter from Percy by this mail giving me his opinion on things in general and his own personal affairs in particular. He seems to glide along peaceably enough in Wellington but how about the warlike Leo?

6 August 1891: I received a letter from the cheerful Percy; he writes in grand spirits; he says that he is working 6 hours daily for his Examination in New Zealand Law, this of course I do not believe!.... Rather rough that on your youthful Bullers that the old him although friendly absolutely refuses to find their Club subscriptions for them. What on earth are they to do o' evenings if they do not join in the mirth provoking pool or try the light fantastic game of billiards with their pals of the Club?

17 September 1891: I am glad to hear that Percy has taken to gardening, ... Percy wrote me a long account of his father's defeat in Auckland....

1 October 1901: The Kodak photographs were great value, especially your Percy performing a solo on the Watering Can; send more like them.

15 October 1891: Whilst I think of it I may mention that I am sending you a piece of music entitled "La Paloma". 'Tis a Spanish composition, I dare say you heard it before you left for it is somewhat stale. I ought to have sent it to Percy for it is to him that it should specially appeal. We heard it on our way back from Algiers at Paris, in the Casino where we were

55 *Evening Post* 15 July 1891 page 2.

imprisoned for about 3 “mortal” hours waiting to see the Can-Can danced. Well, a “cantatrice” warbled forth La Paloma. I had never heard it before and my young heart thrilled with ecstasy at the sound (Percy's bold eyes let me explain were busy ogling some painted Jezebel in the box) and the tune rang in my head for many a day and until quite recently I have never been able to find the music (like the Lost Chord) till Isabella played it one evening at Sherwood lodge. Let Percy see it and recount the above to him in order to freshen up his memory (musty with long poring over N.Z. Statutes & Repeals) on the subject.... I always thought that the Bullers would not remain long in N.Z. I hope however that Percy will stay & not fly away immediately we arrive; it would be cruel if he does so.

12 November 1891: I received by this mail a poem of a letter from Percy....

9 December 1891: Percy sent me a very amusing letter by last mail giving a vivid account of the boxing bout at Te Aro: he should start a Pelican or a National Sporting Club in Wellington where the young bloods might congregate nightly to witness the noble art of self defence.

In November 1891 Lottie, Lady Charlotte Buller, died of heart disease. She was 53.

The funeral of the late Lady Buller took place this morning and was largely attended. Amongst those who paid a last tribute of respect were Sir Robert Stout and a number of other leading legal practitioners. Sir James Hector and the Hon. R. Pharazyn and Messrs. G. Beetham and W. T. L. Travers acted as pall-bearers, and the burial service was conducted by the Primate. The chief mourners were Sir Walter Buller and his two sons (Messrs. Leo and Percy Buller). Neither Major Mair nor

Captain Mair, brothers of the deceased lady, was able to reach Wellington in time for the funeral.⁵⁶

Alex Turnbull wrote to Rob,

*It was a great shock to us all to hear of Lady Buller's sudden death, what a dreadful thing for the Family, especially for Laura. Percy wrote me a note about it: poor fellow he seems quite prostrated with grief. I had done a comic envelope for him, but shall not send it now. I am enclosing this letter to you, in it instead.*⁵⁷



Gottfried Lindauer's portrait of Lady Buller was painted in 1892 – so was posthumous and probably painted over a photograph, as was his practice.

Te Papa 1967-0028-2.

⁵⁶ *Evening Post* 3 November 1891 page 2.

⁵⁷ AH Turnbull to RT Turnbull 9 December 1891. Alexander Turnbull Letterbook I page 130.

In February 1892 Mr Leo Buller (52 Wellington Terrace) advertised for a lost “lemon and white setter dog”⁵⁸ and later in the month put up his four-ton yacht *Ethel* for sale: applicants to “Mr. Leo Buller, at office of Messrs Brown, Skerrett and Dean, Lambton-quay”,⁵⁹ the address suggesting he may have been working in that law firm in 1892.

Percy and Rob Turnbull stayed at Coker’s Hotel on a visit to Christchurch in early July 1892⁶⁰ and later in the month,

Messrs. W. L. and A. P. Buller, sons of Sir Walter Buller, were admitted as barristers and solicitors of the Supreme Court by his Honour the Chief Justice this morning, on the motion of Mr. Gully. Both these gentlemen are barristers-at-law of the Inner Temple, London, and we understand it is their intention to commence practice at Levin, in this provincial district.⁶¹

In May 1893,

A very comfortable dwelling house has been erected on Sir Walter Buller’s property at Muhunua in which the two Masters Buller reside.⁶²

Wise’s Directory for 1894 has E.P. (*sic*) Buller Solicitor, Ohau and W.L. Buller Solicitor, Ohau.

In 1897 the *Cyclopedia* (see below) would record of Percy, that “Mr. Buller has since been engaged in farming in the Manawatu district for four years” – referring to their Muhunua block and suggesting the brothers’ legal practice did not succeed. Indeed, Wise’s Directories for 1896, 1898 and 1900 have AP and Wltr. L Buller “Sheep Farmers, Ohau”.

58 *New Zealand Times* 15 February 1892 page 3.

59 *Evening Post* 19 February 1892

60 *Lyttelton Times* 12 July 1892 page 6.

61 *Evening Post* 22 July 1892 page 3.

62 *Manawatu Herald* 2 May 1893 page 2.



Buller's Papaitonga block, including the lake and stretching to the river.
Detail of NZ Topo map.

In the same month,

The Birthday Ball given at Government House last evening by His Excellency the Governor and Lady Glasgow was the largest ever given at Government House, nearly 600 persons being present.⁶³

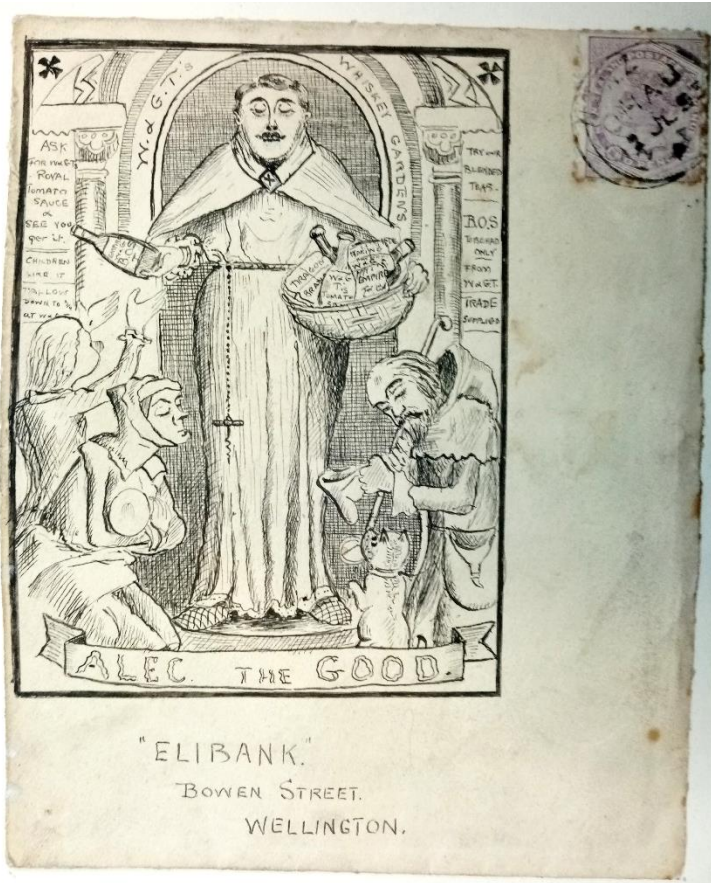
Among the cream of Wellington society at the ball were Percy and Leo Buller, Robert and Alex Turnbull and Leonard Tripp.

Alex Turnbull had told Rob he had done a comic envelope for Percy in 1891. In July 1893 Percy Buller decorated a Papaitonga envelope with a cartoon of "Alec the Good" – Turnbull handing out largesse to the poor – and addressed it to "Elibank," Bowen Street, Wellington with the message,

*Dear Alec. I have let you down more quietly than brother Robert, but next envelope I shall have to punish you to put matters right with ROBERT — WRITE — P.*⁶⁴

63 *Evening Post* 25 May 1893 page 4.

64 ATL E-088-q-22.



Alec the good. The front of an envelope posted at Ohau on 12 July 1893, with Percy's caricature of Alexander Turnbull standing in a doorway inscribed "W & G T's (W and G Turnbull's) Whisky Gardens". He is in a monk's habit (with frilly cuff), distributing tomato sauce, Dragon Brains, tea and whisky from a basket to begging figures at his feet. On the left is an advertisement for W & G T's "Royal tomato sauce"; on the right an advertisement for the firm's blended teas. ATL E-088-q-024.

In August,

Mr Rodway Barnes, the eminent English artist, who has been for some time painting New Zealand scenery, is at present the guest of Messrs Leo and Percy Buller at Papaitonga, where he has made some very successful paintings of lake views and bush studies, to be exhibited together with his other New Zealand pictures, as recently mentioned by us, at the Imperial Institute, London.⁶⁵

In October,

There have been several smaller entertainments during the week – a Progressive Euchre party given by Mrs Molyneux, at the Bank of New South Wales, another given by Mrs W. Moorhouse, and an afternoon tea given by Mr Leo Buller at his father's residence on the Terrace.⁶⁶

Alex Turnbull wrote to Leo,

*I heard from Percy by last mail, seems to be as "gai" as ever & falling frequently as usual.*⁶⁷

Percy went to England again, the *Mail's* London correspondent writing,

Among the passengers by the P. and O. steamer Victoria, which arrived here on the 7th instant, was Mr Percy Buller, of Wellington, who has come Home on a flying visit, and is at present staying with his father at the South Kensington Hotel.⁶⁸

65 *New Zealand Mail* 4 August 1893 page 40. Walter Buller was involved with the the Imperial Institute, set up in 1887 to encourage trade and links within the Empire.

66 *New Zealand Mail* 13 October 1893.

67 AH Turnbull to Leo Buller 30 December 1893. Alexander Turnbull Letterbook I.

68 *New Zealand Mail* 8 December 1893 page 33.

He was there less than three months, the purpose of his visit unclear; he left London on 2 March for Wellington via Brindisi in the s.s. *Victoria*.⁶⁹

In November 1895 Percy and John Anderson, from Nelson, formed the embryo of what is now Buddle Findlay.

We notice that a new legal firm announces the commencement of business in this city. Its members are Mr. A. P. Buller, barrister, of the Inner Temple, and a graduate⁷⁰ of Cambridge, and Mr. J. Anderson, who has for a number of years occupied an important position in the firm of Bell, Gully & Izard. The new firm of Buller & Anderson will no doubt command an extensive circle of clients.⁷¹

They began at 10 Featherston St and they advertised in the restricted way lawyers were, in those reserved and polite days, permitted,

BULLER AND ANDERSON,
BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS,
FEATHERSTON STREET. 816

New Zealand Times 15 November 1895 page 1.

69 *Home News for India, China and the Colonies* 23 February (and 2 March) 1894.

70 It is very unlikely that Percy graduated.

71 *Evening Post* 2 November 1895 page 2.

In 1902 they would move into purpose-built premises at 9 Johnston St – called, unoriginally, Temple Chambers.

The *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* (Wellington Provincial District) 1897 listed under “Barristers and Solicitors”,

Buller and Anderson (Arthur Percival Buller and John Anderson), Barristers and Solicitors, Featherston Street, Wellington, Telephone 762. Bankers, Bank of New South Wales. Private residences: Mr. Buller, Tinakori Road; Mr. Anderson, Coromandel Street. Mr. Buller, who is the second son of Sir Walter Buller K.C.M.G., was born in Wanganui in 1866, and educated in the Colony and at Jesus College, Cambridge. He was called to the English Bar at the Inner Temple in 1890. Returning to the Colony, he was admitted a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand in Wellington in 1891. Mr. Buller has since been engaged in farming in the Manawatu district for four years. Mr. Anderson was born in London, where he commenced his career in a solicitor’s office. In 1869 he came per ship “Hydaspes” to Nelson, under engagement to a firm of solicitors there. After some little time he left the law, and for several years was engaged in journalistic, commercial, and maritime pursuits. Mr. Anderson joined the firm of Buller and Lewis in 1879, and remained with the firm and its successors, Buller, Lewis, and Gully, and Buller and Gully, till the amalgamation of the latter firm with Izard and Bell, under the name of Bell, Gully, and Izard, Mr. Anderson was admitted a Solicitor of the Supreme Court in 1885. He continued with the last-named firm till joining Mr. Buller in founding the present.⁷²

72 Shortly thereafter in 1899 Findlay Dalziell & Co was founded. Buller & Anderson became Buddle Anderson Kent & Co following a series of

Meanwhile, at Ohau,

ACCIDENT AT RACECOURSE. – At the races held on the Ohau course on Wednesday a jockey named T. Carmont was riding Mr Leo Buller's mare Waiwiri in the Second Hurdles, when the mare struck the fourth hurdle very heavily and fell, throwing Carmont on his head.⁷³

Of Ohau, the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* said,

Ohau, some four miles north of Manukau, affords food for author and artist and pleasure for the tourist, for here is variety in open glade and forest land, hill and dell, and lake and river scenery, the last being unsurpassed for the beauty of its blue pellucid waters, its lordly islets, and superbly forest-clad hills, sloping down to the margin of the waters on Sir Walter Buller's lake. The writer spent a day paddling over its sheeted surface in an historical war canoe, bearing time-honoured gashes and dents of the bloody massacre on the island of Papaitonga in 1824, in which the victorious Ngatiraukawas, under the leadership of the dreaded Ti Tiki, did to death over 800 of the warlike Mahopokos. On the south-west headland of Papaitonga stands a wondrous monument commemorative of the spot where the last remnant of a once powerful tribe fell. It is about thirty feet high, made of totara wood, cunningly carved by order of a great Rangitira of the Wanganui, and erected there by the hospitable knight, who owns both lake and island, and who has in his possession, among many other highly-prized relics of barbarous times, a brief history in the original of the conquest of Papaitonga, with the translation into English. At the close of a fine summer's

mergers, while Findlay Dalziell & Co would eventually become Findlay Hoggard Richmond & Co. (Chris Pottinger 1995. *Portraits and precedents. 100 years of Buddle Findlay*. Buddle Findlay, Wellington).
73 *Marlborough Express* 3 January 1896.

day, the lake and the tints and reflections on the stilled waters, well fringed by evening primroses, and the silhouettes of the isles, and the shadows of the wood-crested, turretted heights and terraces, make real live pictures for the finest panoramic effects, and an hour spent in this fairyland must indelibly stamp pleasant visions upon the memory. To get to this enchanted spot, however, the tourist, having first obtained permission, negotiates two miles of dray road going northwards through acre upon acre of Sir Walter Buller's magnificent land, feeding well, as it does, thousands of the knight's well-bred sheep. Away miles to the south east the Ohau River winds through the sinuosities of a fertile valley, on the green banks and slopes of which stand many charming farms and homesteads....⁷⁴

James Cowan wrote in praise of the place and his essay was published widely (see Appendix C).



Lake Papaitonga, Horowhenua district, photographed by Henry Wright 1889–1910. ATL 1/1-020723-G.

74 *Cyclopedia of NZ (Wellington)*. Cyclopedia Co 1897 page 1106.



Maori wooden memorial known as Nga Rangi-o-Rehua or Te Koanga-o-rehua, made from a waka, and carved to mark the grave of Te Mahutu. It was erected at Pipiriki, on the Whanganui River, about the year 1824. About 1865 it was brought down the river to a cemetery in Putiki. Some time later Major Kemp presented the monument to Sir Walter Buller, where it stood at his home at Lake Papaitonga. When Buller died it was given to the Dominion Museum. Photograph taken in Pipiriki by William James Harding, between 1856 and 1865. ATL 1/4-017135-G



The pataka (storehouse) Te Takinga, built in 1820 by Ngati Piako of Te Arawa. In 1886 Gilbert Mair bought it for Walter Buller who erected it on his estate at Lake Papaitonga. After his death his family donated it to the Dominion Museum. It is now in Te Papa Tongarewa, the Museum of New Zealand. Photograph by George Leslie Adkin. ATL PA1-q-002-017.



Unidentified women inside the pataka at Lake Papaitonga in about 1910. Photograph William Williams. ATL PAColl-0434-07.



“Ohau c.1900.” Lake Papaitonga (then commonly known as Buller Lake) was a popular boating and picnic spot at turn of the century.
Horowhenua Historical Society Inc.

The farm may have been too much for Leo, for in May 1896, “Mr Leo Buller has leased a large piece of his Ohau property to Mr McLeary. The slice, 400 acres, borders the main road.”⁷⁵

In June 1897,

For to-night, in honour of Her Majesty’s Diamond Jubilee, His Excellency the Administrator of the Government and Lady Prendergast have issued invitations for a ball at Government House, and as there are more than 500 persons who have accepted, the scene promises to be a brilliant one.⁷⁶

Among the guests were “Sir Walter, Miss, Mr. L., and Mr. P. Buller”.

Percy wrote to his uncle Gilbert Mair on 1 July,

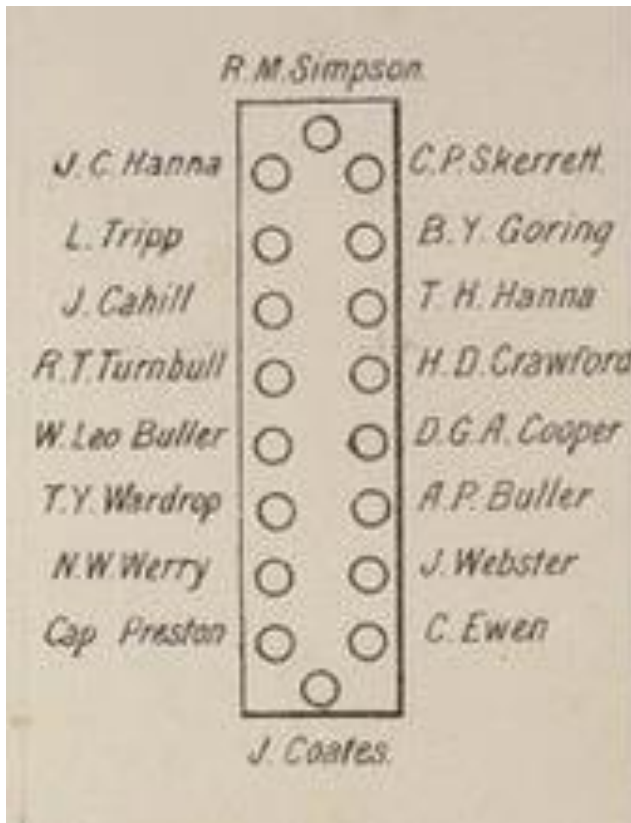
⁷⁵ *Evening Post* 27 May 1896.

⁷⁶ *Evening Post* 23 June 1897 page 6.

My dear Tawa, Many thanks for game. They arrived in first class order (brace pheasants and three brace pigeons). Before Leo left he told me that you were going to send me down some and that you wished me to give some of them to Turnbull. This I did – namely 1 pheasant and a brace of pigeons. I have sampled the pigeons and they were excellent! The pheasant I am keeping a little longer. Game is very scarce in the Wellington shops, and very expensive, so what you sent was much appreciated. I was uncertain as to who the game bag belonged to, thinking it might be Fraser's but I received your telegram yesterday – and I am sending it up to you by Parcel Post, today. Leo would reach London last Sunday week, just in time for the Jubilee. Lucky chap, isn't he? What a glorious sight the pageant must have been. What I should like to have seen most, it would have been the Naval review at Spithead. What a tremendous ovation they have given the Premier. I suppose it is quite right and proper, so as to weld the link between the Mother Country – but as to the Cambridge University conferring its highest degree of learning (the L.L.D.) on a man without a single aspirate, well, its enough to make one ashamed of one's Alma Mater. They will probably yet make him a Dr. of Divinity, and then the farce will be complete! How insufferable he (Seddon) will be on his return – simply bursting with brag and bounce. Really Tawa, this country, with its present Government, is not fit to live in. Our Horowhenua case comes off in the Supreme Court, we hope on 8th of August, when we will win all down the line. Pater & Laura are at Papaitonga. The Appellate Court is still sitting at Levin, and adjourns on the 11th of next month. No news to give you. I have heard several times from Leo, at different points of call. Yours ever. A.P.B. I beg that you will graciously accept the enclosed triumph of a local photographer.⁷⁷

77 AP Buller to Gilbert Mair 1 July 1897. ATL MS-Papers-8151. The photograph has not survived.

On 4 July 1896 the Buller brothers attended a farewell dinner at the Wellington Club for James Crawford Hanna, who had been manager of the Wellington office of the New Zealand Insurance Company, but who was now moving to Auckland. Most of the guests were social giants or sports enthusiasts – Leonard Tripp, Robert Turnbull, Charles Perrin Skerrett among them. A copy of the printed menu and seating arrangement has survived,



The seating for dinner at the Wellington Club on 4 July 1896.
Detail of ATL Eph-A-DINING-1896-01.

On 11 August HD Bell, with him Percy Buller, would represent Sir Walter before his Honour the Chief Justice in the start of a complex dispute over the land in the Horowhenua.⁷⁸

Mr. Theo. Cooper, and with him Messrs. E. Stafford and Baldwin, appeared for the Public Trustee. Mr. H. D. Bell and Mr. A. P. Buller (instructed by Messrs. Buller and Anderson) for the defendant Sir Walter Buller; and Sir Robert Stout (instructed by Mr. F. C. Beddard) for the defendant Major Kemp.⁷⁹

Preoccupied though they were, Percy and Sir Walter found time the next day to attend His Excellency Lord Ranfurly's first levee at Government House at midday.⁸⁰

Percy was elected a member of the Port Nicholson Yacht Club (AH Turnbull, Vice-Commodore) on 30 August.⁸¹

Leo returned to England, visited Sir Thomas Storey at Chirk in north Wales⁸² ("N.B." darkly hinted the *Evening Standard*), then, in December returned to London,

He expects to remain in England some months yet. Sir Walter is expected early in December. I understand he intended to come Home some time ago but felt he could not leave the colony until his differences with the Minister of Lands were conclusively settled.⁸³

Alex Turnbull wrote to his brother Rob,

I had Hugh and Percy up to lunch the day before yesterday and the latter fired off all the usual stale old wheezes. The

78 see Re Horowhenua (1899) NZ Law Reports 481.

79 *Evening Post* 11 August 1897 page 5. Bell was a founder of the law firm Bell Gully, Buller a founder of Buddle Findlay.

80 *Evening Post* 12 August 1897 page 6.

81 *Evening Post* 31 August 1897 page 2.

82 *Evening Standard* 4 October 1897.

83 *Auckland Star* 1 December 1897.

*divine one is staying next door to us and occasionally drops in to smoke a cigarette in the evening; her hair is a beautiful golden hue now and she has made a most artistic job of it!*⁸⁴

Percy is laid up with rheumatism again – not a bad attack I think but bad enough to set him swearing and blaspheming. He is learning the bike (a special machine) and I went down to the drill shed on Saturday to watch him – he is very cautious about it as you may imagine.

The Horowhenua case dragged on; Percy attended the Governor's levee in May 1898 in honour of Her Majesty's birthday⁸⁵ and "Sir Walter, Miss and Mr AP Buller" were invited to the Birthday Ball. The "Brilliant Function at Government House" was the subject of a report "SPECIALLY WRITTEN BY OUR LADY CORRESPONDENT" in the *New Zealand Times* of 27 May 1898,

It is strange to step out of the frosty darkness, above powdered with stars, into the brilliant light and colour of the corridor of Government House. The delicately-coloured walls and white-panelled ceiling are lit by the beautiful clusters of electric lights, designed by Lady Ranfurly herself. Over the soft crimson carpet that stretches to the shadowy green of distant conservatory are passing the many guests, and behind us still is the continuous rumble of carriage wheels as vehicle after vehicle rolls up and deposits its occupants on the steps of the pillared portico.

All the three rooms are thrown open for dancing in to-night. Seven hundred guests require no small amount of space, and the farther room, out of which the conservatory opens, and which is generally used as a

84 AH Turnbull to RT Turnbull 17 February 1898. Alexander Turnbull Letterbook III page 596. The "divine one" was Laura Buller.

85 *Evening Post* 25 May 1898 page 2.

drawing-room, has been pressed into the service. All the long windows are draped in the daintiest of frilled muslin curtains, the yellow satin ones, chosen by the Countess to harmonise with the walls, not having yet arrived from Home. Tall palms, bamboos and quaint Oriental plants break the soft colour here and there, the mantelpieces being a mass of greenery, against which the great crimson stars of the poinsettia gleam vividly.

Under the many lights – “imprisoned bits of moonlight” – that shine, each one with a power equal to 20 candles, from the white squares of the ceiling, and are pendant from artistic brackets on the wall, moves a gay, many-tinted throng. The soft, delicate colours blend and contrast, and form into exquisite groups, with here and there the glitter of a gorgeous uniform, or the more sombre splendour of a Court suit to give it substance.

The ballroom looks splendid, and the yellow walls gleam and shine. Already the floor is crowded, and one can, from a vantage point by the wall, see merely a sea of heads – curled, or severely and soldierly-cropped, bald or well-covered, aigretted, feathered and jewelled. Men to whom Nature has given few inches are standing on tip-toe, seeking desirable partners, and among the many pretty girls surely it is difficult to choose. There are many debutantes, who look very sweet in their dainty white. The Misses Reid, Dolly Tripe, Brandon, Douglas, Batts and Williams have all made their debut tonight, but indeed there are such a number of girls in white – often unrelieved by any colour – that it is difficult to pick them out from the many.

At last a little expectant stir, and the band on the crimson platform in the centre room struck up “God Save the Queen,” and the Vice-Regal party enters. The Governor wears his splendid uniform, and Lady Ranfurly is gowned in green satin of a most exquisite

tint. The skirt is veiled with beautiful gold lace, and masses of great double Czar violets cluster down one side. The bodice is covered with jewelled net and clustered violets, and in the Countess's dark hair hoops of violets rise from behind her magnificent tiara of emeralds and diamonds, while stars of diamonds encircle the coil at the back. Lady Ranfurly wears more of her lovely jewels about her neck and bodice, and carries in her hand a large fan of natural-tinted ostrich feathers.

Then commences the official set of Lancers, which had been arranged as follows – The Governor and Mrs Wallis; Lady Ranfurly and Rear-Admiral Rearson; Colonel Cavendish and Mrs Seddon; Lady Berkeley and Right Hon R. J. Seddon; Sir Henry Berkeley and Mrs Walker; Mrs Renton and the Comte de Court; Lady Douglas and Captain Dicken, R.N.; the Comtesse de Courte and Colonel Penton.

Had the many guests who were not dancing gone out to the corridors or the verandah, the dancers would have had enough room, but they were standing at first three deep along the walls, and took up no inconsiderable amount of floor space. But indeed it was no wonder they were loth to leave such a gay scene.

Infinite in number were the many resting-places, and an errant partner would be ill to find in the long passages and alcoves. One place in particular – a nest of pale-hued silken cushions in an Oriental recess – just fitted two duets, and given an interesting partner, one could not be blamed for lingering there. Lounges, luxurious chairs, inviting sofas are placed all along the corridors and the verandah amid tall plants and stately palms.

The verandah, curtained with flags of many nations, is no longer full of mysterious waving shadows made by the swaying lanterns. To-night the delightful resting-place is brilliant under the electric light, and abounds in

cosy nooks and corners for the sitters-out, who can watch the dancers swaying to the rhythm of the music in the ballroom beyond.

From here we enter Lady Ranfurly's own artistic sitting-room, a very haven of shadowed peace, with soft, low lights, and cushions that seem to invite you to rest against them. Here, too, are some of the Countess' beautiful pictures and many interesting things to look at. The night is cold – bitterly cold – but the conservatory is patrolled by many daring pairs. The lights under the glass roof are half veiled beneath a delicate tracery of green leaves, and among the foliage of many strange plants are bright-hued flowers.

The broad, crimson-carpeted staircase leads to the long upper corridor. From the balustrade above our heads hangs the magnificent large kiwi mat – a priceless gift in these modern days – presented to the Countess by Major Kemp only a month before the death of that gallant soldier. In the supper-room the vivid crimson walls form a splendid background for the gleaming silver plate and the long tables, laden with dainties, were decorated with great silver bowls filled with foliage. The tables are arranged this evening in three sides of a square, it being impossible to accommodate so many guests at the cozy little tables that were used at former functions. Crimson curtains of the same colour as the walls drape the windows. It is impossible to describe the vivid warmth and brilliancy of the supper-room, illumined by the many soft lights reflected in the silver and glass. In the supper-room a window has been taken out, and down some steps, under an awning, the guests walk into a marquee, which forms another supper-room. Beyond this is still another, and standing on the steps and looking down on the many prettily-spread tables, stretching far beyond to the limits of the further tent, the scene is wonderfully

charming. Much trouble has been taken to ensure the ball being a success, but as well as trouble, the artistic taste of the Countess is seen everywhere, for she herself superintends and designs all arrangements and decorations.

The billiard-room downstairs takes the place of the smaller tea-room formerly used on the upper floor, and affords much more space. The arrangements are excellent, and all the vice-regal party spare no trouble to make the Birthday ball an unqualified success. Captain Alexander, the Hon Hill-Trevor and Captain Ward are ubiquitous, and much of the success of the function is owing to their courtesy and attention. Among such a multitude of gowns, one gets bewildered and there is space to only mention a few – Lady Constance had on a rose-pink frock brocaded with white flowers and a white chiffon frilled sash and ruffles. Her dark hair was bound with a black velvet ribbon. Mrs Wallis was gowned in cream satin, with drapery of lovely lace and touches of vivid green on skirt and bodice. Lady Douglas wore black net with crimson, and the Comtesse de Courte a trained accordion-pleated pink chiffon gown, with velvet arm-straps, and white osprey in her back hair, and emerald and diamond ornaments. Lady Berkeley wore grey and white brocade, with beautiful lace; Lady Stout, cream brocade, with jewelled trimming; and Mrs Seddon a handsome heliotrope brocade, with much pale yellow lace draped about the low bodice. The more sombre evening dress of the majority of the guests was relieved by the brilliant uniforms of the officers from the warships, the Commandant of the forces and Volunteer officers.⁸⁶

86 *New Zealand Times* 27 May 1898 page 3.

Leo and Rob Turnbull returned in the *Oruba*, arriving in Albany in June.⁸⁷

In August all four Bullers attended a concert at Government House⁸⁸ and October 1898 saw a fancy dress ball there, when “Mr. A. Buller made a capital Friar Tuck, and looked fully as contented with his surroundings as his prototype”.⁸⁹ Sir Walter went as Governor of the Imperial Institute (of course); Laura was Marguerite de Valois and Leo was a Zouave.

Alex Turnbull wrote to his sister Isabella on 26 October 1898,

*Everybody is excited about the Fancy Dress Ball at Government House tomorrow night, what with that and the chance of war with France Wellington is quite in a ferment. Sissy is going to the Ball as some picture she found in a book. Walter Bethune is to appear in my kilt. Laura Buller as Marguerite of Valois. Mr. Coates as Henri of Navarre and so on.*⁹⁰

Percy was not neglecting his entomology, and Walter read his son’s second scientific paper at the Philosophical Society on 22 November, a report of the appearance of an unusual butterfly captured at Ohau: the paper later appeared in the *Transactions*.⁹¹

87 *Press* 4 June 1898.

88 *Evening Post* 8 August 1898 page 5.

89 *Evening Post* 29 October 1898 page 2.

90 AH Turnbull to Isabella 26 October 1898. Alexander Turnbull Letterbook IV page 93.

91 AP Buller 1898. On the appearance of *Anosia bolina* in the Wellington district. *Trans Proc. Roy. Soc. N.Z.* 31: 38–39.

WELLINGTON PHILOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY.

GENERAL Meeting on TUESDAY, the
22nd inst., at Colonial Museum at 8
p.m.

PAPERS:

1. Ornithology of N.Z., by Sir Walter Buller.
2. The November Shooting Stars, by Sir James Hector.
3. Butterfly *Anosia bolina*, by A. P. Buller.

R. B. GORE,
Secretary.

Evening Post 19 November 1898 page 6.



Hypolimnas bolina nerina, the Australian common eggfly.
<https://antropocene.it/en/2023/01/25/hypolimnas-bolina-2/>.

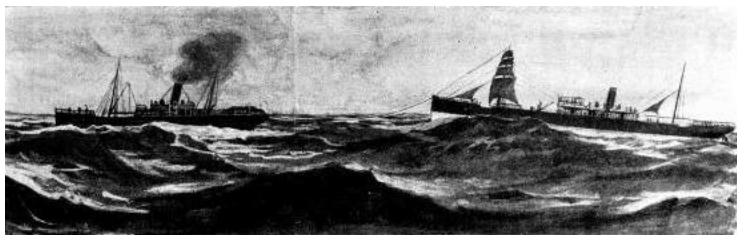


Mr Percy Buller: "Friar Tuck." Kinsey. Photo.
New Zealand Graphic 3 December 1898 page 716.

Still the Horowhenua land case dragged on, Sir Walter, Miss and Mr P Buller attended Lady Ranfurly's "At Home" in January 1899⁹² (Mr and Mrs Malcolm Ross were also present) and Percy gave his annual five shillings to the SPCA.⁹³

Leo and Laura sailed for England and Percy and Sir Walter followed in the Union Steam Ship Company's s.s. *Talune* leaving Wellington on 9 June, ostensibly bound direct to Sydney.

But eight weeks earlier, the Company's ship *Perthshire* had gone missing on a voyage from Sydney to Bluff and the *Talune's* Captain Spinks informed his passengers that he would change course to the north and search for the *Perthshire*. Eventually they found her between Norfolk and Lord Howe islands and with considerable difficulty towed her back to Sydney. Percy wrote a gripping account of the rescue, published first in Sydney followed by another version in *Strand* magazine, illustrated with photographs taken by Sir Walter. See Appendix B.



The *Talune* towing the *Perthshire*.⁹⁴

92 *New Zealand Mail* 5 January 1899 page 12.

93 *Evening Post* 13 June 1899 page 5.

94 The Finding of the *Perthshire*. *The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 24 Jun 1899 page 1472.

Sir Walter Buller, on behalf of the saloon passengers, presented the following address:— “Dear Captain Spinks — Before bidding yourself and your gallant Talune au revoir at the conclusion of this eventful trip, we take this pleasurable opportunity of asking you to accept our heartiest congratulations on the success of your mission in first finding the long-disabled Perthshire in this vast expanse of Pacific, and, further, in towing her safely upwards of 800 miles to the haven of Port Jackson, thereby removing much widespread public anxiety. We can assure you of our sympathy with your feelings during this period of responsibility and anxious experiences. Particularly do we admire the masterly way you handled your steamer when in close proximity to the Perthshire, when a heavy sea was running. At that critical and apparently perilous moment your cool demeanour considerably allayed the nervous apprehensions endured by your passengers. Then, again, the getting of the line from the disabled ship after having broken the first hawser, and safely taking on board the 10-ton cable, was accomplished in such a dexterous and expeditious manner as to command our utmost confidence in the captain who had practically had two large steamers and several hundreds of souls thereon in his charge. Any eulogy expressed such as this would be incomplete without a reference to the efforts of your officers and gallant crew, their behaviour being a theme of admiration. In conclusion, let us trust that substantial salvage will reward your indomitable efforts; and that these waters may long know the most genial and courteous of commanders, your good self, together with your ship and crew, is the truest wish of the undersigned.” Here followed some 45 signatures.⁹⁵

95 *Otago Daily Times* 30 June 1899 page 4.

Not everyone was so admiring. The captain of the *Perthshire* claimed she was well on her way to port and didn't need rescuing, so the Union Company received only £5000 of the £20,000 salvage money it was expecting. Furthermore the prolongation of the *Talune's* voyage resulted in her cargo of onions rotting and the Union Company was later successfully sued by the produce merchants.⁹⁶

Percy's account was widely reported in New Zealand,

An excellent article on the finding of the s.s. "Perthshire" appears in the current number of the "Strand Magazine." It is entitled "In Search of a Derelict," and is written by Mr A. P. Buller, the illustrations being reproductions of capital snapshots taken by his father, Sir Walter Buller. The article is exceedingly vivid and picturesque, and I understand that the editor of the "Strand Magazine" expressed in most cordial and complimentary terms his admiration of its merit.⁹⁷

The *Free Lance* adopted a tone of cosy familiarity tinged with sarcasm,

Percy Buller, lawyer by profession, and clubman by nature, has had serious thoughts of forsaking both lines of life, and becoming a literary man. At least, he has been overheard warmly debating the matter with his cronies in the secluded corner of Wellington Club. His temptation came about in this way He was fortunate enough to get lost – or his father (Sir Walter) got lost, or some other member of the family got lost – with the *Perthshire* – or he or Sir Walter or some other person was on the steamship which found the *Perthshire* – and P.B. (or the other B.s) took a number of photographs of the memorable long-voyager. At any rate, Percy B. had the

96 *Nelson Evening Mail* 7 December 1900 page 3.

97 *Otago Daily Times* 14 December 1899 page 8.

photographs, and he wrote an article round those pictures. This literary exercise was sent to the “Sydney Mail.” To the writer’s surprise, he received five guineas where he expected an acknowledgment. Fired with ambition, he sent similar material to the “Strand Magazine” and received 15 guineas, with a request for more good things! He says now that if there is a union of magazine writers that can keep up prices like these he will become a member.⁹⁸

Walter Buller sailed from Brisbane to Vancouver in the *Aorangi*, spent some time in Canada and the USA and went on to London to join Leo and Laura.

Percy returned to Wellington in the *Wakatipu* leaving Sydney on 11 July. In October he attended a reception at Government House in honour of the contingent of men preparing to go to South Africa⁹⁹ and on 7 February 1900 was among the guests of the Count and Countess de Comte at “an enjoyable garden party in the grounds of the French Consulate, Fitzherbert terrace”.¹⁰⁰

On 22 March 1900 Percy wrote to Sir James Hector,

*My father has authorised me to offer Mr. Bradshaw £26 for the yellow kakapo now in your keeping – I have telegraphed him offering that amount and in reply he has accepted, I now acknowledge receipt of the skin from you, together with the blank cheque left by my father which you have now cancelled. I will forward Buller & Anderson Trust A/c cheque for £26 to Mr. Bradshaw by todays registered Post.*¹⁰¹

98 *Free Lance* 26 January 1901 page 3.

99 *New Zealand Times* 21 October 1899 page 5.

100 *New Zealand Times* 8 February 1900 page 7.

101 Te Papa MU000147-007-0316.

The note is hastily handwritten on Colonial Museum notepaper, a formal record of the transaction, no doubt at Hector's insistence.

Meanwhile, in London,

Another engagement just announced is that of Miss Buller, daughter of Sir Walter Buller to Mr Storey, of London. Miss Buller and her father are at present visiting England.¹⁰²

The Storeys lived in Chirk, so *that* was why Leo visited Chirk and the *Evening Standard* hinted "N.B." Percy unsuccessfully defended a Mr Harris in a receivership case in September¹⁰³ and in October,

There was an excellent attendance at the Sailors' Rest last evening, when Miss Hilda Williams provided a varied programme consisting of songs and recitations. The following took part: – Misses Hilda Williams and Flanagan, Mr. Buller (banjo), Messrs. Schalz and Harrison, Miss Pharazyn contributed a piano solo. The room looked very bright, being decorated with flowers, Chinese lanterns, etc. The stage curtains presented by Mr. A. H. Turnbull greatly enhanced the effect.¹⁰⁴

Percy was enjoying himself,

In the enclosure at the racecourse, where a picturesque thatched house stands, Mr and Mrs Heaton Rhodes entertained a number of guests at luncheon on Monday. The day was a fine sample of the Carnival weather, and the luncheon was much enjoyed. Among those invited were Mrs Wardrop and Miss Bell, Dr May and Lieutenant Rideout (of the Mildura), Mr Coates, Mr P.

102 *Otago Witness* 5 October 1899 page 51.

103 *Evening Post* 15 September 1900 page 4.

104 *Evening Post* 23 October 1900 page 5.

Buller, Mr and Mrs Malcolm Ross, and Baron Wedel (of Wanganui). These out-of-door functions are extremely jolly, especially when there is the additional attraction of the races before and after.¹⁰⁵

Percy had a springer spaniel named Nap who appears in the formal portrait used here as a frontispiece. He also stars in a series of photographs taken on New Year's Day 1901 at Papaitonga and the Ohau river by Charles Hill-Trevor and Percy Buller.

Dogs were a part of his life. Percy, aged 16, won a special award for his Newfoundland dog in the Wellington Poultry, Pigeon, Canary and Dog Show in 1882,¹⁰⁶ Leo's "Spot" was very highly commended at the New Zealand Kennel Club's Dog Show in 1892¹⁰⁷ and Percy was a member of the Wellington Kennel Club in 1905.¹⁰⁸

The name Nap may have may have been meant to imply habitual somnolence or may have been short for Napoleon and as such may have referred to the little Emperor ("he was not physically imposing but he had a hypnotic impact on people and seemingly bent the strongest leaders to his will"¹⁰⁹), or to a popular card game of the time,

A witness in a case at Court on Thursday stated that he joined a number of friends in a game of Napoleon, called "Nap" for short. "What is nap?" asked the examining lawyer, whereupon the auditors smiled. "Well, I don't know, further than that it is the name of it," was the response, "How do you play nap?" asked the counsel, and the Court again smiled. "I can't describe it," said the

105 *Free Lance* 17 November 1900 page 8.

106 *Evening Post* 6 October 1882 page 3.

107 *Evening Post* 6 February 1892 page 2.

108 *New Zealand Mail* 6 September 1905 page 54.

109 <https://historyandartblog.wordpress.com/2015/12/20/napoleon-personality/>.

witness. A second lawyer engaged in the case remarked that his learned friend was awfully innocent and said he supposed they could take it for granted that the R. M. knew what the game was. His Worship's reply was inaudible, but the witness vouchsafed the information that the first man after the dealer had the first show of "making" and if he went three the next man could go four if his "hand" warranted it, and should another player have what is called a full or "nap" hand he could "go the whole hog." This satisfied the Court, and the auditors came to the conclusion that there was no doubt of his having "been there."¹¹⁰

Charles Hill-Trevor was Aide-de-Camp to Uchter John Mark Knox, 5th Earl of Ranfurly, Governor of New Zealand from 1897 to 1904.



Lady Constance Knox (Lord Ranfurly's eldest daughter)
with Charles Hill-Trevor. ATL PA1-f-194-39-2.

¹¹⁰ *Wairarapa Daily Times* 7 April 1891 page 2. In those days "auditors" meant simply "listeners".

The aide-de-camp would meet the Governor each day to discuss his programme and attend events. He would liaise with event managers, organise gifts for events, arrange travel, organise appointments and schedule, keep up with correspondence, and ensure speeches had been written. He would have been in charge of arrangements for the Royal Tour by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary) in June 1901.

The *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* recited his whakapapa,

The Hon. CHARLES EDWARD HILL-TREVOR, Assistant Private Secretary to Lord Ranfurly, is the third son of the late Baron Trevor, of Brynkinalt, Chirk, North Wales (third son of the third Marquis of Downshire), and of the Hon. Mary Catherine Curzon (daughter of the Hon. and Rev. Alfred Curzon, and sister of Alfred, Lord Searsdale, of Keddelston, Derby). His paternal grandmother was Lady Maria Windsor, daughter of the fifth Earl of Plymouth. Lord Trevor—father of the subject of this notice—held a seat in the House of Commons for the same constituency from 1845 to 1880, and was a magistrate for Counties Salop, Nottingham, Denbigh, Flint, and Down, and deputy-lieutenant for Nottingham and Down. He was Major in the North Shropshire Yeomanry Cavalry from 1863 to 1872, and a lieutenant-colonel of the South Down Militia. In 1862, on succeeding to the estates of the late Viscount Dungannon, he assumed the additional name of Trevor. The Hon. Charles Hill-Trevor, who was born on the 23rd of December, 1863, was educated at Eton College. Entering the Militia in 1883, he was for some time captain of the third Battalion of Royal Welsh Fusiliers, from which regiment he resigned in 1893. Mr. Hill-Trevor had seven years' experience in orange-growing in Florida. United States of America. In 1887 he acquired

an estate in that country, which he still retains. He was appointed to the staff of His Excellency in June, 1897. The Hon. Charles Hill-Trevor is a member of "White's" Club, St. James' Street, London.¹¹¹

Hill-Trevor kept a scrapbook of photographs of Vice-regal occasions as well as private events in his own life. Two pages are devoted to a day's fishing with Percy Buller on the Ohau river on New Year's Day 1901. The photographs on the following pages are from his album,¹¹²

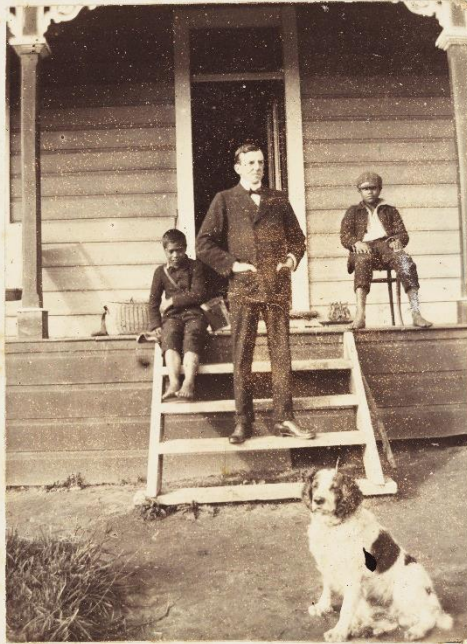


Lake Papaitonga, Ōhau. View From the Buller house.

111 *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand (Auckland Provincial District)* 1902. Cyclopedia Company, Christchurch.

112 Charles Edward Hill-Trevor, 3rd Baron, 1863-1950: Photographs of New Zealand and Cook Islands compiled during Vice-regal term of Lord Ranfurly. ATL: PA-f-142.

Papaitonga. Ohau.



Kahu

Puke - CHS Nap.

A fine New Year's morning on the steps of the Buller house at Papaitonga, Charles Hill-Trevor suited, collared and bow tied, shoes shining, ready for a day's fishing on the Ohau river. Barefoot assistants Puke (creel behind him, binoculars case over his shoulder) on the porch, Kahu on the bentwood and Nap in obedient pose on the foreground path.

Percy no doubt the photographer.



Nap swims the Ohau river after Hill-Trevor.



A. S. E. Buller lands ^{the} trout.
River Ohau.

It is Kahu, not Percy, whose feet get wet.



Percy invites Nap's interest in what is a good fish, but Nap, tail down, wet and shivering, isn't really focussed and looks as if he's had enough for the day.



Percy insists. Nap pleads, "No thank you. I just want to go home."
Puke watches Nap and Kahu scratches his head in puzzlement, barefoot on the stones. Does the walking stick represent his seniority? or is his left leg wasted by polio like Percy's right?

Percy wrote about another excursion with Hill-Trevor to his uncle Gilbert Mair,

Dear Tawa, Glad to get your letter of Oct 7th. Alex Turnbull showed me a "Press" the other day with a capital picture of you capturing the wily shark. He posted it to Leo. What sport that must be! Trout fishing very small potatoes in comparison. I have had some pretty good fishing this season – went out with Hill-Trevor on the opening day and we each got 15 nice ones. Every Saturday and Sunday sees me on the river, and the fresh air and the exertion is very enjoyable after the week in the office. By the way address Leo always to c/- AG for N.Z. Victoria St. London S.W. Cheery letters from the Pater & Kahurangi¹¹³ last mail. They are simply in clover in Hampton Court Palaace (sic). Pater sent me some beautiful photos in the last mail. Glorious old pile – (venereal pile as Mrs Malaprop termed it!) Henry VIII and his many wives lived in it, and the place is chock full of the past. I am slowly getting over Jock's death. A sum has just been on the estimates for the payment of our Horowhenua costs, so the bitterness of the whole thing is now at an end. But for Jock's deplorable death, we would never have been paid! Allan MHR tells me that Seddon's mana is by no means what it was, but nevertheless I predict that he will come back with a big majority next gen. election, unless the Opposition can find a strong leader. Russell is no sort of good at the game. The present session has been very uneventful and the statute book will be a very small one. I hope the idea of a National Museum for Maori curios will eventuate. If a fire proof building was erected in Wton I think it quite possible that the Pater would deposit his whole collection. At present they are packed away in cases, and lost to the world. I am glad you got such a good price for yours and tho' it must have been a wrench to part with it, it is a lot

113 His sister Laura. Kahurangi = "precious"; to be named Kahurangi is to receive a great honour. Alex Turnbull called her "the divine one".

*of satisfaction to know that it is on exhibition, and that thousands of people can inspect it. Sorry to hear that poor old Percy is bowled over again. I am glad to say that my health keeps A1 and I have almost forgotten what "relievers" are like. Well, very little news here, so adios. Ever yours, A.P.B. Isn't the dismissal of "Uncle Redvers" a tragic thing? What true words these are, "South Africa is the grave of reputations."*¹¹⁴

In February Percy represented the Union Steam Ship Company in a suit brought by the touring Stanford Dramatic Company (represented by Mr Tripp) to recover damages for delaying shipment of baggage from Lyttelton to Wellington.¹¹⁵

<p>O P E R A H O U S E</p> <hr/> <p>STANFORD DRAMATIC COMPANY STANFORD DRAMATIC COMPANY.</p> <hr/> <p>In consequence of non-arrival of Baggage and essential Properties for "THE POWER AND THE GLORY" from Christchurch, THE INITIAL PERFORMANCE IS P O S T P O N E D TILL TO-MORROW (TUESDAY) EVENING, At 7.45.</p>

114 Percy Buller to Gilbert Mair 26 October 1901. ATL MS-Papers-8151.

General Redvers Buller had just been dismissed as Commander in Chief of the British forces in South Africa.

115 *Evening Post* 22 February 1901 page 5.

On 7 May a select group of men were guests of the Governor,

A dinner party was held at Government House last night. His Excellency invited the following:— The Chief Justice (Sir Robert Siout), Sir James Prendergast, Sir Kenneth Douglas, the Mayor of Wellington (Mr. Aitken), Hon. T. Thompson, Lieut.-Colonel Hume, Major Owen, Captain J. G. Hughes, D.S.O., Rev. J. K. Elliott, Drs. Ewart and James, Messrs. J. B. Tunbridge, H. Beauchamp, A. P. Buller, Jas. Coates, C. Crawford, A. Duncan, W. Ferguson, T. Hamer, W. A. Kennedy, J. Plimmer, sen., N. Reid, C. P. Skerrett, E. Tregear, L. Tripp, and A. H. Turnbull.¹¹⁶

Australia marked the federation of its states with a series of Commonwealth celebrations in the early months of 1901. Events in Sydney included a parade of British Empire soldiers, including Ghurkas, Bombay Lancers and other Indian troops, who later toured New Zealand. The *Free Lance* published four photographs of the visitors by Percy Buller, with the paragraph,

We are indebted to Mr. A. P. Buller, of Buller and Anderson, solicitors, for the snap-shot photos which are reproduced on this page.¹¹⁷

James McRobert Geddis, also a frequent guest at Government House social events, was the editor and no doubt well known to Percy Buller – who was a member of the Wellington Camera Club, along with Alex and Rob Turnbull.¹¹⁸

But the big event of the year was the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, the future King George V and Queen Mary. The events in Wellington, the Empire City, were

116 *Evening Post* 8 May 1901 page 4.

117 *Free Lance* 2 March 1901 page 12.

118 *Evening Post* 9 June 1928 page 7.

joyous in their jingoism. A choir of 250 voices sang a specially written ode, of which the first verse will more than suffice,

Arise, Zealandia! high occasion waits;
A Royal squadron crowds thy rocky gates;
The Heir of Empire proudest message brings
O'er ocean highways from the home of kings.
Be glad, O Land! uplift exultant voice!
With mightiest song let every heart rejoice!
Let shout go forth o'er mountain, stream and plain,
And break triumphant o'er th' resounding main!¹¹⁹

Percy Buller was among the guests at Government House to welcome them. His uncle, Captain Gilbert Mair, organised the Royal couple's visit to Rotorua. The *Press* special correspondent explored the special "native camp" for Maori visitors, at the racecourse, noting, "Others we meet as we stroll about are Mr Buller and Mr Turnbull..."¹²⁰

Wellington's *Evening Post* evidently had the same special correspondent, but expanded the wording: "Others we meet as we stroll about are Mr. Buller and Mr. Turnbull, curious and interesting in the pouring rain..."¹²¹

Curious and interesting? strange and fascinating?

The *Otago Witness* gave a somewhat different meaning, "Others we meet as we stroll about are Mr Buller and Mr Turnbull, curious and interested..."¹²²

Eleven years later on 12 July 1912 Turnbull wrote to Gilbert Mair after his brother William's death,¹²³ recalling that Percy and he had stayed with William in Rotorua.

119 *Evening Post* 19 June 1901 page 5.

120 *Press* 14 June 1901 page 5.

121 *Evening Post* 14 June 1901 page 5.

122 *Otago Witness* 19 June 1901 page 29.

123 McCormick page 240. AH Turnbull to Gilbert Mair 12 July 1912.

“Christobal,” who wrote a Social Gossip column for the *Free Lance*, noted in July,

Major Madocks left last week en route for England. Mr. Buller went with him as far as Horowhenua, where they were both to stay till Monday.¹²⁴

William Robarts Napier Madocks, born in India in 1870, the grandson of General Lord Napier of Magdala, came to New Zealand in 1896 as Staff Officer to Major Penton, the Commandant of the New Zealand forces for the Boer War.

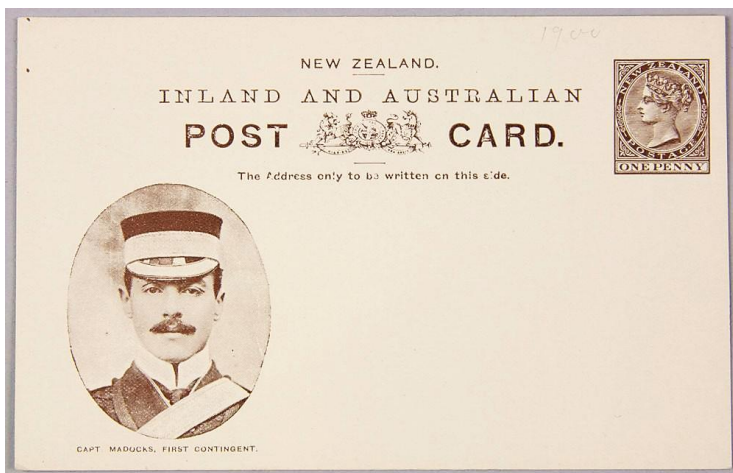
He was a popular guest at many social events, very often the same ones the Bullers attended. He played polo with Percy’s friends Charles Hill-Trevor, Leonard Tripp and Charles Skerrett.

He accompanied the New Zealand Contingent to the Transvaal in 1899. In 1900, New Zealand’s No.2 Company and Yorkshire troops were occupying a hill at Slingsfontein farm in Northern Cape, when the enemy advanced under cover of long-range fire.

The Yorkshire captain and colour sergeant were killed, but when Captain Madocks saw what was happening, “He dashed up, waved his hat, called on his men to fix bayonets, and with about 12 men dashed for the Boers, and jumped over the breastwork,” said a trooper. “Sergeants Gourlay and Connell, of Auckland, were side by side with him and both fell. Madocks got a bullet through his hat, and shot a Boer officer dead five yards away, who was aiming at him. The Boers fell back as soon as they saw the steel.”

The place was named New Zealand Hill after the battle and Madocks became a celebrity for his “pluck and gallantry” – though was not awarded the VC many thought he deserved.

124 *Free Lance* 20 July 1901 page 10.



Madocks's image on a Boer War postcard.



Madocks leading the charge against the Boers at New Zealand Hill (a bullet taking his hat off). An *Auckland Weekly News* illustration.

He returned as a hero to Wellington in 1901 and left for England in July,

Major Madocks, who has completed a five years' period of service with the Defence Department, left this morning for Auckland en route to America and England. He was entertained at a dinner last night at the Wellington Club, and presented with a draft for a substantial sum by the Polo Club.¹²⁵

“Miss Laura Buller’s engagement to Major Madocks, of New Zealand Hill fame, is announced,” the *Auckland Star* noted on 2 September 1902. (So much for Mr Storey of Chirk). The Madockses were married in January 1903.

In August 1901 his Excellency, the Governor and the Countess of Ranfurly hosted a concert to seamen at Government House,

There were songs, and recitations, and instrumental music, and some delightful old “chanties” by the sailors themselves. The sailors and their wives presented Lady Ranfurly with a basket. of beautiful flowers nicely arranged, and cheered her heartily as she smilingly accepted it. Later on they persuaded her to sing a Scotch song, and when they cheered and asked for an encore she gave them a pretty ditty, “The yellow rose of Texas”. Mr Buller, with his banjo songs, pleased the sailors immensely, and Mrs Malcolm Ross delighted them with several recitations, grave and gay.¹²⁶

Forrestina Elizabeth (known as Forrest) Grant, Otago teacher, had married Malcolm Ross, Otago journalist and distinguished sportsman, in 1890. He was one of the pioneers of the southern hinterland and of the Tasman valley and West Coast back country in particular.

They honeymooned in the Tasman valley and later she became the first woman member of the newly formed New Zealand

125 *Marlborough Express* 13 July 1901 page 4.

126 *Press* 31 August 1901 page 8.

Alpine Club. A glacier in the Tasman valley, the Forrest Ross Glacier, was named for her.

Both Forrest and Malcolm Ross helped to popularise mountaineering through lively descriptions of their expeditions in newspaper articles. From near Mt Cook he wrote,

Turner and I were left in the hut, and during these two days, in addition to doing the cooking and washing-up, I managed to find time to make a collection of beetles and butterflies for my friend, Mr. Percy Buller, of Wellington. Amongst the butterflies was the somewhat rare Hectori,¹²⁷ and one or two other species that may prove new to science. It is possible that amongst the beetles, which have not yet been classified, there may also be one or two new species.¹²⁸

Malcolm Ross was part of the first traverse (and fourth ascent) of Mt Cook in 1906. He was also a founding member and vice president of the New Zealand Alpine Club in 1891 and editor of the *New Zealand Alpine Journal* in 1893–94, a task which Forrest also briefly carried out.

The Ross family moved to Wellington in 1897. Malcolm became the Wellington and parliamentary correspondent for the *Otago Daily Times* and the *Christchurch Press*, and later the New Zealand correspondent for the *Melbourne Age* and *The Times* of London. Forrest became a parliamentary reporter for several papers and was appointed the first woman editor of the *Evening Post*. Her column of “Political news and notes” was lively and widely read.¹²⁹

127 The moth *Dasyuris hectorii* probably.

128 *Evening Post* 3 February 1906 page 9.

129 Extracted from Janet McCallum 1993, 2006. Ross, Forrestina Elizabeth and Ross, Malcolm, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand,

The Rosses attended the same society occasions that Percy Buller did during their time in Wellington and she and Percy often performed together at charity events.

Percy Buller was in the court news these days, though his firm had a “modest law practice.... The letter books of the period show the typical round of conveyancing sales, purchases and leases, quite a deal of debt collection but little litigation.”¹³⁰ Nonetheless the firm was apparently prospering, for,

A contract has been let to Messrs Brown and Johnston by Messrs Buller and Anderson, solicitors, for the erection of a two-storey brick building in Johnston street (opposite the Theatre Royal). Messrs Buller and Anderson will themselves use a portion of the building, and will let the rest for offices.¹³¹

Table tennis was invented in England in the early days of the 20th century. In England the Ping-Pong Association was formed in 1902 but broke up in about 1905, though apparently the game continued to be played outside London and by the 1920s was being played in many countries. It was being played in Wellington in 1901,

THERE is much excitement among the Terrace “Ping-Pong” players over a champion belt presented by Mr A. P. Buller, to be competed for first by the ladies. The belt, which is a sash by the way, is made of pink silk, with an appropriate inscription written across it, containing an equally appropriate Latin motto, though Latin and “Ping-Pong” seem far apart. On a red seal are two dainty crossed rackets, while two silver pins attach the sash to

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2r28/ross-forrestina-elizabeth>
(accessed 25 August 2023)

130 CG Pottinger 1995. *Portraits and precedents. 100 years of Buddle Findlay*. Buddle Findlay, Wellington

131 *New Zealand Times* 15 October 1901.

the shoulder of the fortunate owner pro tem. The sash is to be worn by her while she is playing the match. At present Mrs Ewen holds the trophy, winning it three times running. Miss Lily Edwin was also successful in securing the sash three times. There are ever so many competitors for the honour waiting their turn. Mr Buller himself is the champion “Ping-Pong” player of Mungaroa, and wears a blue sash in token of his laurels.¹³²

Mrs Stafford had a number of friends one evening last week, and cards and ping pong made the time pass most quickly. Mr Buller won the ping pong prize, a silver button-hook.¹³³

The belt Mr Buller presented to the Terrace ping-pongists, and which has been the object of some most exciting contests, is to be finally won in September.¹³⁴

The society columnists reported Percy’s presence at Government House at a dinner in September, a dance later in the month and a “brilliant” Coronation Ball in August 1902. In October 1902 he offered a trophy for competition at the Horowhenua Athletic Club’s Annual Sports; the Club presented it to the Best-dressed Highlander, with Pipes.¹³⁵

Walter Buller wrote from London to Gilbert Mair in November 1902,

(Leo) is, I am sorry to say, very slack about writing, not having sent a line to his brother for six mails past! He has congenial employment now, with none of the sentiment that he objected so much to in his former billet, and gets a clear £400 a year besides a little help I am able to give him from time to

132 *Free Lance* 26 October 1901 page 10.

133 *Evening Post* 15 February 1902.

134 *Evening Post* 12 July 1902.

135 *Evening Post* 29 October 1902 page 6.

time.... My “Kahurangi” proposes to be married about the middle of January. I shall be mokemoke¹³⁶ for a time!¹³⁷

Indeed, Walter escorted Laura to the altar of St Peter’s church, Eaton Square, on 7 January, when she and Major Madocks were married. Madocks’s father had recently died, so the ceremony was private and,

Of necessity her costume had to be of the quietest, but the general exclamation afterward was: “What a lovely bride!” She was attired in an ivory white cloth gown, trimmed with Irish lace and white chenille embroidery, made by Madame Rizoul, 19, Albemarle-street, and a large white panne picture hat, trimmed with chiffon and ostrich feathers, designed specially for the occasion, and made by “Lucy Crowe” (Miss Hawkins). A white ostrich feather stole and a large bunch of natural lilies of the valley fastened by a diamond crescent, completed the costume. Simple as the attire was, it was decidedly effective, and the bride was in every way a credit to the fair land of her birth.¹³⁸

Percy was otherwise engaged in Wellington – judging, along with headmaster JP Firth and Mrs Kirkcaldie, the “living poster competition” at a Garden Fete, in aid of the Veterans’ Home, held at the Wellington College grounds in February 1903.¹³⁹ The *Free Lance* noted the wedding,

Not a few Wellington folks were interested in the marriage in London recently of Major Madocks and Miss Buller. The bride spent a great deal of time in Wellington, and was very popular in society as became the pretty and only daughter of Sir Walter Buller. The

136 Mokemoke = lonely.

137 Walter Buller to Gilbert Mair November 1902. ATL MS-Papers-8151.

138 *New Zealand Herald* 19 February 1903 page 6.

139 *Free Lance* 14 February 1903 page 10.

only representative of the Buller family now left in Wellington is Mr. Percy Buller, who is in legal practice as the partner of Mr. Anderson. Major Madocks made many friends in the city when he was staff-officer to the then Commandant (Colonel Penton), and became something of a hero with the New Zealanders as an officer of our First Contingent in South Africa.¹⁴⁰

In April photographers Muir and Stewart took a group shot of members of the Wellington legal profession. Percy Buller is the short man in the boater and wide striped tie standing at right.



Members of the Wellington legal profession. Muir and Stewart 1903.
Free Lance 4 April 1903. National Library PA7=49-33.

140 *Free Lance* 17 January 1903 page 3.

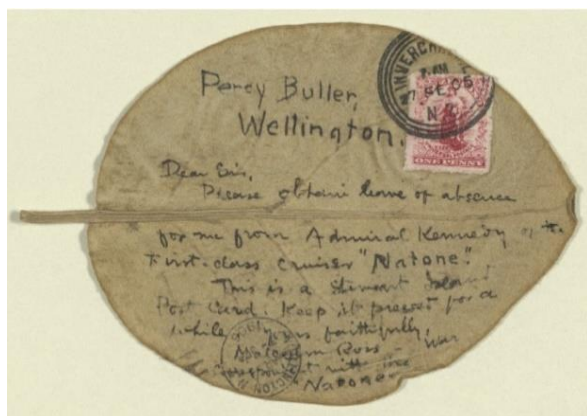


Percy Buller in 1903. Detail from Members of the Wellington legal profession. Muir and Stewart 1903. *Free Lance* 4 April 1903. National Library PA7=49-33.

In June the *Free Lance's* "All Sorts of People" column told its readers,

Mr. Malcolm Ross, well known in town as an ubiquitous gatherer of news for the London "Times" and other papers, is fond of experiments. He climbs mountains, rides high bikes, shoots deer, and all that kind of thing. One of Malcolm's latest investments was a post-card. He wrote a message on the blank side, put a miniature portrait of a friend on the address side, added "Southern Hemisphere," and dropped it in the box. He had heard a rumour that the postal authorities were fairly smart but he didn't believe it. Next day, Mr. A. P. Buller, the popular Wellington solicitor, got that card with his photograph on, with the official endorsement, "Try A. P. Buller Esq."¹⁴¹

Malcolm Ross sent Percy another postcard, preserved in the Rex Nan Kivell collection in the Australian National Library,



Malcolm Ross. Postcard. Rex Nan Kivell collection.¹⁴²

141 *Free Lance* 13 June 1903 page 3.

142 <https://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1394637>.

It reads, “*Dear Sir, Please obtain leave of absence for me from Admiral Kennedy of the First-class cruiser “Natone”. This is a Stewart Island Post Card. Keep it pressed for a while. Yours faithfully, Malcolm Ross – War Correspondent with the Natone.*”

It was a leaf postcard, written on a muttonbird scrub (*Brachyglottis rotundifolia*) leaf and posted from the Paterson Inlet Post Office (Ulva), Stewart Island. The *Natone* was the Union Company’s tug in Wellington and the Company’s manager, WA Kennedy and his wife would take passengers on social excursions to Somes Island at weekends. It seems Ross either travelled south in the *Natone* (I can find no evidence of such voyages) or was joking with Percy about harbour excursions.



Later Ross would become a real war correspondent, reporting from the Dardanelles and the Somme.

Malcolm Ross.
ATL 1/1-014723-G.

The *Evening Post's* "Ladies' Column: Girls' Gossip" reported,

Sailors make the most delightful of audiences – critical, appreciative, enthusiastic, and attentive – as those who have performed at the concerts down at the Sailors' Rest can testify. Last week an excellent entertainment was organised by Miss Julia Skerrett, a concert for which any reasonable person might willingly pay half-a-crown and judge it well expended. Miss Julia Skerrett herself sang delightfully, and the Miss Putnams also contributed charming music. But it was Major Moore and Mr. Percy Buller of whom the sailors could not have enough. They sang song after song, Mr. Buller accompanying himself on his banjo, and had the nautical audience had its way, the performers and sailors would not have gone home till morning. The Rest is a capital institution. I believe if the sailors themselves were to organise a concert, with dances and their own queer chanties, they could draw a large audience and materially increase the funds.¹⁴³

Percy was living at 1 Aurora Terrace but spent his weekends at Papaitonga. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary on Temple Chambers letterhead on 7 December 1903,

Sir, I have the honour to ask if you will be pleased to give me authority to procure a pair of live Crested Grebes, from Lake Manapouri. I am desirous of obtaining a pair to place on Sir Walter Bullers lake at Papaitonga (Manawatu).

The Lake is set apart as a "sanctuary" for wild birds, and shooting is never permitted thereon. It is a highly suitable locality for breeding purposes, and as the Crested Grebe is almost flightless, they would probably do very well there. I may say that I have written to the Secretary of the Acclimatisation Society at Invercargill, asking if they would offer any

143 *Evening Post* 13 June 1903 page 2 (*Supplement*).

objection, but he replies that his Society cannot give permission, but expresses the hope that I may accomplish my object, by applying to you under section 23 of the "Animals Protection Act 1880".

The suggestion as to obtaining the birds for the Papaitonga Lake, was made me by Mr. Justice Chapman, who considers that the Lake would be an ideal place for the Grebe to multiply.

I trust that you will give the matter your favourable consideration.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant...¹⁴⁴

Permission was granted, but whether the Grebes ever arrived is not recorded. Perhaps not, for shortly thereafter, on 12 April 1904 tragedy struck,

FIRE AT PAPAITONGA.

SIR WALTER BULLER'S HOUSE DESTROYED.

About midnight on Tuesday the six-roomed homestead on Sir Walter Buller's property at Lake Papaitonga was destroyed by fire, with all it contained. There were in the house at the time Mrs. Spicer (wife of the caretaker, who was away in Otaki), her three daughters and son and a visitor. Mrs. Spicer thought she heard some one call her and got up. On getting to the passage she found it full of smoke. In the front room the lining above the mantelpiece was blazing. She awakened the sleepers, but little could be done to save anything. They tried to get a piano out but could not, and the flames began to get a firm hold of the building, and the inmates had to take to the open air. Beyond some clothing belonging to young Spicer and the visitor (Mr. Martin) nothing was saved.

144 AP Buller to Colonial Secretary 7 December 1903. Archives NZ. R24857170.

The loss to Mr. Percy Buller is great, for he had a piano, many valuable curios, a choice collection of books, and general furniture in the house. The building was insured in the Standard for £350, and the furniture in the same office for £225. Mr. P. A. Buller states that he will rebuild shortly.

Mr. Spicer, the caretaker, lost heavily. When the stables were burned on this property a few months since he lost £50 worth of furniture stored there, and by the fire on Tuesday night he has lost every article belonging to the family, valued at £100.

The fire appears to have been caused by the subsidence of the breastwork of the chimney.¹⁴⁵

Percy was as good as his word,

Mr B. W. G. Coleridge has received instructions from Mr A. P. Buller to prepare plans, etc., of a residence to replace the buildings recently burnt down at Lake Papaitonga.¹⁴⁶

He sang, with Mrs Malcolm Ross and others, at the Sailors' Rest in April¹⁴⁷ and spoke, with George Hudson, at the July 1904 meeting of the Wellington Philosophical Society,

Papers.— 1. “On *Macro-lepidoptera* observed during the Summer of 1903–4, including a Note on the Occurrence of a Hawk-moth new to New Zealand,” by G. V. Hudson, F.E.S. (*Transactions*, p. 358.)

2. “Notes on the Occurrence of some Rare Species of *Lepidoptera*,” by A. P. Buller, F.E.S. (*Transactions*, p. 331.)

These two papers were discussed together. The President said that it was interesting to find that two

145 *Evening Post* 15 April 1904 page 5.

146 *New Zealand Times* 10 May 1904 page 4.

147 *Evening Post* 19 April 1904.

collectors, working independently of one another, had each, within the same short period of time, observed so very rare a description of moth as the one referred to in the title of Mr. Hudson's paper.

Mr. A. P. Buller then exhibited a collection of butterflies made by Mr. Ward, naturalist to Sir Henry Stanley's expedition in search of Emin Pasha. The thanks of the meeting were conveyed to Mr. Buller for his interesting exhibit.¹⁴⁸

The *Evening Post* reported Percy's remarks,

Those who object to moths would do well, apparently, to keep the white-flowered escallonia out of their gardens. Those, on the other hand, who collect lepidoptera, might follow Mr. A. P. Buller's example, and cultivate the plant in the interests of entomology. At the last meeting of the Philosophical Society, Mr. Buller described the shrub as the Mecca of moths and butterflies. Its flowers are fragrant and honeyed, and its attraction to these insects, by night or day, is irresistible. The scientific names of the various insects captured on this alluring plant, as enumerated by Mr. Buller, constituted an imposing list. They would brave even the rain to visit the flowers. The red-flowered variety, Mr. Buller added, had no such attraction.

These butterflies were collected in the heart of Africa by Mr Herbert Ward, when he was a member of Stanley's expedition in search of Emin Pasha. As those will remember who have read Stanley's book "Across the Dark Continent," the expedition spent six months in the Dark Forest before coming out on the upper reaches of the Congo. In this forest Mr Ward made a very large collection of butterflies and moths. Sir H. M. Stanley,

148 *Trans. Proc. Royal Society of New Zealand* 1904 page 601.

continuing his quest of Emin Pasha, left behind him the rearguard – amongst them Mr Ward – and they formed a camp, afterwards known to history as Starvation Camp. When Stanley returned to this camp he found a scene of desolation and death. Fever had broken out, the natives had mutinied, and Major Barttelot had been murdered. Mr Ward, whose life was spared, returned to England with his collection, which was presented to the British Museum. Mr Buller happening to be at the museum on the day the insects arrived there, the curator, Dr Bowdler Sharpe, gave him some of the specimens. These he exhibited to the Philosophical Society last night. They are very handsome, and of great variety.¹⁴⁹

But it must have been a chilly July night at the Philosophical Society, for two weeks later,

Mr. A. P. Buller, who has been confined to his room with an attack of pneumonia, was well enough to take outdoor exercise to-day.¹⁵⁰

His entomology was attracting attention. In August 1905 the *Free Lance* gossip column was written by “Little Miss Muffit” whose boisterous alliterative humour is possibly even more tiresome than that of his/her predecessors,

A perfidious bot fly buzzed perkily through the LANCE window on Tuesday, and we chased him with a waste-paper basket, and caught him. He is impaled as a “specimen” on the wall of the LANCE den. And why this entomological enthusiasm? Well, it is Mr. Percy Buller’s fault. You see, the LANCE spoke a while ago about a bug, beetle, moth, and butterfly enthusiast, yclept Bert Royle,

149 *New Zealand Mail* 13 July 1904 page 22.

AP Buller FES 1904. Notes on the appearance of some rare speies of *Lepidoptera*. *Trans Proc. Roy. Soc. N.Z.* 37: 331–333.

150 *Evening Post* 30 July 1904 page 5.

of the J. C. Williamson staff, and the bug, beetle, moth, and butterfly enthusiast first hereanbefore mentioned, previously unaware of the existence of another of his ilk, read about it with avidity, and encountered Royle, and charged him with being a bug-hunter, and they hobnobbed, and Percy saw Bert's bugs, and Bert gloated over Percy's butterfly collection. The twain are now cronies. And you, who are disposed to regard a butterfly-hunter as something of a crank, ought to see a good collection before you decide about cranks.

We have spent a splendid hour with Mr. Buller's, and few people know how very careful Nature has been to vary with amazing beauty her artistic creations. You don't know, for instance, that there are moths – great green, moths – flitting about Wellington that measure six inches across the wings. Mr. Buller has lots of them. People don't know that the pictures painted by Nature on the wings of butterflies, born usually to die unseen, far exceed in beauty the paintings of a Leighton. But it is so. You are not enthusiastic when a beetle hits you in the eye, and “nearly knocks you off de hoss,” but go and see the myriads of beetles possible only to the enthusiast who is willing to spend days perhaps in the capturing of a single specimen, and it will stir you to endeavour.

Nature is canny. She paints her insects to match her scenery, and she protects them by making them resemble leaves, or flowers, or sticks. She made a twelve-inch butterfly for Indian service, and told him to go to sleep without fear. Nobody – except a Buller – would touch him, because when the great wings are folded they exactly resemble the head of the deadly cobra di capello about to strike! Mr. Buller has chased the nimble insect since boyhood, and only during his English residence (he is a Cambridge man) did he “give it best.” He has weird beasts that are imagined only in one's most horrid after-

heavy-supper sleeps, or that might be conjured up by a delirium tremens patient. We have been seeing butterflies and bugs and moths and beetles like sticks ever since we left the Buller bachelor quarters. But, wait a bit! There's a fly! Bizz! Bang! He is ours!¹⁵¹

Mr. Bert. Royle, musical comedy writer, Williamson manager, butterfly collector and “doggy” man, talks moths and beetles and bugs and butterflies whenever he gets the least show. He has about the best collection in New Zealand. One day, in the not very remote past, there was a wharf-labourer near the ships in harbour. There fluttered on to his arm a drowsy moth. He was a kind man. He didn't flick it off and he saw it was a remarkable looking animal. A man who appeared to know things asked him to keep quiet while he went for Mr. Royle.... A few minutes later, Mr. Royle was looking at that strange insect with the paleness of a great joy. The moth was transferred to the coat-sleeve of the enthusiast, and is now one of the most valued of the collection. Lest you should smile at this enthusiasm, it is only necessary to say that Mr. Percy Buller, a brother moth frother, got word and was on the spot as quickly as possible. He offered £30 for that insect! Perhaps, Wellingtonians are not aware that the city has green moths with a six-inch beam inhabiting its atmosphere. The £30 moth was, of course, a foreigner, possibly from a boat.¹⁵²

William Burton (“Bert”) Royle, actor and songwriter, in 1898 became the New Zealand representative of JC Williamson's theatrical and production company. Williamson was Australia's foremost impresario. He lived in Wellington until his death in

151 *Free Lance* 19 August 1905 page 10.

152 *Free Lance* 1 September 1906 page 3.

1929.¹⁵³ I can find no record of his insect collections, but here are the words of one of his songs,

I've often watch'd the woolly bear as he slowly creeps along,
Blind to the charms of flowers fair, deaf to the Bee's gay song.
He dreams not of the joy in store, when a butterfly he'll be;
So was my life all gloom before love lit the world for me.

*Sweetheart were I a butterfly, I'll flit from flow'r to flow'r;
And bear their sweets on silken wing from nature's fragrant bower.
I'll capture as I flutter by the golden sunbeams too
And all my treasure trove I'll bring to you, my love, to you!*

I've seen the chrysalis entombed in his dark cheerless cell,
Like some poor stricken fairy doomed by wizard's evil spell;
Then open bursts his prison-gate, like a jewel of bliss wakes he.
So shone my soul sweetheart when fate with love transfigured me.

*Sweetheart were I a butterfly....*¹⁵⁴

Percy Buller made watercolours of a range of New Zealand butterflies and moths (see Appendix A). He left his portfolio to Alexander Turnbull who (after 1910) bound most of them with the 1893 envelope carrying Percy's caricature of Turnbull. There is no indication the paintings were made in 1893.

Turnbull was probably referring to Percy's miniature watercolours when he wrote to his brother Rob in 1891,

*I am sending you a Strand Magazine containing some Post Office curiosities & when you have read it, pass it on to Percy, at the same time drawing his attention to what the writer of the article says about writing on postage stamps.*¹⁵⁵

153 <https://ozvta.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/royle-bert-722014.pdf>.

154 "Were I a butterfly" words by Bert Royle, music by Arthur King. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-165268360/view?partId=nla.obj-165268371#page/n0/mode/1up>.

155 AH Turnbull to RT Turnbull 28 May 1891. Alexander Turnbull Letterbook I page 50, referring to *Strand* magazine 1891. 1: page 520.

It is not clear just when he painted these images but his statement (above) that he “gave it (his) best” while he was at Cambridge may be informative.¹⁵⁶

Arthur Percival Buller was elected F.E.S. – a Fellow of the Entomological Society, London – on 5 November 1902. New Fellows had to be nominated by at least three current members and elected by two thirds of the members. The Royal Entomological Society (as it is now) no longer has a record of who nominated Buller for Fellowship.

Along with Leonard Tripp, Alex and Rob Turnbull, Charles Skerrett and other Wellington men, Percy was on the committee for the Racing Club Ball in July 1905. It was held on 13 July in the new Town Hall and was declared “Brilliant”.¹⁵⁷

Whilst all the officers and stewards of the Club contributed their quota of time and energy to the preparations for the ball, it was acknowledged on all hands that to Mr. P. Buller was due the greater share of the credit for the highly successful result of the function.¹⁵⁸

Shortly after this though, Percy Buller contracted a serious illness and there was fear for his recovery.

The diagnosis is not recorded but this was probably acute glomerulonephritis, then known as Bright’s Disease and less than five years later it would kill him.

The newspaper reports of the ebb and flow of his indisposition were frequent, if brief,

156 There is, however, no mention of him in *Psyche*, the Cambridge Entomological journal, between 1886 and 1890.

157 *New Zealand Herald* 14 July 1905 page 6.

158 *Evening Post* 14 July 1905 page 2.

The condition of Mr. Percy Buller, who has been very ill, is now much improved. He is able to leave his bed, but is not well enough to resume his professional duties.¹⁵⁹

Mr Percy Buller is recovering from the illness that has incapacitated him of late.¹⁶⁰

Mr. A. P. Buller, who for some weeks past has been unable, owing to illness, to attend to his professional duties, has suffered a relapse, and is again confined to his bed.¹⁶¹

Mr Percy Buller's condition shows no improvement. His brother is on his way from England, as, owing to serious illness, Sir Walter Buller is himself unable to visit New Zealand.¹⁶²

Mr A. P. Buller, son of Sir Walter Buller, who has for some months been confined to the house with a serious illness, has had a relapse, and is again confined to his bed.¹⁶³

Very great regret has been expressed at the serious illness of Mr. Percy Buller. Always so exceptionally cheerful, he has won scores of friends, who have been hoping that long e'er now he would be on the road to recovery. Sir Walter Buller has left England, and will arrive here next month. Mr. Buller is still bright and cheerful, and, although suffering greatly, meets his friends with a joke and a smile.¹⁶⁴

159 *Evening Post* 10 October 1905 page 4.

160 *New Zealand Mail* 18 October 1905 page 14.

161 *Evening Post* 8 November 1905 page 8.

162 *Otago Daily Times* 14 November 1905 page 12.

163 *Otago Witness* 15 November 1905 page 27.

164 *Free Lance* 18 November 1905 page 8. It was Leo, not Walter, who was on his way from England.

Mr. A. P. Buller, who has been seriously indisposed, has shown a marked improvement during the past few days.¹⁶⁵

Owing to the critical condition of Mr. Percy Buller, his medical attendants in the colony cabled to his father in London advising him to go out to New Zealand. Sir Walter Buller's own health, at the moment, made this impossible, so he decided to send his eldest son and to follow himself as soon as his doctor will allow him to travel so far. Accordingly, Mr. Leo Buller left a few days ago by the Orient steamer Orotava, and he expects to be in Wellington about December 10.¹⁶⁶

Mr. A. P. Buller, who has been in ill-health for some considerable time, will leave in a few weeks for England.¹⁶⁷

We are pleased to state that Mr Percy Buller is much better, and is daily gaining strength.¹⁶⁸

Percy Buller is about once more, and in due course will be heard of on the Rialto, or wherever else the legal fraternity most do congregate. He has had a pretty stiff ordeal to pass through since he was placed hors de combat in the early part of September, and, although some of his friends wore rueful faces behind his back, Percy's pluck never failed him, and, aided by careful tending, he has pulled prosperously through. We hope he will prove to be newer than ever, and able to hold his own against Bert Royle in the chase after beetles and butterflies.¹⁶⁹

165 *Evening Post* 21 November 1905 page 4.

166 *New Zealand Herald* 13 December 1905 page 6.

167 *Evening Post* 3 March 1906 page 5.

168 *New Zealand Mail* 27 December 1905 page 26.

169 *Free Lance* 17 February 1906 page 3.

Mr. A. P. Buller will leave by the Maheno on Saturday on a six months' visit to England and the Continent, embarking from Sydney in the Orient liner Oruba. Mr. Leo. Buller will return to England with him.¹⁷⁰

Mr. Buller turns his face to-day towards the Old Country, and, now that he is so much better, ought to have a most enjoyable trip. Some of his friends who had been associated with him on those fishing excursions when unsuspecting anglers used to haul up old boots tied on by frivolous-minded companions, presented him on Friday night with a little gold fish as a memento.¹⁷¹

Chapter 4: England again

Leo and Percy disembarked in June and it was winter,

Mr. Percy Buller (Wellington) and his brother, sons of Sir Walter Buller, have arrived in England. They reached London at the beginning of the current week, and I am glad to be able to report that Mr Percy Buller is in excellent health. They travelled from Australia by the Orient steamer Oruba as far as Marseilles, and came overland thence, via Paris, Calais, and Dover. Immediately on arrival they went through to Fleet, in Hampshire, to stay with their sister, Mrs. Madocks. It is with very great regret that I learn that the condition of Sir Walter Buller is still causing the gravest anxiety to his family. It is hoped that the summer months will prove beneficial to him. Sir Walter is still with his daughter,

170 *Evening Post* 28 March 1906 page 7.

171 *Evening Post* 31 March 1906.

Mrs. Madocks, who has for some time past been living at Pondtail Lodge, Fleet, Hampshire.¹⁷²

Mr A. P. Buller, of Wellington, who had been ill before leaving New Zealand for England a few weeks ago, arrived in London on May 14th. He was then in good health. Mr Buller was staying last month with his sister, Mrs Madocks, in Hampshire. Sir Walter Buller was with them. His condition then was causing much anxiety, but it was hoped that the approaching summer would act as a restorative. The bitterly cold weather of winter had been much against him.¹⁷³

The *Free Lance* columnist chose an unfortunate time for flippancy,

Mr. A. P. Buller, the cheery soul whom illness ne'er dismays, and who wields the law when he's here, writes from Hants, England. He assures us that, like a shipment of New Zealand butter, he has arrived in "prime condition," and it's comforting, because "Percy" had not been in "prime condition" for some time before. After a fortnight in Hants, Mr. Buller saw the English sun for the first time! He points out that the English climate is fickle, but it appears to us that it's pretty constant if the sun only shines once a fortnight.

Mr. Buller tells us that Vesuvius was sullenly smoking when he went ashore at Naples, and that town hadn't had time to dean up the ashes even then. He enthuses over the loveliness of rural England, so it is presumed that after he wrote the sun kept out a bit. Mr. Buller was staying at the time of writing with Major Madocks, an officer who has won the respect and affection of many New Zealanders, and whose wife is

172 *Evening Post* 27 June 1906 page 2.

173 *New Zealand Mail* 27 June 1906 page 44.

Mr. Buller's sister. It is hoped the change of scene and climate may restore Mr. Buller to permanently robust health. It is gratifying to the LANCE that so many friends in distant parts of the world remember the paper so kindly.¹⁷⁴

On 20 July Sir Walter Buller died at Pondtail Lodge, Fleet, his sons and daughter at his bedside. Every paper in New Zealand carried an obituary. He left Papaitonga to his children.

In August the *Evening Post's* London Correspondent wrote,

Mr. Percy Buller, I am glad to learn, is now in the best of health. He has been staying in Hampshire with his sister, Mrs. Madocks, but now has come up to London for a time. In July he hopes to go to Scotland, and at the end of that month to take a run over to Brussels to stay with friends prior to a few weeks' course of travel in Germany. Mr. Percy Buller expects to return to New Zealand about October.¹⁷⁵

Mr. Percy Buller has just returned to London from Brussels. He is staying for a few days at Hampton Court Palace with his sister, Mrs. Madocks. Later, he hopes to take a trip to Ireland....¹⁷⁶

Then Percy discovered the motor-car and, conscious of his need for publicity, wrote to his friends at the *Free Lance*,

Mr. Percy Buller, writing from the Royal Societies' Club, in London, tells the LANCE that for some time previous to the death of Sir Walter Buller, his relatives and friends were preparing for the inevitable. At the time he wrote has sister and brother-in-law, Mrs. and Major Madocks, were in London. Mr. Buller says he has been seeing

174 *Free Lance* 21 July 1906 page 3.

175 *Evening Post* 6 August 1906 page 6.

176 *Evening Post* 3 October 1906 page 3.

summer life in the English counties from a motor ear – “a forty horsepower creation that sent the indicator up to the rate of sixty-seven miles an hour.” Mr. Buller rather quaintly observes that the English country is a dream of beauty, but the *LANCE* expects he had to observe this beauty while the car was taking petrol aboard, or had broken down, or something. He has been visiting old-world villages and old Norman churches, and generally having the fine sort of time that one cannot get anywhere else but in Britain. Says he is going south with the swallows middle of this month, and to the Continent, picking up the boat at Marseilles, and arriving in Wellington in December. Talking about dreams of beauty, does he compare the English lanes to the Basin Reserve or the Botanical Gardens?¹⁷⁷



We don't know what make Percy's 40hp car was in 1906 but it would have been similar to this French 1906 Berliet 40hp 6.3 litre open drive limousine.

Percy left London for Paris on 19 November. His law partner John Anderson died in Wellington after a long illness on 22

¹⁷⁷ *Free Lance* 13 October 1906 page 10.

December.¹⁷⁸ Percy spent a few days in Paris, subsequently proceeding by rail to Marseilles where he joined the Orient-Pacific steamer *Ortona* by which he sailed on the 23rd for Australia on his way to New Zealand.¹⁷⁹ His car and Leo came with him.¹⁸⁰

Chapter 5: To and from New Zealand

They arrived on 2 January 1907.¹⁸¹ Percy left – with his car – and his chauffeur – for an Australian holiday in midjuly,¹⁸² returning in October on the *Monowai*.¹⁸³ The *Free Lance*'s gossip columnist loved it,

Mr. Percy Buller, with his chauffeur and motor car, all landed back in Wellington from Sydney last week. Mr. Buller has been having a great time in New South Wales, and has made his name famous in the Blue Mountains. The “Bulletin” got on his tracks over there, or, rather, on the tracks of his motor car, which was dubbed “The Blue Slayer.” Whether Mr. Buller’s car earned the title or not, one thing is certain, he travelled 3960 miles in it, with Sydney as his base. Mr. Buller put up at the Hotel Australia, and it is stated that all the other coloured slayers within some miles radius of Sydney shed petrol tears when the “Blue Slayer” parted from its comrades on the shore. Speaking of his car, which by the way, is registered W115, Mr. Buller says it came through

178 *Evening Post* 22 December 1906 page 5.

179 *Evening Post* 24 December 1906 page 7.

180 *North Otago Times* 31 December 1906 page 4.

181 *Wairarapa Daily Times* 3 January 1907 page 5.

182 *Clutha Leader* 26 July 1907 page 7.

183 *Evening Post* 24 October 1907 page 7.

without a single hitch – only its number became exaggerated. The incident is worth noting from the “Bulletin”....

“Miss Marie Narelle¹⁸⁴ was staying at Medlow last week when a Maorilander fellow-visitor offered her a spin in his car to look at Somebody’s Leap, or Anybody’s Falls, or some such jump. W11537291384444 (the M.L. cars carry numbers, so that when they run over a person the crushed party is able to tell the constable the slayer’s



Marie Narelle

figure ere he sinks back a mangled remains) – well, K337.251, with its owner and the melodious heavyweight aboard, whizzed from the premises in the presence of all the guests. It did so in a blinding shower of rice. The waste of the rice would have made a Chinaman weep.

“Passengers and chauffeur shed grain on the dusty red road, and the birds of the air ate thereof. The inhabitants of the various townships stared and grinned. A motor hates to be laughed at, just as a dog hates sarcasm. W115392 began to run hot with rage. Not until it got back to Medlow did it discover that, besides its tail, it carried dangling shoes and white rosettes, and suchlike official earmarks, incurred by persons who have just had ‘How Welcome was the Call’ or ‘Perfect Love’ sung at them. And the reason of these things is unknown.”

Mr. Buller says that the surf-bathing at Manly and Coogee is a magnificent sight. (Mixed bathing, of

184 “The Australian queen of Irish song.”

course.) The press in Sydney are running hot night and day at present on the subject of gentlemen's skirts for bathing. A by-law has insisted on the male sex wearing skirts, and "Indignant," "Adonis," "Pro Bono," and hundreds of others are squealing indignant protests against the innovation. Mr. Buller says that the tariff and Mr. Watson's resignation from the Ministry are not heard of in the controversy. Personally speaking, we understand that Mr. Buller is anti-skirt in his ideas – (that is, in a surf-bathing sense). He stayed at Mark Foy's wonderful hydro in the Blue Mountains. The little palace, which cost £109,000, has one of the finest picture galleries on this planet, and Mr. Buller's constitutional walk each morning was the quarter of a mile from his bedroom to the dining-room – all in the hydro. Mr. Buller looks as fit as a fiddle.¹⁸⁵

The Hydro Majestic Blue Mountains Hotel was built by retailing magnate Mark Foy, opening its doors in 1904. It was sited on the edge of a cliff.

The *Bulletin* columnist quoted above used the pen name Akenehi; she was Agnes Macleod née Agnes Conor O'Brien. When she died in 1934 her brother's hometown newspaper, the *Opunake Times*, republished her obituary from the *Sydney Morning Herald*,

Agnes Conor O'Brien, afterwards Mrs William Macleod, was born in Auckland. As a girl she studied art, and later began her literary career as a writer of short stories. In 1889, she went to Melbourne, later joining the staff of the "Evening Standard." At this time she wrote a number of short stories for "The Australasian," She joined the "Bulletin" in 1901, and wrote under the pen name of "Akenehi" in the "Lone Hand" and the

185 *Free Lance* 9 November 1907 page 4.

“Bulletin.” Subtle wit and humour were characteristics of her writings. “When my soul went on a jag” was one of her most noted humorous efforts. She could also be tragic and mysterious, as two short stories – “Lorenzo, the Magnificent,” and “Lace Curtains” which appeared in the “Bulletin” after her marriage, showed.

Her private charities were legion, and public charities for which she worked consistently where the Hospice for the Dying and the Prisoners’ Aid Association.

After her marriage in 1911 she became a notable hostess, widely known for her tact, wit, and charm, and her innate kindness. Visitors came to Dunvegan from all parts of the world. Her book. “MacLeod of the “Bulletin” sold out and she completed a novel at the end of last year.¹⁸⁶

Clearly Percy knew her and corresponded with her, though how they met is not recorded. She wrote, in her regular “A Woman’s Letter” column,

A sapling of one of the families who have made Maoriland history is in Sydney, and enthusing spontaneously over the magic of our blue-and-honey-colored winter, as he rushes through it in his own gasoline cart. Mr. Percy Buller is at the Bar in Wellington. All Australasians who have walked hand in hand with Culture will remember the writings of his father, the late Walter Buller.¹⁸⁷

But in December Percy had relapsed,

The friends of Mr A. P. Buller, son of the late Sir Walter Buller, will regret to learn that he is seriously ill.¹⁸⁸

186 *Opunake Times* 13 April 1934 page 3.

187 *The Bulletin* 1 August 1907.

188 *Wairarapa Daily Times* 13 December 1907 page 5.

By February he had improved but his siblings were on their way to collect him,

The many friends of Mr. Percy Buller will be glad to hear he is better, and is considered to have quite turned the corner. His sister arrives next month, and it will be good news to find the invalid at any rate fairly convalescent.¹⁸⁹

Mrs. Madocks, wife of Major Madocks, has left for New Zealand to see her brother, Mr. Percy Buller, who has been seriously ill.¹⁹⁰

Mr Percy Buller – who has been so seriously ill for the last five months – is much better, and is well enough to be moved to Day’s Bay, where his sister, Mrs Madocks, is with him. Mrs Madocks, her family and governesses, and Mr Buller, hope to leave for Home in May, going across America by easy stages.¹⁹¹

Indeed, Mrs Madocks and 3 children and 2 maids, as well as WL and AP Buller were on the Union Company steamer *Warrimoo*, Wellington to Sydney direct, on 29 May.¹⁹² They would take the *Marama* to Vancouver. Percy and Laura and her children (and the maids) would cross Canada by train, thence to England.

Akenehi wrote in the *Bulletin*,

A bunch of well-known persons went off by the new R.M.S. *Marama* on Monday.... The Buller trio – the two sons and one daughter of the late scientist Walter Buller – were passengers from Maoriland. That land of trout

189 *Free Lance* 15 February 1908 page 8.

190 *Dominion* 14 April 1908 page 5.

191 *Bruce Herald* 30 April 1908 page 7.

192 *Evening Post* 28 May 1908 page 8.

and geyser is simply exuding passengers by the new liner.¹⁹³

A belated Rocky Mountain post-card (with a cold-shiver-down-your-spine view on it) comes from Mr. A. P. Buller, the Maorilander. He reports himself in great form, and says the voyage was delightful.¹⁹⁴

On 15 July 1908 Percy wrote to his uncle Gilbert Mair from “Mid-Atlantic” on the *Empress of Britain*,

Dear Old Chap, Just a few lines to tell you that we are all “serene”. I have sent you a few post cards “en route” reporting progress. The trip has been most enjoyable throughout and it has done me a power of good. Indeed, I can hardly realise that I have been ill! wonderful isn’t it? ever since leaving N.Z. I have gone on like a house on fire, and not once have I experienced any sensation of “tiredness”. I’ve put on some weight and feeling remarkably well and the “ticker” jogs along a steady, regular beat, and never goes beyond dead normal. So I have much to be thankful for. Laura, Leo and the kiddies are all in good “shape” but poor little Gwynne’s glands are very much enlarged and we fear that they will have to be cut before long. They are now very conspicuous, but Laura will get the best advice in London, and we shall shortly be there. In fact, we are due there in two days time. The trip across Canada was enjoyable, but arduous, Laura and the kiddies went right through with the miles, and it was wise, as it would have been a great contrast for her, to break the journey in the train. Under the wing of Sir James,¹⁹⁵ they went through in great comfort. I found the rail journey somewhat monotonous, the first five days and night were glorious – the scenery in the Rockies being beyond words, their grandeur

193 *The Bulletin* 11 June 1908 page 22.

194 *The Bulletin* 20 August 1908 page 20.

195 Sir James and Lady Mills had joined the *Marama* at Suva.

being almost terrifying. Victoria – and Vancouver both had their charm, and we stayed a day at each. We took the air on both occasions, in Sir James motor – quite the best way of seeing things. Leo and I broke off at Banff (Rockies) and a day and night there. Then we headed for Winnipeg, two days, the largest town in the Dominion, and very fine. A day there, then off to Toronto 2 days and two nights in the train – a day there to rest, and clean! (for the train journey is very “grubby”). To Toronto, there is nothing to be seen. Millions of acres of boundless prairie. No sign of life save now and then – a colony of prairie dogs. Comical little chaps, they sit up on their hind legs, and sort of “cock snooks” at the train! Then a whole day at Niagara – to where we went by steamer, 4 hours. The rapids and the Falls simply “whip creation”. Photos can give no idea of its glories. I could hardly tear myself from Niagara. Forster Frazer writes admirably – “Conrad as it is”. His description of the Falls, is splendid – get his book if you can. He admirably describes the awful moment at the “Horse Shoe” fall – “the profound hell of the irrevocable”. Then a night on the train – from Toronto to Montreal – where we met Laura and party – all well. We hadn’t seen her for 10 days! Montreal a charming and beautiful city – planted everywhere – a day and a night there then hey for Quebec, by river in steamer 12 hours. Sleeping on the boat. Then the splendour of Quebec, chock-full of historic charm, and one thanks God and Wolfe, that it is ours! Canada is a noble possession, and is becoming splendidly peopled. Men, too that will fight to the last man, against the world. My acquaintance with just the passing stranger, disappointed me. They are damnably “American” and their twang fairly gets over done. But of course, we haven’t happened on the better class. We took 10 days from Sea to Sea – 3500 miles – the train shakes the life out of one, and one does not get used to it. I would never go by this route again. Too much changing and chopping about. – The almighty dollar is practically the same

value as our shilling and you are bled at every point. The strenuousness of the trip across Canada, has indicated to me, more than anything else, how fit I must be to have stood it so well, not having felt, any fatigue whatever.

The "Empress of Britain" is a magnificent ship – 20,000 tonnes and one can hardly realise that we are at sea – tho' the vibration today – as we are putting on the pace – and writing is quite trying. She has 6 decks and when full, something like 2000 souls. Every comfort – drawing rooms, buffets and god knows what. Laura has just gone to the telephone to send a "wireless telegram" to Billy! We are now about 300 miles from England! What a wonderful world, and age this is! say 10d a word! I too have sent a Marconi to Hilleary¹⁹⁶ only cost 8/-!

Well goodbye dear old chap. Will let you have a line from London Town. Laura will be in town for about a week, and I will stay at the Royal Societies Club (St James's Street London S.W.) Much love to Uncle Will. Yours ever, A.P.B.

Leo in splendid nick.¹⁹⁷

By now John Anderson's son Harry E Anderson had taken his father's place in the firm and with Percy's exit, Harry Buddle became a partner.

LEGAL.

BULLER, ANDERSON & BUDDLE,
BARRISTERS and SOLICITORS.

Mr. H. E. Anderson and Mr. H. Buddle having been admitted as Partners in the business heretofore carried on by Messrs. Buller and Anderson, Barristers and Solicitors, Temple Chambers, No. 9, Johnstons-street, Wellington, the business will henceforth be carried on under the style of Buller, Anderson and Buddle.

Evening Post
1 May 1908.

196 George Edward Hilleary, Percy's London solicitor.

197 AP Buller to Gilbert Mair 15 July 1908. ATL MS-Papers-8151.

Chapter 6: Back Home in England

Percy had said he intended to come back to New Zealand in two years, but when Richard Keene, land and estate agent, returned from England in December, he told the press,

At Portsmouth he met Mr Percy Buller, who said he had never felt better in his life, and who had pretty well decided to settle down in England.¹⁹⁸

Columnist “Penelope” reported in her syndicated “Happenings in the Capital” column,

Post cards have been received from Mr Percy Buller, with a picture of himself wrapped in a luxurious fur coat in his motor car. He is in excellent health, and it does not seem likely he will return to New Zealand.¹⁹⁹

Percy wrote to Tawa from Lynwood, now the Madocks home at 4 Waverly road in Southsea, on 11 February 1909,

My dear old chap. I was very glad to get your long and interesting letter of Dec 7, which reached me here on 7 February. It is as you say, a devil of a distance, before one can get “into communication”. It is the first news I have had of you. Leo told me some time since you had written, but I did not see the letter, as I don't go to Town very often. Well, now where to start that is the question! First for your news, what rough luck on poor old Norman.²⁰⁰ He is such a splendid fellow, having to lay up again but with such a magnificent constitution as he has, he will get over everything. I hope he is now quite serene again, and I feel sure it will have made all the difference your having him with you. I hope to hear good news of him when next you write. Your letter tells me that you are working too hard, and giving yourself no play at all. Is it

198 Bay of Plenty Times 23 December 1908 page 2.

199 North Otago Times 6 January 1909 page 1.

200 Probably Norman William Lyndoch Mair, son of William Mair.

wise of you to take so much out of yourself? By this time perhaps, Norman may be with you and that will take some of the strain off you. You always were a “grafter” but don't over do it, or you may jeopardise your health. Let things come and go more easy.

In fact, you are really, “Swiss family Robinson”! and you appear to have simple wonders at “Rere”.²⁰¹

Now what about our news? Well of course, Leo's engagement is the theme at present, and they are both very happy. It is simply the very best thing on earth for Leo. Miss Ridley is a fine handsome “brune”, and very fond of Leo, and they will hit it off capitally. She is a thoroughly sensible girl – no nonsense about her at all, and every inch, a Rangatira.²⁰² They are going to be married in April but no doubt Leo will tell you all about it, and his plans. They have taken a two years lease of a charming place – Furnished – about 100 acres – delightful gardens, trees and so forth, and 50 acres of shooting, where Leo can potter about with gun and dog. The place is “Hall Court” Wickham – in this county (Hants). I motored over in my car last week to see it. It's 14 miles from here (Lynwood) and I was charmed with it. Standing in beautiful park land – splendid old oaks as old as the hills, and a *** outlook over typical English country, with its mellow haze of history, over all. They will be as happy as “Larry” there. Hall Court has about 20 rooms, so they ought to find it large enough for a start! They will keep a motor car of course – which is absolutely a necessity in England, and it makes one quite independent of distance.

As for myself, I've never felt better in my life! By the time I got to England, I was pretty well quite fit, and since then, I've gone strong ever since.

I order my life very carefully and the result is most gratifying. I make a practise of never getting up till 11.30 and

201 Mair farmed at Rerewhakaaitu, near Rotorua.

202 Rangatira = aristocrat.

thus not make too long a day of wear and tear. I take things very quietly and don't take anything out of myself, the result being that I have not yet experienced the sensation of fatigue. Wonderful, isn't it?

Pretty well every day, I take a run in my car, and have visited some lovely places and neighbourhoods. When summer comes, I will go far afield. Even with the thermometer at 15 degrees of frost, I've motored all the afternoon, perhaps some 30 or 40 miles, clothed of course, in suitable "kit", Furs and what not, and never once felt cold. At Xmas time we had a record "Blizzard". People froze to death in all directions. I went out in it all! So I am fairly "case hardened". The whole of England was deep under snow, and it was most impressively beautiful.

The only touch of illness since I have been in England was a slight cold in the head and I went to bed straight for 3 days, and absolutely threw it off. So that is not much to complain about! As for the lungs and nerves, they are perfect, and heart is wonderfully steady and good.

The Dr. tells me (a capital fellow by the way, and thoroughly understanding my case – Having heard all about me through Laura) he considers me a marvel! I always take an hour on my bed without fail, every day before dinner – which in this country is 8 pm, and that keeps me very fit till bed time, 11 pm. And there's my day, and a very happy one it is. I have been elected to a very good club in Southsea (Royal Albert Yacht Club) – H.M. the King was a member for years, and is now the Patron of the club. The club is nicely situated (¼ mile from Lynwood) looking out to sea with the Isle of Wight in the near distance and the Channel Fleet quite in the foreground – with the good old "Victory" hard by (Portsmouth runs into Southsea) so there is always something going on. Soldiers and sailors in thousands every where. Most afternoons I drop into my club, and meet lots of charming and distinguished men. Admirals and Generals and what not! The

worst of the winter is now over, and in two more months, we will see the buds again.

“Lynwood” is very warm & comfortable, and a charming home, and I am very happy in it. Laura & Billy²⁰³ are in capital form. The dear little kiddies are fit and well and are all away at present with various uncles & aunts for a few days. Poor little Gwynnee had a bad time when we arrived with his glands, and had to have them taken out, but the scar is almost gone now, and now is putting on weight and getting on capitally.

I go up to town about every 6 weeks or so, for a change – and stay at my club there (Royal Societies) for a week, and see some Theatres, Music Halls and so forth! And always enjoy it.

N.Z. I'm afraid is in a bad way. From all sources I hear of the tightness of money, and I fear that still more evil times are coming. Alex. is a capital Scribe & writes every mail.²⁰⁴

I will try and get you the book you are wanting. I will push enquiries from the local bookseller here.

Hope you got the “Queen’s Gift Book” at Xmas, which I registered so it might not be priggged. Well, my dear old chap, I’ve written dry, so with much love, ever your affec. nephew, APB. Laura & Bill send best wishes.²⁰⁵

Leo’s engagement attracted some attention in New Zealand,

Mr Leo. Buller’s engagement was announced by the last mail. He went Home, it will be remembered, with his brother, Percy, and his sister, Mrs Madocks. His fiancée is tall, handsome, of independent means, and good family. Indeed, her mother is a cousin of Lord Ridley –

203 William Madocks.

204 The mail via San Francisco to London left thirteen times a year and took 35 days. Report of the Post and Telegraph Department for the year 1910-11. *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1911 Session I, F-01.

205 AP Buller to Gilbert Mair 11 February 1909. ATL MS-Papers-8151.

Miss Alice Ridley is the name of the young lady – and a sister-in-law of Lord Teignmouth, while Miss Ridley’s uncle is Sir Arthur Bigge, Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales and Equerry to the King. Mr Leo. Buller hopes to bring his wife out on a visit to New Zealand after their marriage, which will take place in spring.²⁰⁶

Leo duly married the wealthy, aristocratic and attractive Miss Alice Ridley on 28 April in London.

After the ceremony, a reception was held at St. James’s Palace by Lady Bigge (aunt of the bride and the wife of Sir Arthur Bigge, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., Comptroller and Private Secretary to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The many beautiful and valuable presents were displayed in the drawing room – a historic chamber, which was the scene of the final leave-taking between Charles the First and his children, on his way to his execution at Whitehall. The presents by the bridegroom included a diamond tiara, diamond and emerald pendant, diamond and amethyst pendant, and an ancient Maori greenstone pendant. From Mr. Percy Buller and Major and Mrs. W. Madocks came a canteen of table silver and cutlery, and a Print de Venise lace fan....²⁰⁷

Mr. Leo Buller, whose marriage to Miss Ridley took place at the end of April, has taken a charming place, “Hall Court,” standing in a park of about 150 acres, in Hants, fifteen miles from Lynwood, where Mr. Percy Buller and Mrs. Maddox live. Mr. Percy Buller has rented a mile of trout stream near, in the valley of the Meon.²⁰⁸

206 *Bruce Herald* 1 March 1909 page 7.

207 *Evening Post* 8 June 1909 page 9.

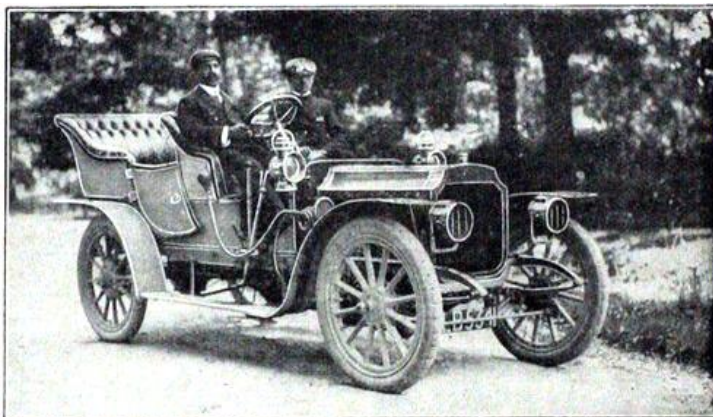
208 *Evening Post* 17 May 1909 page 9.

Percy wrote again to Gilbert Mair on 8 July 1909,

My dear old Tawa, Many thanks for your long letter of 3rd April, which I have been rather slack in answering. "Rere" seems to be flourishing like the green bay tree!

We are all serene here, Laura and the kiddies and Self, are in capital "nick" – we are "supposed" to be in mid Summer, but literally, I have not seen the sun for over a month: dull, cloudy, and rain, every other day! It has been a rotten summer, and everything has been spoilt – Races, Henley, Cricket, and all the Summer fixtures that one so looked forward to. I am in the glories of my new car! – 20 hp. Vauxhall. A beautiful and powerful car which develops 30 horse power! I always go up to London now in her, instead of the train – (80 miles) and my car does it quite comfortably under 3 hours. Out in the open, we sometimes spin along at 50 miles per hour without a tremor, and the engine is as silent as a sewing machine. She is painted french grey, striped with black panels, and upholstered in red Morocco leather, and altogether, a thing of great beauty and power. Last week, I was "touring" in her for a week or so travelling all over the country, visiting my old college (Jesus) and then going on to Oxford. I am wonderfully well but I take no chances, and always take a maximum of rest, and never take too much out of myself. My local Medico "vetted" me yesterday, and says that I am wonderfully fit and the heart is steady as a rock! What a wonderful marvel I am!! The Buller constitution for ever! And as for the Mairs, well it must be a splendid blend! Leo is very happy in his married life and is quite a "new man", full of interest in all his surroundings and he has a charming home. It is a pleasant run from Southsea to Hall Court – 16 miles and a pleasant objective for a motor drive, his kitchen garden also being a great attraction for he has tons of fruit, Hot house peaches and all fruits. I am sure you

must have been very pouri²⁰⁹ about poor Mrs Donnelly's demise. The Ward scare has practically died out, and the Asquith govt. are as rotten as pears. In three years time, England will get her backside handsomely kicked by Germany. Its only a question of 3 years. She will smash up our fleet (for we have ceased building ships) and beg a war indemnity of 100,000,000 or something of that sort. Germany is working hard to beat us in Dreadnoughts and she will have the lead in that. She is also doing marvels with air ships, building numbers of them, and we are only thinking about it. Unless England wakes up a bit she is doomed all right. Laura and Bill went to the Court Ball at Buckingham Palace last week. It was a dazzling spectacle and the King & Queen, they say, were in great form. The old King dancing hard! Much love old chap to you and Uncle Will. Percy. I couldn't get that book for you, apparently out of Print.



A 1909 20hp Vauxhall A.

209 *Pouri* = sad

Uncle and nephew were close. In 1916 Gilbert would write to Alexander Turnbull,

*I have such a longing to hear how you are that I must perforce send you Some words of greeting. I look upon yourself as one of the golden links which bound me to dear old Percy, and it often makes me regret I cannot see you oftener.*²¹⁰

On 14 September 1909 Percy was best man at the marriage of Leonard Owen Howard Tripp and Geraldine Henry at Christ Church in Westminster.²¹¹ Tripp was from a Canterbury sheep station, Orari Gorge, schooled at Christ's College, admitted to Trinity Hall at Cambridge University in 1881, admitted at the Inner Temple in 1882 and called to the Bar in 1886. By 1914 his firm was Chapman, Skerrett, Tripp and Blair, solicitors in Wellington (now Chapman-Tripp) and he was often at the same social events as Percy Buller. He played polo with Madocks and Skerrett and was on the Racing Club ball committee with Percy. He was Leo Buller's solicitor in Wellington. Later he famously acted as Ernest Shackleton's New Zealand agent for the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition 1914–1917. He is described as "Colonial gentry".



Leonard Tripp, somewhat later.
ATL 1/2-043288.

²¹⁰ He had an eloquently intimate way with words. Gilbert Mair to Alexander Turnbull May 1916. McCormick page 267.

²¹¹ *Evening Post* 26 October 1909 page 9.

Chapter 7: And in the end...

Arthur Percival Buller “of the Royal Societies club St. James-street Middlesex and of Wellington in New Zealand died 28 February 1910 at Mentone in France”. He was buried on 5 March in the churchyard at Fleet in Hampshire. He was 44.

Notices of his death were widely published in New Zealand – this from *Free Lance*,

A feeling of deep regret was diffused among a wide circle of friends in Wellington when the cable arrived on Tuesday announcing the death of Mr. Arthur Percival Buller, at Mentone, in the Riviera. Percy Buller, the name by which he was generally known, was the younger son of the late Sir Walter L. Buller, and was born at Wanganui in 1866. Educated in New Zealand, Cambridge, and Heidelberg,²¹² Mr. P. Buller was called to the English Bar in 1890, and in the following year he was admitted to practice in New Zealand, and, along with Mr. John Anderson, founded the legal firm of Buller and Anderson. Mr. John Anderson died in 1906 and was succeeded by his son, and, upon Mr. Harry Buddle joining, the style was altered to its present form, Buller, Anderson, and Buddle.

Mr. Buller was one of the most amiable and genial of men, and excellent company. His tastes were refined. He played the guitar very skilfully and his comic songs were in much request among his friends. He was connected with both the Wellington and the Wellesley Clubs, as well as the Racing Club and the Golf Club. He was fond of healthy outdoor sports, but a crippled leg unfitted him to actively participate in them. The taste for natural history, which made his father an authority on New

²¹² Leo matriculated at Heidelberg for two semesters before Cambridge, but there is no record at Hedelberg of Percy having done so.

Zealand birds gave Percy Buller a very decided bent towards entomology. He wrote papers on this favourite study, collected rare beetles and butterflies with great enthusiasm, and great was his joy when he discovered in Mr Bert Royle a kindred soul. Mr Buller's collection is lodged for safe custody in the Dominion Museum.

In 1907,²¹³ he passed through a critical illness, and friends like the late Mr Garvey²¹⁴ despaired of his life. Mr Garvey passed away in the fulness of his strength, while Mr. Buller, whose life had seemed to hang on a thread, got better slowly. In May, 1908, he went Home, intending it to be for good. Since then, he has lived chiefly at Southsea, wintering in the South of France. Quite recently he acted as best man at Mr. Leonard Tripp's marriage, and he accompanied Mr. Tripp to the Tilbury Docks, to see him off on the honeymoon. On that occasion he remarked: "I don't think I shall ever go out to New Zealand again. I feel if I did it would be only to die." His gentle life has closed all too soon, and he leaves not a single enemy behind. The malady which carried him off was Bright's disease of the kidneys. Mr Buller was never married. He is survived by his elder brother, Mr Walter Leopold Buller, and his sister, Laura, married to Major Madocks. Both brother and sister live in England.²¹⁵

... a man beloved by all who knew him....²¹⁶

The deceased gentleman had not enjoyed good health for many years, having suffered from an affected heart and Bright's disease. For that reason he relinquished his

213 1905 actually; Garvey was dead by 1907.

214 Patrick Samuel Garvey 1856–1906 was Governor of the Terrace Gaol, so a neighbour of the Bullers.

215 *Free Lance* 5 March 1910 page 4.

216 *Press* 2 March 1910 page 6.

law work in Wellington about two years ago, and took up his residence in Southsea, England, hoping that the change would be of benefit to his health. He was intermittently ill at Home, but never allowed his condition to interfere with his captivating geniality and volatile spirits, which endeared him to many in New Zealand. He was always glad to meet New Zealanders at Home and liked to keep himself posted in Dominion affairs. A few weeks ago his medical attendant advised him to seek a warmer climate during the English winter, and warned him that the cold was too much for his weakened heart. As the result he was wintering at Mentone when overtaken by death.²¹⁷

... the last mail had brought letters to several Wellington friends couched in the terms of greatest cheerfulness. In these Mr Buller spoke of improved health, the delights of Southern France, and of projected pleasure trips in England for the coming spring. The deceased had been in failing health for some years, and his condition had been the theme of sympathetic reference whenever his name was mentioned.... While resident in Wellington the deceased was a great favourite in social circles. Notwithstanding grievous physical infirmities he preserved an indomitable cheerfulness and a merry wit, and many stories are told of his delightful personality and quaint originality, even under the most depressing circumstances. Music was one of his accomplishments, and to his charm as a raconteur was added skill as a pianist and singer....²¹⁸

Mr. Buller inherited a taste for natural history from his father, and formed a fine collection of lepidoptera, now in the Dominion Museum. He also prepared papers

217 *Dominion* 2 March 1910 page 4.

218 *New Zealand Times* 2 March 1910 page 7.

on entomological subjects for the New Zealand Institute and kindred societies in Great Britain. Some of his papers have been embodied in the Transactions....²¹⁹

Mr A. P. Buller, son of Sir Walter Buller, who crossed the Styx last week at Mentone (southern France), was an old Wanganui-ite. After a primary education in New Zealand, deceased went to Jesus College, Cambridge, returned to the Dominion, and practised his profession as a barrister in Wellington. After a while he took up farming in Manawatu. He was a specialist in natural history, and his collection of lepidoptera is now largely prized by Auckland's museum authorities. Like K. of K., Mr Buller avoided the matrimonial net.²²⁰

His Menton *Acte de Décès* gave his name as *Arthur Percival Buller, celibataire*²²¹ and his occupation as *avocat* but not the cause of his death. The newspapers said it was Bright's disease, so we would say renal failure.

His and his doctor's concern about his heart suggests valve disease resulting from the rheumatic fever of his childhood – perhaps aortic stenosis – as well, though cold weather can adversely affect ischaemic heart disease from atherosclerosis too (his mother had died at 53 of heart disease).

He was buried with his father,

219 *Evening Post* 1 March 1910. If he did submit papers to "kindred societies" they must have been minor publications. The major entomological journals have been indexed and there are no papers by AP Buller.

220 *NZ Truth* 12 March 1910 page 1. Full of inaccuracies, but an interesting last line.

221 A curious French word meaning "single".



His epitaph has lines from “A German Student’s Funeral Hymn” by Dinah Maria Craik 1826–1887.

Farewell, true heart and kindly hand, left lying
 Where wave the linden branches calm;
 'Tis his to live, and ours to wait for dying,
 We win, while he has won, the palm.

His legacies:

- AH Turnbull: portfolio of original watercolour drawings of New Zealand Lepidoptera.
- The Colonial Museum at Wellington: four cabinets of entomological specimens.
- Victoria College library: the set of calf-bound *Transactions* left to him by Sir Walter.
- Victoria University: £50
- Salvation Army Wellington: £25

- Wellington Home for the Aged and Needy: £25
- Wellington Home for Incurables: £25
- Wellington Sailors' Rest: £20
- Harry Banks and Eugent Everard, staff of Buller Anderson & Buddle: £20 each
- His godson Arthur McLeavey (son of their Ohau lessee): £10
- Gilbert Mair: £250
- William Madocks: £100
- His goddaughter Juliet Ann Madocks: £100
- His godson Kenneth Vernon Chester: £10
- Leo: £3000
- Laura ("free from the control of her husband"): £3000
- The remainder on trust, the income to go to Leo and then to his children when 21 or married.

His estate was certified for Stamp Duty at £54,073.²²²

The portfolio of watercolours of NZ butterflies and moths is one of the treasures of the Alexander Turnbull Library. The images are reproduced here, with notes, as Appendix A.

Victoria University decided to spend its £50 on biology books.

As for his collection of insects, the newspapers reported,

The late Mr Percy Buller... bequeathed his collection to the Colonial Museum. A Wellington correspondent states that the insects in this collection include some very beautiful butterflies, and all have been mounted with remarkable care and skill.²²³

222 *Evening Post* 1 February 1911 page 3.

223 *Bay of Plenty Times* 8 July 1910 page 4.

Percy had deposited two cabinets of specimens at the museum in 1896, writing on 16 April to *The Curator, Colonial Museum, Wellington*,

I beg to place on deposit in the Colonial Museum the following articles: namely:—

1. *Cabinet containing collection of New Zealand Insects.*
2. *Cabinet containing collection of Foreign insects.*

*The cabinets are now in place in the museum, and ready for exhibition.*²²⁴

Te Papa has an exchange of letters between Augustus Hamilton and Percy Buller in 1909. Hamilton wrote on 14 April,

I was very pleased to get your letter and card showing that you still keep an interest in the old place. I am just going to send you a few notes to show that we are still moving along. In the first place the Government during one of my visits to the country for Huias ordered the plans etc., for the Museum on Mt. Cook to be gone on with. When I returned however I found they had taken the wrong plan and I therefore got the matter hung up until the architect returns from his holiday. I hope we shall then go on with it. I have satisfied the minister that nothing will do but a real new building and that the old portion of Mt. Cook can be used for Archives. When I write next I hope to be able to say that we have really started.

Now for butterflies. You I think know that I had my son and young Oliver collecting for me in the Wakatipu region from November to the end of March, and they sent some interesting and really very good stuff notwithstanding the cold and wet and otherwise unfavourable season. Speaking generally our collection now has specimens of practically all the Noctuidae

224 Te Papa MU000147-008-0132.

except *M. erichryea* and *M. merope*, a species that I do not know. So you will see that we have been very lucky. Perhaps the most showy line in the cabinet is a series of 15 *Rhodopleura* in splendid condition, then 20 *Maya* and two good specimens of *Exquisita* of which only two other specimens are known. We have a long series of nearly all the common kinds. In butterflies we have a fine series of *Erebia butleri* and a new and large form of *Pluto*, differing from the one my son caught last year and which I called *micans*.

You were no doubt glad to hear that Howes had been appointed as Government Entomologist, however the Government dispensed with his services on the 31st of March. It was a great blow to him and a loss to us in Wellington.

Your friend O'Connor²²⁵ has done splendidly this year, and we were talking last week about his collection which now numbers over 500 species, and we were looking at your *B. spinosus* in your cabinet, and O'Connor remarked that it was one out of the 6 or 7 that you have and which he has not yet got. Only a day or two after I had a magnificent female specimen absolutely perfect sent to me from Taranaki, which I immediately handed over to him, much to his great joy.

I think I told you that the boys collected a remarkable series of *Caerulea* at Waipori, showing graduations from the typical steel blue to bright yellow without marks at all. In the long series of 90 specimens of all possible varieties. Then we have a number of good things we collected in the Gardens by careful working night after night.

A few good Maori things have turned up lately, and I propose publishing some of them in the next Bulletin

225 Probably Albert Creagh O'Connor, New Zealand malacologist, ornithologist and entomologist.

which however I cannot get the Government Printer to print as they are so full of work.

We are all delighted to hear that you are keeping in such good health.²²⁶

Percy replied on 3 August,

I have been very remiss in answering your long and interesting letter, and I may say, that the record of your captives for the Museum made my mouth positively water! What treasures you have secured.

It's a fair upheaval in getting such a splendid range of such rare species.

My entomological heart beats just as strong as ever, with regard to the insects of my native land. I often happen upon butterflies and beetles in this country, but beyond admiring them, I go no further, and make no steps to collect them. The stimulus that your efforts have produced in my being, makes me long, at times, to be there, and spend a summer in N.Z. but I have now, more or less, "closed my book" there. If I had the "wishing cup" I can honestly say that the first pleasure of all would be to have some hours in the N.Z. collections, and to gloat over the choice things. There has always been a deep sense of romance with me when collecting our native Lepidoptera. To some extent, I suppose it is the beautiful environment of our bush and atmosphere, that makes our collecting there, such a joy. O'Connor appears to have made a splendid collection of Coleoptera. He has a fair genius in spotting things and happening on their particular locality. I do hope that he will keep it up. When I last saw him, he was keener than ever.²²⁷

He went on to discuss the weather, his health and his motoring, ending with,

226 Te Papa MU000152-003-0024

227 *Ibid.*

I shall be interested to hear what they have decided to do with regard to the Museum? will it be at Mount Cook? as you are hoping. A line from you is always acceptable.

Hamilton wrote again with Christmas wishes on 3 November, concluding,

You will be glad to know that your collection are looking well. One cabinet is rather troubled with mould but otherwise they are doing well.²²⁸

These had now been formally gifted, along with another two cabinets, with the stipulation, spelled out in Percy's will, that they were "for the use of Students of National (*sic*) History and the public generally expressing the hope that the collections of New Zealand Lepidoptera and Coleoptera be kept intact and not broken up and arranged with other collections."

His collections were identifiable in the Dominion Museum in 1926: HM Hale wrote,

I have seen four specimens of *Diaprepocoris* in the Percy Buller collection of Coleoptera at the Dominion Museum. These were almost certainly taken in New Zealand, but unfortunately they lack data. According to Miss A. Castle and Mr. H. Hamilton, most of Percy Buller's collecting was done in the Wellington and Auckland districts.²²⁹

Percy Buller's insects are hard to find at Te Papa now, perhaps victims of the mould Augustus Hamilton mentioned, perhaps used to better effect than they might have been if kept intact as one man's collection and not broken up, as he had hoped.

228 *Ibid.*

229 HM Hale in JG Myers 1926. Biological Notes on New Zealand Heteroptera. *Trans. Proc. Roy. Soc. N.Z.* 56: 465.

Entomologist George Vernon Hudson's *New Zealand Moths and Butterflies (Macro-Lepidoptera)* was published by West-Newman in London in 1898.

Percy's relationship with Hudson is unclear. Both were members of the Philosophical Society and became FES at about the same time. Hudson had been encouraged by Walter Buller in his work and he, in turn, acknowledged Percy. Of the moth *Dasypodia selenophora* he wrote, "Mr. A. P. Buller informed me that he had taken a magnificent specimen near Featherston."²³⁰ They were of similar age and it seems highly likely they collaborated.

On page 146, of the moth *Sphinx convolvuli* he wrote,

Mr. A. P. Buller has very kindly furnished me with the following interesting notes on the habits of this species, as observed by him in the Auckland district:

"During the summer of 1879²³¹ I came across *S. convolvuli* in great numbers, near Ohinemutu, in the Hot Lake district, frequenting at dusk a tall, delicately perfumed meadow flower (*Enothera biennis*, commonly called the evening primrose). They were to be seen on the wing soon after sundown, and on warm, still evenings literally swarmed. It was an extremely pretty sight to watch their rapid movements as they darted from flower to flower, never alighting, and keeping up a constant vibration of their wings as they probed the yellow blossoms. They appeared to be extremely local, for I only met with them on a few of the grassy slopes round the shores of Lake Rotorua. I visited the same locality two years later, at the same season, and only occasionally saw one, although the evening primrose

230 Hudson GV 1899. Notes on Macro-lepidoptera observed during the Summer of 1898-99. *Trans Proc. Roy. Soc. N.Z.* 32: 10.

231 ie, when he was 13!

was in full bloom at the time. In 1882 I captured several at flowers of the trumpet-tree (*Brugmansia*) in a garden near Auckland. The same summer I found large numbers of the larvæ at Waiwera (near Auckland), on a species of convolvulus growing in profusion on the sandhills in the vicinity. Although the larvæ were so abundant I never came across the perfect insect. I obtained some twenty or thirty of the pupæ, but unfortunately was never successful in hatching out the imago. As far as my knowledge goes, this beautiful moth is confined to the Auckland and Waikato districts, although I have heard of a single specimen being taken in Hawkes Bay.”

I am also much indebted to Mr. Buller for the loan of a very perfect specimen of this moth, expressly lent to me for figuring and describing in the present work.



George Vernon Hudson’s painting of Percy Buller’s specimen of *Sphinx convolvuli*, now known as *Agrius convolvuli*, the convolvulus hawk-moth. It is common throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Here we call it the kumara moth, hīhue. Detail of Plate XIII (1), GV Hudson’s *NZ moths and butterflies*. 1898.

James Drummond FLS FZS wrote a long running syndicated column of notes on natural history in New Zealand, headed “IN TOUCH WITH NATURE”. In June 1914 he published a similar passage based on Percy Buller’s words.²³²

Was Percy just a dabbler, a dilettante among entomologists? more than that, I think. WTL Travers, in his Presidential address to the Wellington Philosophical Society on 30 June 1897, said,

... we have had, and still have, a host of collectors and investigators, the results of whose work have been embodied either in separate volumes or manuals published by the Government under the editorship of Sir James Hector, or in the shape of memoirs in the “Transactions of the New Zealand Institute,” and in various English and foreign scientific serials. Amongst these the researches and works of Sir James Hector, Professor Parker, of Dunedin, and Professor Hutton in relation to the marine and fresh-water fishes of the colony; of Professor Hutton, now supplemented by the labours of Mr. Suter, into its land and marine Mollusca; of Mr. Dendy, into what he has termed its “Cryptozoic fauna”; of Powell and Urquhart, into the forms and life-history of its Arachnidæ; of Captain Broun, whose fine work, in two volumes, on the Coleoptera deserves particular mention; and of Mr. Fereday, Mr. Hudson, and Mr. Percy Buller, in relation to its Lepidoptera, are highly valuable and interesting.²³³

Distinguished company indeed.

232 *Otago Daily Times* 13 June 1914 page 19.

233 WTL Travers 1897. On Material and Scientific Progress in New Zealand during the Victorian Era. *Trans Proc. Roy. Soc. N.Z.* 30: 22.

How close were Alex Turnbull and Percy Buller? They had ample time to become close, living in the same cities for nearly 25 years.

Although the 5–6 year old Alex Turnbull may have attended St Paul’s School in Sydney St Thorndon in 1873–4, the Turnbolls left Wellington just as 7 year old Percy Buller came back from Christchurch. Certainly Leo Buller, 3 years older than Percy, claimed to have attended “St Paul’s College, Wellington” when he matriculated at Cambridge, but he was enrolled at Wanganui Collegiate 1874–5 and then attended Wellington College till 1878. Percy and Alexander may have known each other briefly as near neighbours – certainly their parents were friends – but if so it cannot have been for long.

Again possibly they met again when Alex. Turnbull visited New Zealand in 1885, but their friendship surely blossomed after 1886 when Buller started at Cambridge or when he came to London to be admitted at the Inner Temple in 1887. Turnbull had left school in 1884 and was working in the London offices of his father’s firm – at least he was until the business was sold in 1888 and at 20 he became a wealthy young man of leisure.

What we know of their relationship is contained in letters by Alexander Turnbull, mostly to his brother Rob when Alex was living in London and Rob in Wellington and vice versa.

In Wellington 1892–1908 both Alex and Percy were members of the Wellington and the Wellesley Clubs and the Port Nicholson Yacht Club; both attended social events at Government House and they had mutual friends – and though there seems little of Percy’s extraversion in Turnbull, both seemed to thrive on humour and wit.

After Percy Buller left for England for the last time in 1907 he said that Turnbull wrote “by every mail”– ie, every month or so. Those letters are lost.

Leo Buller and Turnbull also corresponded, as did Gilbert Mair and Turnbull. Walter Buller wrote to Turnbull on 14 November 1902, “Leo spent an evening with us this week. He was reproaching himself with not having written to you for about six months. I reminded him that the S.F. mail closes tomorrow, so there will be no excuse for him if he misses it.”

Turnbull to Mair 14 September 1915, “Leo has not written to me for ages – he owes me a letter – if not two. How was he & the family when you last heard from him? and how is Madocks?”

Leo is hard to read. He seems to have enjoyed a feckless youth: he lost his dogs, he forgot to register them, he managed to be fined as a student, he didn’t keep up with his correspondence, he studied but failed, then passed but didn’t practise law and his father had to supplement his income. Turnbull enigmatically called him “warlike”. But he too enjoyed the rivers and, as Percy noted, he married well.

Were these young men celibate aesthetes or were they gay? homosexual acts were illegal so nobody was going to admit, or even accuse somebody else of them. But it has been written of Turnbull,

He never married and his sensitive eyes, bushy moustache and clear brow would make anyone’s gaydar ping. There is an oral tradition that he was “a screaming queen”, but his biographer, Eric McCormick, himself gay, said there was no clear evidence. He is known to have used cocaine. He was a dandy, having his clothes tailored in England, and an aesthete. With one of his best friends, Percy Buller, he visited Algiers (but also shows in Paris with dancing girls) probably in 1890, and their

relationship has some curious features: in London in 1891 during a “pretty gay” weekend he was “... Sorry to Say did not go home that night...” At the end of 1893, he wrote to Percy’s brother Leo in the Manawatu that Percy was “as ‘gai’ as ever” and signed himself “ever thine Alex.” (Leo later married.) The secondary meaning of “gay” was then “immoral, dissolute, befitting a prostitute” but had the present meaning begun to emerge that early, and was Alex writing in code?²³⁴

Turnbull’s relationships with close male friends have been carefully scrutinised by Robyn Maree Pickens. She concluded, inconclusively,

A case for causal links between sexual repression, substance abuse and loneliness, culminating in an early death, can certainly be made.... Turnbull was simultaneously a man apart and a man conjoined to his library, and he loved to the extent possible and in ways permissible in an era of repression.²³⁵

And so, *Percy*? certainly he was a dandy, but many straight men – again in our current narcissistic age – are particular about how they look.

He and Turnbull dined at Kettner’s in Soho – Oscar Wilde’s favourite restaurant,

... a buzz truly took hold in 1890 when it was discovered that King Edward VII courted his mistress, the actress Lillie Langtry, at the restaurant, apparently going so far

234 Queer History New Zealand. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender New Zealand History: Alexander Turnbull – we wish!
<http://www.gaynz.net.nz/history/Turnbull.html>.

235 Robyn Maree Pickens 2020. Whom Did He Love, and How? *Turnbull Library Record* 52: 27–43.

as to order a secret tunnel be built between the restaurant and the Palace Theatre where she performed.²³⁶

After that Kettner's enjoyed a risqué reputation, added to which, Turnbull confessed to his brother Robert that he did not get home that night, at least not to his house, Mount Henley. I don't want to be overly defensive on Percy's part, but Turnbull may have just dosed down on Percy's couch. Or he may have passed out in a brothel. Or (as is darkly hinted elsewhere) they may have spent the night in each other's arms, doing, as HG Wells put it, nice things with their bodies.

Similarly, their visit to Algiers (1890) has been paraded as soft evidence of libidinous activity – presumably based on its later (1895) association with Oscar Wilde, André Gide and Lord Alfred Douglas – but you can go to Lourdes and not be a sick Roman Catholic just as you can go to Tangier or Algiers innocently unaware of the possibility of a naked lunch.²³⁷

The *Evening Post* noted, during the Royal Visit at Rotorua in 1901, “Others we meet as we stroll about are Mr. Buller and Mr. Turnbull, curious and interesting in the pouring rain....” Interesting? a word to the wise, or just a typo?

“Mr Buller, with his banjo songs, pleased the sailors immensely” might be perfectly innocent, but this? “it was ... Mr. Percy Buller of whom the sailors could not have enough. They sang song after song, Mr. Buller accompanying himself on his banjo, and had the nautical audience had its way, the performers and sailors would not have gone home till morning.” Simple, direct, artless prose? hmm – and “queer chanties”?

236 <https://www.standard.co.uk/reveller/restaurants/kettner-s-townhouse-soho-restaurant-open-to-public-b1093547.html>.

237 You would have spoken French in Algiers in 1890, so would have said “gai” instead of “gay”.

“Personally speaking, we understand that Mr. Buller is anti-skirt in his ideas – (that is, in a surf-bathing sense).” So... possibly not ideologically opposed to a bit of skirt in that *other* sense? It seems not, for in the Casino in Paris, after Algiers, Turnbull wrote (with a hint of jealousy?), “Percy’s bold eyes... were busy ogling some painted Jezebel in the box”.

And why was Buller so often reported in columns called “A Woman’s Letter”. “Ladies’ Column: Girls’ Gossip” and the like? was it because women are said to be interested in gay men?

New Zealand Truth ended Percy’s obituary with the words, “Like K. of K., Mr Buller avoided the matrimonial net.” Lots of people “never married”: Skerrett, for instance, who went on to become Chief Justice. Is that *celibataire* state really evidence of homosexual yearning?²³⁸

K. of K. (Kitchener of Khartoum) visited New Zealand 17 February to 2 March 1910, to huge newspaper coverage, so he was a celebrity here when Percy died on 28 February. But why mention him? perhaps because his sexuality, too, was a subject of speculation,

Kitchener was a lifelong bachelor. From his time in Egypt in 1892, he gathered around him a cadre of eager young and unmarried officers nicknamed “Kitchener’s band of boys”, who included his friend Captain Oswald Fitzgerald, his “constant and inseparable companion”.... They remained close until they died together on their voyage to Russia. Rumour occasionally circulated that Kitchener was homosexual, and after his death a number of biographers suggested or hinted that he might have been a latent or active homosexual.²³⁹

238 The repeated use of the expression “matrimonial net” in *Truth* around that time says more about its writer than its subjects, I suspect.

239 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Kitchener,_1st_Earl_Kitchener.

One authority on Kitchener concluded that the absolute absence of evidence either way left “an issue about which historians can say almost nothing useful”.²⁴⁰

Now there *is* a useful phrase. And so it is with Percy Buller: aside from the coded hints in the passages quoted above, there is almost nothing useful one can say about his sexuality. Nor on another question: what was the relationship of each with their sibling?

Leo and Percy Buller were close. They lived together as young bachelors at Papaitonga and there are hints in Percy’s letters to Gilbert Mair (Tawa) of his concern for his brother and his relief when Leo made a good marriage. Alex and Robert Turnbull too – both were described as dandies and Alex’s letters to Robert seem at times flirtatiously intimate (they might also end with “Ever thine”). In one he wrote of “*your* Percy”. The four knew each other well, corresponded and travelled together. They were friends.

And what should we say about Tawa and Lottie Mair?

*Who loves me best? my sister fair,
With her laughing eyes and clustering hair!
Who flowers around my head doth twine,
Who presseth her rosy lips to mine.*

Leo Buller and his wife Alice came to New Zealand on 3 May 1911 and spent the next six months divesting themselves of their New Zealand possessions, socialising, sightseeing and farewelling family and friends. In Wellington they stayed at Miss Malcolm’s, the boarding establishment now renting his father’s house at 114 Wellington Terrace.

240 Brad C Faught 2016. *Kitchener: Hero and Anti-Hero*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

**IMPORTANT SALE OF FARM
PROPERTIES.**

Subdivision of the well-known PAPA-
TONGA ESTATE, situated at OHAU,
Manawatu Line, on account of the
representatives of the late Sir Walter
Buller.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26th, 1911,
At the
TOWN HALL, LEVIN,
At 1 o'clock.

ABRAHAM AND WILLIAMS, LTD.,
in conjunction with **DALGETY
AND CO.,** will offer by public auction
as above—

900 ACRES of this famous estate,
subdivided into 19 Sections,
ranging from 25 to 96 acres.

The situation of this beautiful prop-
erty cannot well be beaten in the whole
of the Dominion. It is close to the Ohau
Railway Station, 2½ miles from Levin,
and 58 miles from the City of Welling-
ton. Its close proximity to creameries,
schools and railway stations, the unde-
niable quality of the soil and the beauti-
ful climate all combine to make it a
paradise for dairy farmers, fruit grow-
ers, poultry farmers, etc.

Every inducement to men of small cap-
ital has been given. The reserves on the
various sections will be most reasonable,
whilst only 15 per cent. cash is required,
provided satisfactory improvements are
made.

For plans and further particulars ap-
ply to all branches of the Auctioneers,
ABRAHAM AND WILLIAMS, LTD.,

And
DALGETY AND COMPANY, LTD.,
Or to
**MESSRS CHAPMAN, SKERRETT,
WYLIE AND TRIPP,**
435 Solicitors, Wellington.

New Zealand Times 11 July 1911 page 10.

**Clearing Sale
Clearing Sale**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15.

1.30 p.m.

**Lake Papaitonga,
Ohau**

**HITCHINGS, HANKINS AND
CO., LTD.,** have received in-
structions from **L. BULLER, Esq.,**
who is returning to England, to sell
on the premises at Lake Papaitonga
the whole of his valuable Furniture
and Effects, entirely without re-
serve, and comprising:—

Handsome Chesterfield, drawing
room arm chairs, easy
chairs, 24 large pictures,
rugs, writing table, car-
pets, handsome sideboard,
curtains, dining chairs,
10 deer's antlers, 1 boar's
head, tables, duchess
chests, b.r. bedstead, w.w.
mattress, chest drawers,
Ottoman, linoleum, table
linen, bedroom linen, cut-
lery, kitchen utensils,
etc., etc.

NOTE.—This will be a sale of ex-
cellent furniture and effects, all in
first-class order, and a wide selec-
tion.

No Reserve!
No Reserve!
1285-t.d.

Horowhenua Chronicle 13 November 1911 page 4.

He donated his father's collections of taonga Maori to the Dominion Museum, including the canoes and the pataka at Papaitonga. The new museum building was frustratingly delayed by the War and there is an extensive and sometimes terse correspondence in the Te Papa archives about Leo's past and potential gifts to the Museum and what he perceived as the inadequate provision for their care.²⁴¹

They gave the hospital £500 for a Percy Buller memorial bed.

On 3 November, after hosting a farewell dance in the Sydney street schoolroom, they left for England via Sydney, on departure offering to sell the Papaitonga lake and the land around the house to the government for a reserve.

In 1913 they moved to a manor in Gloucester named Norton Court. Leo died in 1918 and among those attending his funeral at Norton Church, in addition to remaining family and members of the nobility, were Messrs N Hawkins and M Hawkins, Mrs Newstead, Cecil Newstead and private Wintle (household servants). Mr Minnett (butler) was prevented by indisposition from attending. Floral tributes were sent by the Tenant Farmers and the Cottage Tenants.²⁴²

Leo was English gentry.

Mr. Walter Leopold Buller, of Norton Court, near Gloucester, left estate valued at £21,400 13s. 3d., with net personalty £20,700. The will is dated 9th July, 1914, wherein testator left £200 to James Crawford Hanna as executor; £100 to George Newstead if serving; £500 to his sister, Laura Madocks; to his nephew, Kendrick A. M. Madocks, gold watch and £300; to his widow, £1,000 and the income from the residue of his property for life; all the medals and diplomas of his late father, his own

241 Te Papa MU000001-0002-0036, 002-0046, 001-0071, 0072, 0073, 0185, 0186, 0087.

242 *Gloucester Journal* 16 November 1918 page 6.

epergnes, silver presentation plate, and family portraits to his wife for life and then to his children, or failing issue then to his sister, Laura Madocks.²⁴³



Norton Court, Gloucester where Leo and Alice lived after 1913.
It was demolished in 1959 after a fire.

Alice died in 1957. Two unmarried daughters Gwen and Margaret were living in Warminster in 1963 – Gwendoline Charlotte Buller 1910–1984 presented James Buller’s bible to the Methodist museum at Maungunu on the Hokianga in 1981. She left her belongings (including “the portrait of our father”, perhaps, just perhaps, referring to the lost Lindauer portrait of their grandfather) to a third sister Kathleen Mary (Buller) Brown born 1918, who married James Russell Brown in Bath in 1946. They emigrated to the US and Canada and a son Michael Russell Brown 1954–2008 was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and lived in Winnipeg.

243 *Gloucester Journal* 29 March 1919 page 8.

In February 1909 Percy told Gilbert Mair that Laura and Billy Madocks were “in capital form”. In May 1909 a report of Leo’s wedding mentioned “Lynwood, where Mr. Percy Buller and Mrs. Maddox live”. In May 1910 Percy wrote his will and left his sister Laura £3000 “free from the control of her husband” – the pattern suggesting Laura and Billy were no longer in capital form. Indeed, at the time of the 1911 census Laura Madocks was living with 5 year old Kenrick in a boarding house in Margate St John the Baptist, Kent. Kenrick was killed in 1928 in a motor vehicle crash in France and her other son Gwynne in the same year while flying at an aviation meeting.²⁴⁴ Later Laura and William Madocks were living together in St Ermin’s Hotel, Caxton St, London SW1 according to the 1929–1933 Electoral Registers.

Laura Madocks (Kahurangi, the divine one) died in February 1934. Her daughter, Percy’s goddaughter Juliet Ann Madocks, born 1905, married in 1935,

The Duke of Gloucester, attended by Major R. T. Stanworth, was present at the marriage, which took place at Holy Trinity, Sloane street, London, on April 30, of Lieut.-commander Leonard Arthur Herbert Wright, only son of Mr C. W. Wright, of Saxelbye Park, Melton Mowbray, and Miss Juliet Ann Madocks, of Glanywern Hall, Denbigh, North Wales, only daughter of Brigadier-general W. R. N. Madocks and the late Mrs Madocks (formerly of Wellington), of Old Basing House, Basingstoke.²⁴⁵

244 *Manawatu Times* 24 February 1934 page 2.

245 *Otago Daily Times* 28 May 1935 page 14.

Adopted Maori Chieftainess Passes.

DAUGHTER OF SIR W. BULLER.

(Received 1 p.m.)

LONDON, February 20.

The death is announced of Laura, wife of Brigadier-General W. R. N. Madocks and daughter of the late Sir Walter Buller, who conducted the negotiations between the British and Maoris after the hostilities.

Mrs. Madocks was born in New Zealand and was adopted, in recognition of her father's services as a Maori chieftainess.

She collaborated with her father in the collection and annotation of the wild birds of the Dominion, the result of their work being presented to the Wellington City Council in 1906. Both her sons were accidentally killed. In 1928, Kenrick met his death in a motor accident in France, while Gwynn was killed while flying at a Household Brigade aviation meeting.

Brigadier-General Madocks was a staff officer in the New Zealand Defence Forces, 1896-99, and served in the South African War with the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, 1899-1900. He was on the General Staff of the B.E.F. during the Great War. He retired in 1927. Through the influence of Mr. Ernest Davis, of Auckland, Brigadier-General Madocks, who is interested in all forms of sport, agreed to act as representative of the New Zealand Football Association on the English Football Association.

Auckland Star 21 February 1934 page 7.

Brigadier Madocks died in 1946. He left his entire fortune to his daughter Mrs Juliet Ann Wright, expressing “The strong wish and desire that, should any male issue of my daughter succeed to the Llay estate he shall use the surname ‘Madocks’ in addition to, or in substitute for, his own surname”.²⁴⁶

Did he thus seek to replace his own dead sons? The Wrights had four children, two boys and two girls.

Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull died at age 49 in 1918, probably of maxillary cancer, a nasty outcome of smoking. He had had an operation (“a little bit of bone cut away in the nostril”) perhaps to relieve the pressure and an X-ray treatment machine had been installed in a room in his house (X-ray treatments were used for a wide range of malignancies after about 1895). Postoperative sepsis possibly exacerbated by X-radiation side necrosis may have been the immediate cause of death. He too had avoided the matrimonial net.

Robert Thorburn Turnbull was killed at age 58 on the Hutt road in 1923 when the car in which he was a passenger hit a stationary truck at night.

The collision occurred through Adams (the driver) dimming his own lights when meeting a motor-car with dazzling headlights, and thus failing to see the lorry. “I suggest that local authorities take into serious consideration the advisability of passing a bylaw compelling motor-lorries to carry a bright rear light at the end of the vehicle....”²⁴⁷ – said the coroner.

Robert Turnbull had also avoided the matrimonial net.

²⁴⁶ *Leicester Evening Mail* 4 March 1947 page 4.

²⁴⁷ *Auckland Star* 30 August 1923 page 8.

Appendix A: New Zealand lepidoptera

New Zealand Lepidoptera. Original drawings by AP Buller, his identifications in **bold**, recent identifications and later notes in plain text.

There are two collections in the Alexander Turnbull Library.

Percy bequeathed the former (ATL E-088-q) to Alexander Turnbull, who bound them in a booklet along with Percy's July 1893 Papaitonga envelope with his cartoon of "Alec the Good".

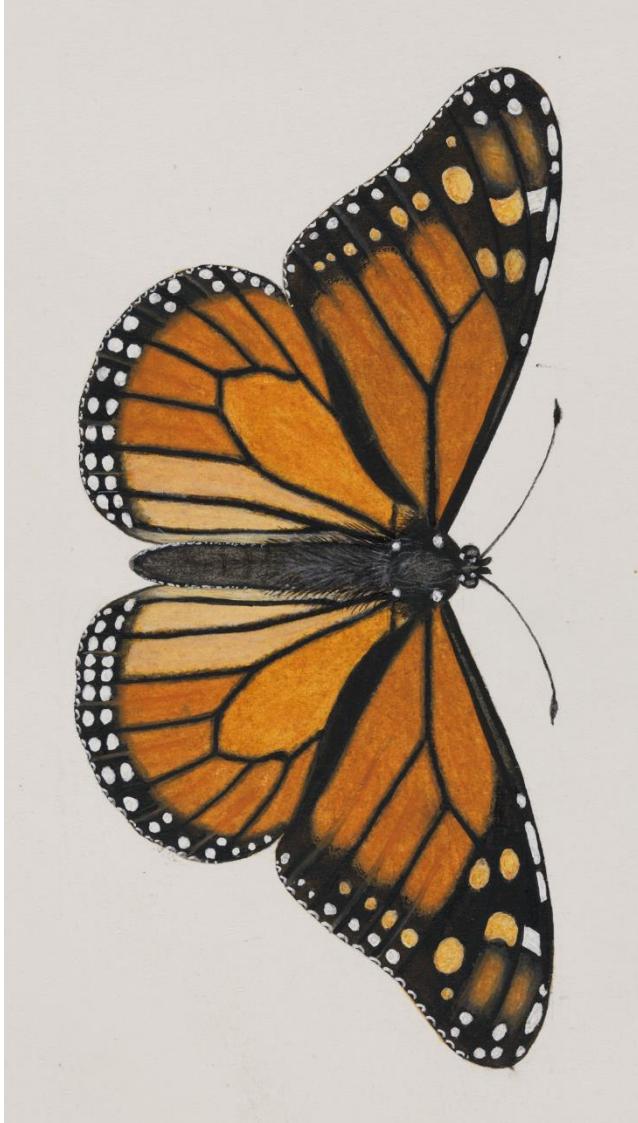
The latter set of drawings (ATL E-074-q) was purchased by the Library in London in 1970 from the estate of Kenneth Athol Webster, along with an offprint of one of Percy's papers in the *Transactions*. Webster was collecting in London after 1945 so perhaps he purchased the drawings from the Madocks estate.

The first drawing in this latter set is of a butterfly not found in New Zealand: it is *Ornithoptera priamus urvillianus*, the blue birdwing butterfly from central and south Moluccas, New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, Solomon Islands, and north-east Australia.

The third drawing in the second set is of uncertain origin, a ghost moth but probably not a New Zealand one.



Selidosema dejectaria. (brown evening moth, now *Gellonia dejectaria*) and
Agrotis ypsilon (*A. ipsilon*, the greasy cutworm moth). ATL E-088-q-001.



Anosia erippus (monarch butterfly, now *Danaus plexippus*).
Native of North America. ATL E-088-q-002.



Argyrophenga antipodum (common tussock butterfly, tussock ringlet).
The male above wings spread; female below and on right and below, wings closed. ATL E-088-q-003.



Azelina fortinata (now *Ischalis fortinata*, the angle-winged fern moth),
Azelina gallaria (now *I. gallaria*, the oblique-striped fern moth),
Selidosema rudisata (now *Pseudocoremia rudisata*, the pale black-waved
brown moth). ATL E-088-q-004.



Chloroclystis bilineolata [three different species: *Pasophila* sp. probably not *P. bilineolata*; *P. muscosata* (?) and *P. testulata* (?)].
ATL E-088-q-005.

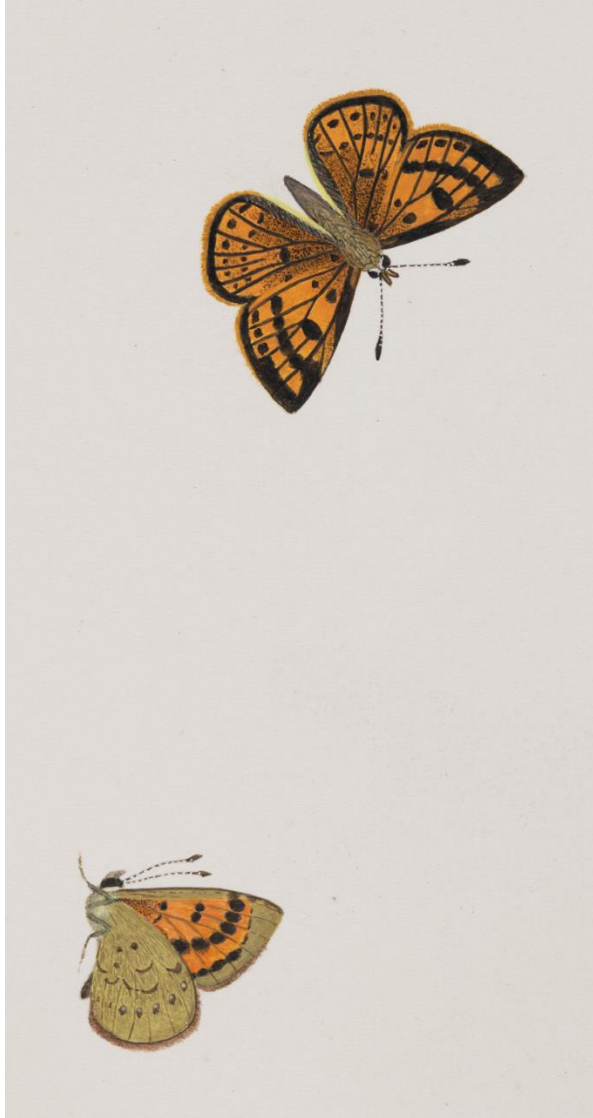


Chrysophanus boldenarum (boulder copper butterfly, now *Lycaena boldenarum*). Male below, female above and undersurface.

ATL E-088-q-006.



Chrysophanus enysii (glade copper butterfly,
now *Lycaena feredayi*). Male below. ATL E-088-q-007.



Chrysophanus feredayii (actually *Lycaena rauparaha*, Rauparaha's copper butterfly). Male above. ATL E-088-q-008.



Chrysophanus salustius (common copper butterfly, now *Lycaena salustius*).
Male above and underside, female below. ATL E-088-q-009.



Orthosia commma (now *Proteuxoa commma*); ***Declana egregia*** (now *Ipana egregia*, the South Island lichen moth); ***Melanchra ustistriga*** (now *Ichneutica ustistriga*, the large grey cutworm moth). ATL E-088-q-010.



Melanchra insignis (green marked cutworm moth, now *Ichneutica insignis*), ***Declana junctilinea*** (now *Ipana junctilinea*), ***Erana graminosa*** (mahoe stripper moth, now *Feredayia graminosa*). ATL E-088-q-011.



Dodonidia helmsii (forest ringlet butterfly). Female and underside.
ATL E-088-q-012.



Epirranthis alectoraria (now *Xyridacma alectoraria*, but wing shape more typical of *X. ustaria*). ATL E-088-q-013.



Heliiothis armigera (*Ichneutia mutans*), ***Melanchra composita*** (*Helicoverpa armigera*, the tomato fruitworm moth), ***Melanchra mutans*** (*Persectania aversa*). ATL E-088-q-014.



Hydriomena gobiata (*Morova subfasciata*), ***Hydriomena similata*** (*Austrocidaria similata*, the dark coprosma carpet moth), ***Siculodes subfasciata***. (green and purple carpeting moth). ATL E-088-q-015.



Lycaena oxleyi (southern blue butterfly, now *Zizina oxleyi*).
Underside above, male below. ATL E-088-q-016.



Lycaena phoebe (common grass blue butterfly, now *Zizina labradus labradus*). Male above and underside. ATL E-088-q-017.



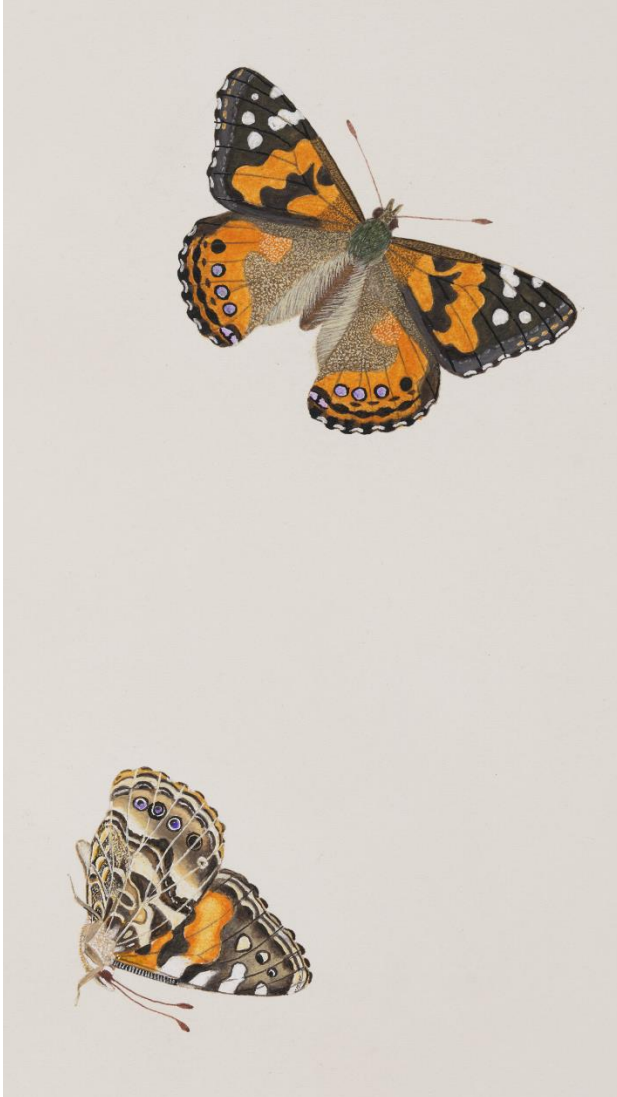
Mesarcha hybrealis (*Deana hybreasalis*, female, *D. hybreasalis*, male),
Semioscosma peroneanella (now *Izatha peroneanella*, the green lichen
moth). ATL E-088-q-018.



Porina despecta (now *Wiseana despecta*, the pink porina moth).
Porina signata (*Wiseana cervinata*). ATL E-088-q-019.



Rhapsa scotosialis (*Pseudocoremia leucelaea*). ***Selidosema productata***
(*Rhapsa scotosialis*, the slender owlet moth). ***Sestra humeraria*** (*S. flexata*).
ATL E-088-q-020.



Vanessa cardui (*Vanessa kershawi*, the Australian painted lady butterfly, male and underside). ATL E-088-q-021.



Vanessa gonerilla (New Zealand red admiral butterfly, kahukura. Female above, male underside below). ATL E-088-q-022.



Vanessa itea (New Zealand yellow admiral butterfly, kahu kowhai, male below and underside). ATL E-088-q-023.

More Lepidoptera. Original drawings by AP Buller, ATL E-074-q



Ornithoptera priamus urvillianus (blue birdwing butterfly, male). ATL E-074-q-01.
Ipana atronivea (North Island lichen moth, female). ATL E-074-q-02.



A ghost moth (*Hepialidae*)? but not a NZ one. ATL E-074-q-03.



Meterana pictula and *Cosmodes elegans*. ATL E-074-q-04.



Aenetus virescens (puriri moth, male) ATL E-074-q-05.



Uresiphita maoralis (kowhai moth), *Xanthorhoe semifissata*,
Heterocrossa eriphylla ATL E-074-q-06.



Pyrgotis plagiatana, *P. eudorana*, *Izatha acmonias* (?). ATL E-074-q-07.



Upper R: *Musotoma aduncalis* (maidenhair fern moth), Lower R: *Glaucoccharis pyrsophanes*, Centre: *Asaphodes beata*, Left: unidentified. ATLE-074-q-08.



Upper: *Paranotoreas brephosata* (?), *Notoreas perornata*,
Eudonia aspidota. ATLE-074-q-09.



Dasyptodia selenophora. ATLE-074-q-10.



Dumbletonius unimaculatus. ATLE-074-q-11.



L: *Tatosoma tipulata*, Upper R: *Orthoclydon praefectata* (flax window-maker), Lower R: *Xanthorhoe rosearia*. ATLE-074-q-12.



Dumbletonius characterifer. ATLE-074-q-13.



Above: *Epalxiphora axenana*,
UR: *Elvia glaucata*. LR: *Helastia cymozeucta* or *H. crypta*. ATLE-074-q-14.



Aenetus virescens (puriri moth, female). ATLE-074-q-15.



Sphinx (now Agrius) convolvuli (convolvulus moth). ATLE-074-q-16.



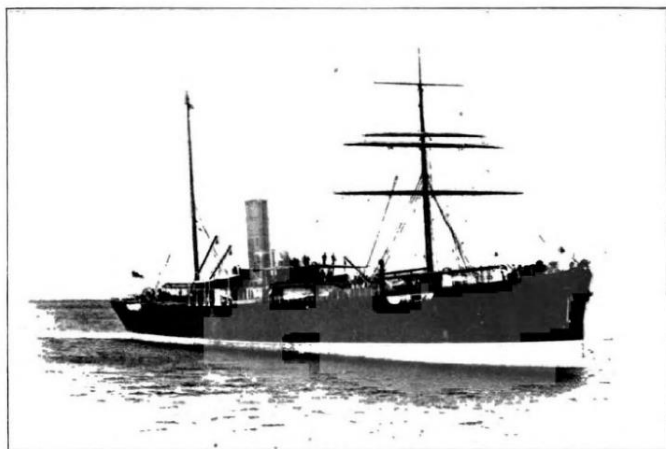
Epiphyryne verriculata (cabbage tree moth). ATLE-074-q-17.

Appendix B: In search of a derelict

Strand magazine, November 1899: 490–495.

In Search of a Derelict.

BY A. P. BULLER.



From a Photo. by

THE "PERTHSHIRE."

(Dunedin, N.Z.)



F all the events of recent years connected with the sea, perhaps the break-down and disappearance in mid-ocean of the steamer *Perthshire*, and her ultimate rescue after drifting helplessly for forty-five days, covering a distance of over 1,400 miles, affords one of the most interesting and remarkable.

This splendid steel screw steamer was built at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1893, at a cost of some £80,000, for the Shire Line, and is one of a fine fleet trading between London, Australia, and New Zealand. She possesses a gross tonnage of 8,000 tons, being built almost entirely for cargo purposes, her usual shipments from the Colonies consisting of frozen mutton.

On the 26th day of April of the present year she left Sydney for the Bluff (her first calling point in New Zealand) with a large and valuable cargo, to be completed at the principal ports prior to her departure for London. She carried a few passengers and a crew of about sixty, making in all some seventy souls on board.

The trip ordinarily takes from four to six days at the outside, and her non-appearance at the Bluff, as week followed week, naturally gave rise to much anxiety and surmise. Vessels plying between Australia and New Zealand kept a sharp look-out, and some

"zig-zagged" in their course in the hope of finding the missing ship. No tidings came to hand till the 26th May, when a scow of 150 tons, called the *Whangaroo*, arrived in Sydney, from New Zealand, and reported that on the night of the 12th of May she had seen on the horizon signals of distress, in the shape of blue lights and a continuous fire of rockets. Altering her course she sailed down, and eventually discerned the loom of a huge steamer, which proved to be the *Perthshire*. The scow signalled that she would stand by till daylight, and the answer came back, "Thanks." As soon as it became light, communications were established between the two ships, and the captain of the scow then learnt that the propeller shaft of the *Perthshire* had broken clean off in the tail-tube, and that in consequence she was absolutely helpless, her spread of canvas being too limited to give her even steering-way.

The little schooner could, of course, render no assistance, and continued her voyage to Sydney. The *Perthshire* had up to that time been drifting for fourteen days without sighting a sail. Another fortnight elapsed ere she was seen again, when, on May the 25th, a barque, *The Northern Chief*, sighted her in lat. 33 S., long. 164 E., still drifting to the northward, and to the region of reefs and islets, and now quite out of the track of steamers. Then for a further period of eighteen days

she passed out of human ken, and vanished as completely as if the ocean had engulfed her.

By this time, as can be well imagined, the public anxiety was becoming intense; the question, "What *has* become of the *Perthshire*?" was asked in every quarter, and the mystery of her disappearance became a universal topic throughout Australasia. Tug-boats and private steamers were out in all directions looking for the derelict, both in the interests of humanity and the prospects of heavy salvage, and at last the apprehension became so great that two of Her Majesty's ships on the Australian Station were prepared to join in the search. The steamers of the Union Steamship Company's line, running weekly between Australia and New Zealand, had all deviated in their courses, expecting to find her, but without success, one after the other arriving only to report "no tidings of the *Perthshire*."

Then one of the company's boats, the ss. *Talune*, of 2,000 tons (on board of which the writer was a passenger), left Wellington on the 9th June, presumably for Sydney direct. On the following morning, however, the passengers were informed that she was going to make a lengthy search, and had taken in an extra supply of coal, rockets, and towing hawsers; we also noted that she was going far off her track, towards the north, instead of shaping on the usual westerly course.

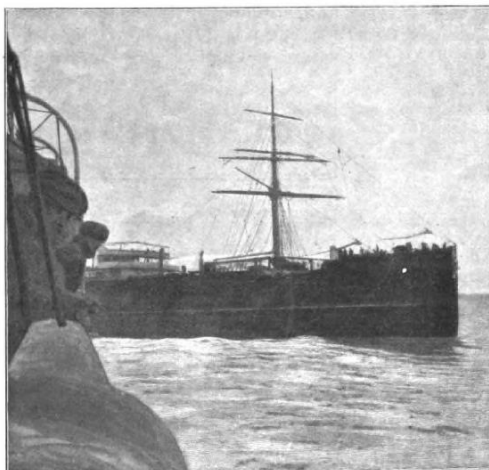
On the second day out "a crow's nest," in the shape of a coal-basket, was swung up to the foremast head, and from this elevated perch two hourly watches were kept—a lonely vigil for the look-out man; but the hope was ever present that while sweeping the trackless waste of waters with his telescope he would at last descry the derelict.

Till now we had sighted neither sail nor steam, and, but for a rear-guard of never-tiring albatrosses, we had the ocean to ourselves. In fact, the endless expanse of moving water rather reminded one of the first lessons in geography, when we were told that "the ocean occupies a very large part of the

globe on which we live!" An electric beacon light, in the form of a double shield, was rigged up at the mast-head, fitted with twelve electric burners, giving a power equal to 300 candles. This shield arrangement enabled an arc of light to show from either side of the vessel a distance of twenty-two miles; that is to say, a tract of forty-four miles was covered by our beacon.

On the evening of the third day the probability of being in the neighbourhood of the *Perthshire* increased, and the rockets were brought out for use. The first two, in their anxiety to speed into the heavens on their errand of help, burst prematurely when some thirty feet up, but the third left the deck with a screech and roared its way into space, leaving behind its fiery train of sparks. Its far-off explosion could just be heard above the noise of wind and wave, followed by the beautiful meteoric shower of bursting stars high above us.

Throughout this and the following night rockets were thrown up hourly, but met with no response. Monday passed uneventfully, and we were beginning to fear that our ocean tramp would prove fruitless. At noon on that day our course was still lying to the N.W. (or, to be absolutely accurate, N.W. $\frac{3}{4}$ N.), our latitude 30.20 S., longitude 167.19 E., and, roughly speaking, some 600 miles out of our course. Our commander



From a Photo. by

COMING UP TO

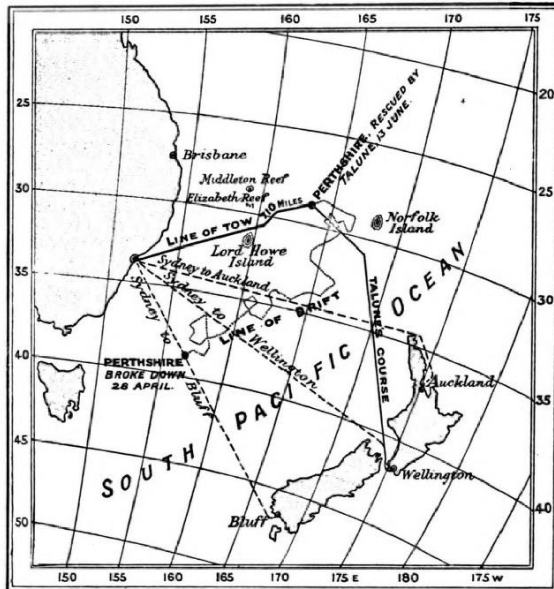
[Sir Walter Buller.

(Captain Spinks) had spent many anxious hours poring over the chart, studying the trend of the ocean currents, and plotting the courses of the other searchers in order to get at the proper position of the *Perthshire*. He ultimately decided to run up within fifty miles south of Norfolk Island and then take a zig-zag or triangular course from there to Lord Howe's Island, his opinion being that the missing vessel would be found somewhere towards the apex of the triangle, and subsequent events proved how correct he was in his surmise.

Towards three o'clock on Tuesday morning (13th June) passengers awoke on missing the now familiar "drum of the racing screw," and to hear the sea thrashing against their port-holes as our steamer rolled from side to side in the swell. Lightly clad, one hurried on deck to hear the cheering news that we had "found the *Perthshire*!"

Away on our starboard hand we could see her head-light blinking, and as the first shaft of day broke in the east, there lay our derelict silhouetted dark and large against the horizon. The second officer had sighted her shortly before three, a blue light burnt on the *Perthshire* having attracted his attention. We then drew close and stood by until daylight enabled us to communicate with her. At the time of finding her she was slowly heading on the same course that we were on, viz., W. by N. $\frac{1}{4}$ N., the latitude being 29° 3' S., longitude 163° 38' E. By referring to the accompanying chart one will get a fair idea of her position, some 750 miles off her course. It was a most fortunate

circumstance that we sighted her when we did, for Captain Spinks had decided to alter his course within the next hour to the S.W., in which case we would certainly have missed her. About 7 a.m. her captain boarded us, meeting with a hearty cheer as he reached our deck. His expressions of relief and delight at such welcome succour can be left to one's imagination. He informed our captain that the day before he had almost



SKETCH CHART—SHOWING THE TRACK OF STEAMERS FROM SYDNEY TO NEW ZEALAND. THE POSITION OF THE "PERTHSHIRE" WHEN SHE BROKE DOWN—HER LINE OF DRIFT AS SHOWN ON HER CHART—AND THE COURSE THAT THE "TALUNE" TOOK TO LOOK FOR HER—WHERE SHE WAS DISCOVERED—AND THE LINE OF TOW TO SYDNEY.

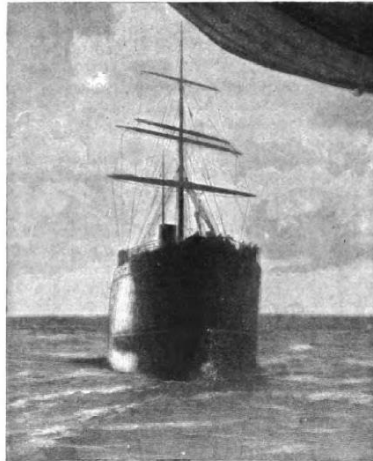
given up hope, and had remarked, "Shall we ever be found?" He told us that on the day of the break-down (28th April) a terrific crash was heard on board the *Perthshire*, just as if she had been struck by a tremendous wave, followed by great shaking of the engines. The mischief was very soon discovered, and it was found that the propeller was hard up against the rudder-post. As the task of repairing the break seemed insurmountable, and it was impossible in any way to navigate the ship, he decided not to attempt it, trusting to be soon picked up by some passing steamer.

Week followed week, however, without assistance coming; by this time they were far off the track of vessels, drifting towards the South Sea Islands, and the hope that always springs eternal in the human breast at last began to fade. At one time his ship was in great peril of being blown towards the dreaded Elizabeth reef (lying to the north of Lord Howe's Island), a strong gale taking him in that direction, but fortunately the wind shifted to another quarter, and for a time the danger was averted. Gale followed gale, and he was quite unable to fight against the currents, drifting in one day alone no less than seventy-five miles.

How completely helpless the ship was can be gathered from the fact that, while drifting, she described three complete circles. Every effort was now made to get the fractured shaft in something like working order, and it proved a matter of the most extreme difficulty and danger. Owing to the fact that the shaft had broken off in the after-tube, those working at it had very little space to move in, and were continually exposed to the danger of the water suddenly rushing in and drowning them all before they could leave the compartment. At last, after fourteen days' incessant work, the broken shaft was reached (after cutting through the three-inch stern-tube) and patched up by means of immense couplings, sufficient to enable the ship to steam very slowly in calm weather, although quite unable to face a head wind or sea. On hearing these particulars one could not fail to admire the silent heroism and indomitable perseverance of the *Pertshire's* engineers, working so steadfastly at what appeared at first to be an almost hopeless task.

After mutual congratulations had been exchanged between the two commanders and arrangements had been discussed, we

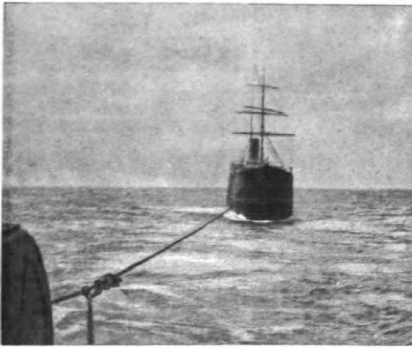
ran up the signal to "Prepare for towing," and the captain of the *Pertshire* then left us. Forthwith preparations were made on our ship. Mighty hawsers were brought along our deck, and the sailors went about the business as if they had graduated from steam tugs, and that towing an ocean liner a matter of 700 miles was quite an every-day occurrence with them. A light Manila hemp rope was brought over from the *Pertshire* by boat, to which was attached a 14in. hawser, and, the supply being insufficient, a wire hawser attached to that, and then made fast on the *Pertshire*. Our end of it was brought through the after-chocks



THE "PERTSHIRE" PREPARING FOR TOWING.
From a Photo. by Sir Walter Buller.

on the starboard side, a turn taken round the stern bits, then brought along the upper deck, passed through the hawsepipes amid-ships, and finally made fast to the bits on the main deck forward. A 10in. hawser was then bent on to the other, and veered out some fifty fathoms astern, the other end being carried along the port side and made fast in the same manner as that on the starboard side. By this ingenious method the strain was equally divided throughout the whole ship.

At 8.30 a.m. all was ready, and a string of bunting fluttered gaily up on the *Pertshire*, conveying the message, "Tow slowly, and good luck to you." The two ships swung gradually into line, and at 8.40 the telegraph rang out its instructions to the engine-room. Simultaneously the responsive screw throbbed out its answer, and cheer after cheer went up from both ships as they pointed their bows to the south-west and forged slowly ahead. It was a spectacle to be long remembered by those fortunate enough to witness it, and for the remainder of the day everyone was intent on watching the great liner straining at her cable, and plunging her mighty bows into the deep, 100 fathoms astern.



SHOWING THE V-SHAPED ARRANGEMENT OF THE ROPES.
From a Photo. by Sir Walter Buller.

Up to this stage the weather had been singularly fine, but our lucky star seemed to wane as soon as we started on our long tow. The wind now freshened on our beam, and finally went dead ahead, bringing with it a very lumpy sea, and towards evening it became evident that the cable would not stand the strain much longer. The steam winches then came into play, and from the chain-locker forward fathoms of anchor cable were brought along the deck and added to the hawser, giving an additional length sufficient to considerably ease the tension. This necessitated a stoppage for about an hour. By noon the following day we had covered 120 knots with our captive, travelling at the rate of about five or six knots an hour. By this time, however, wind and sea had considerably increased, and our speed diminished to two or three knots. Thursday morning brought no improvement in the weather, and as the ship's bell struck 8.30, a mighty sea lifted us like a cork, striking the *Perthshire* a minute later. The 14in. hawser snapped in the middle like a fiddle-string, and our charge, after a tow of 19.4 miles, became a derelict once more.

The space between the ships widened rapidly, and half a mile lay between us in a few minutes. Signals were run up on board the *Perthshire* notifying that she had "lost command," and that they would tighten up the couplings before re-towing. To husband our coal we shut off steam, and at three o'clock the *Perthshire* signalled that she was ready. She was now some distance off, drifting at

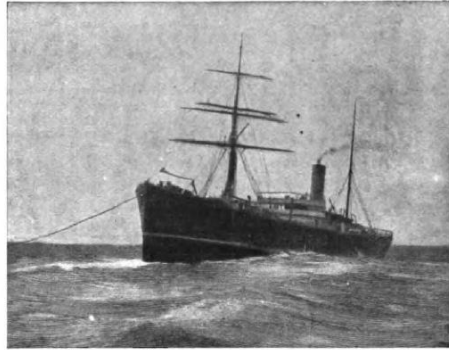
the rate of about two miles an hour, or as the bo'sun remarked, "going to leeward like a crab!" Those seven hours of waiting helped us more easily to realize the dreariness of drifting, even though we possessed the power of steaming at any moment. By this time a tremendous sea was running and half a gale from the south-west was blowing, with occasional squalls sweeping down, accompanied by stinging sheets of rain. A line had to be got to the *Perthshire* by some means or other, and as an open boat could not have lived in such a sea, it was decided to steam up to her and endeavour to effect the connection by means of a ship's rocket. To do so necessitated a very close approach, for we found that the rockets weighted with a necessarily heavy line would only fly a short distance. Then came an incident in seamanship to which it would be hard to find a parallel in the records of the South Pacific. Running close up to the *Perthshire* we loosed our first missile: it ran a true course, but struck her fore-yard, and the line fell back. For the next twenty minutes a running fire of rockets took place between the ships, one after the other falling short and bursting under water, giving one the idea of mimic naval warfare. At length a rocket from the *Perthshire* became entangled in one of our rocket lines, which was secured, and



THE "PERTHSHIRE" IN TOW.
From a Photo. by Sir Walter Buller.

the fusillade ceased. These efforts to get our line on board, and eventually to receive the *Perthshire's* wire hawser in return, necessitated constant manoeuvring on the part of our steamer, at one time a space of only some 40ft. dividing the two vessels. On reflection for a moment it is easy to realize how fraught with danger such a rescue was. A helpless leviathan, drifting, rolling, and plunging in an angry sea, a thrust from whose towering iron bows would have sent us to the bottom, was a dangerous customer to tackle. However, it had to be done, and our captain did it, though it was patent to all that only a man of iron nerve, and one that knew his ship and knew his men, would have essayed the task.

By four o'clock we had the *Perthshire's* wire hawser on board. Our cable was now unshackled from the anchor and brought aft along the upper deck, sufficient cable being laid down to allow of its being paid out when the two cables were bent. It was then made fast to the forward bits on the main deck. A heavy tackle, comprising two 16in. treble blocks with a 4in. Manila fall, was then rove, lashed to the towing cable, and taken up to the bits and capstan on the fo'c's'le head, this arrangement acting as a "spring" to relieve the weight from the bits on the main deck. The after end was then bent on to the *Perthshire's* wire hawser, and again we had her in tow and were heading once more on the home trail. Against the heavy sea and head wind we now made very slow progress, tugging sullenly at our burden, and only registering seventy-four miles by noon on the following day. By midday on Saturday the gale was pretty well spent, and we had added another 130 knots. Shortly afterwards the wind veered round, and enabled the *Perthshire* to shake out her canvas, and thus take some of the strain off our engines. We now made splendid progress, and by twelve o'clock on the following day had reduced the distance by 194 miles, but the fates were determined to have a parting kick at us, for ten minutes later the *Perthshire* signalled that the



THE "*PERTHSHIRE*" JUST AFTER THE BREAKING OF THE HAWSER.
From a Photo. by Sir Walter Buller.

couplings on the shaft had broken, and we were again brought to a standstill. While waiting, a pilot boat sighted us afar off, steamed alongside, and then sped off to Newcastle (some thirty miles distant) with the news. A few hours later and the telegraph would be clicking its message far and wide that the *Perthshire* had been saved! A delay of seven hours, while the couplings were being tightened, and we were off again, this time without further mishap.

Sydney Heads were reached early next morning (June 19th), and a flotilla of steam-tugs, launches, and all sorts and conditions of craft came out to give us joyous greeting. Our triumphant entry down the harbour was a touching and impressive sight: steamers and ferry-boats blew their whistles incessantly as they passed, and cheers went up from every side. We took the *Perthshire* back to her own moorings in Athol Bight, and there left her. Her anchor rattled out in the placid waters of Port Jackson, to the accompaniment of a parting cheer, and the long tow of 710 miles was over!

Thus the drama of the "missing *Perthshire*," to which only a Clark Russell could do justice, closes. Her helpless drift of over 1,400 miles, the plaything of wind and wave for forty-five days, and her varied experiences from the time of the breakdown to her ultimate finding and rescue, furnish the Pacific with a romance hard to equal in the annals of the sea.

Appendix C: **Papaitonga. Lake of the trembling waters.**

Auckland Star 9 December 1911 page 18.

(By JAMES COWAN)

Few New Zealanders have set eyes upon the little lake called Papaitonga, but it may soon become much better known. Negotiations are now going on which will probably result in the purchase of the lake and its shores, where the late Sir Walter Buller had his home. The bulk of the estate has been cut up and sold by the executors of the estate, and realised big prices; but the pretty homestead and the immediate environs of the lake, with the native forest thereon, are retained by the family, whose desire is that the place shall become a National Reserve for all time. The only trouble in the way is the price. Ten thousand pounds is asked, but it is understood that the Government considers this too much. However, it is to be hoped that a mutually satisfactory arrangement will be made, and that Papai-tonga – “The Beauty of the South” – will become a State park and botanical garden, and that the lake will continue to be what Sir Walter Buller made it, a sanctuary for our shy and vanishing native birds.

Topographically and historically there is much to interest one at Papaitonga. It is just a few miles south of Lake Horowhenua. a larger water-sheet, and it is more beautiful than Horowhenua, and it is rich in legendary and poetic associations. To reach the place one goes by train from Wellington, about sixty miles up the Manawatu line, as far as Ohau or Levin: either is a convenient place for the short drive to the lake, but Ohau is the nearer, a little less than two miles from the old Buller home. It lies between the railway and the sea, a sheet of fresh water of 135 acres in extent, with two beautiful islands covered with native vegetation. Papaitonga, a name of beauty, really belongs to the larger island, but it is now generally

applied to the lake, superseding the original name of the watershed, which is Wai-wiri. the "Trembling Waters." Waiwiri is also the name of the tortuous little creek which flows from the western end of the lake to the sea, three miles away; in this sense the name may be translated as "Twisting Stream" – for "wiri" has several meanings. On the north and east sides the lake is enclosed by native forest, presenting a fringe of ferns and shrubs along the water's edge; towards the western end there is a thick growth of raupo and other water-reeds, which affords perfect shelter for the wild duck, swamp-hen, teal, widgeon, and other water birds, native and introduced, that live and breed here undisturbed.

A BIRD SANCTUARY.

For the "Trembling Waters" are tapu to the wild birds. No gun is ever fired on the beautiful shores of Wai-wiri. The Maoris in the neighbouring kainga of Muhunoa and other settlements used to snare thousands of the brown duck here in former days. In the narrow parts of the lake, between the island and the shore, and in some of the deep bays, there were renowned duck drives. The Maori stretched right across the passage, and just above the surface of the water, a thin flax line, supported by fixed stakes, with running loops and nooses suspended from it, close to each other. A Maori in a canoe would gently drive the flock of ducks before him, in the gloom of the evening, when the snares were not readily seen. Mr. Brown Duck was quickly fast in the snare of the fowler, and not many moments thereafter his neck was deftly wrung to save him further trouble.

It is a pretty sight to watch the water-fowl on Wai-wiri, alias Papaitonga. Wild ducks, dabchicks. and teal sail about its placid waters in peace and safety; in the shooting season they congregate here in their thousands, for they know well that the Trembling Water is their most secure retreat. The white swan as here too, filling in the picture with its graceful beauty; and the English mallard and other water-birds have been

introduced. The white swan was first acclimatised here by Sir Walter Buller, who in 1893 turned out on the lake five cygnets, a gift from the Royal flock at Kew Gardens, London. As the evening comes, the melancholy cry of the weka, the wood-hen, is heard on every side, although the bird is almost extinct in the surrounding country; the sharp call of the kiwi comes across the still waters from Papaitonga Island, where Buller liberated several varieties of this flightless bird, the *Apteryx haasti*, *Apteryx oweni*, and *Apteryx mantelli*, in the early nineties. Truly a delightful home for our vanishing birds, this lake of the fern-tree and the gently swishing raupo. Since the Earl of Glasgow – then Governor of New Zealand – was a guest here, and enjoyed some good sport among the ducks, in 1892, no shooting has been allowed on the lake, except for taking scientific specimens. Let's hope it will always be kept as strictly tapu.

SIR GEORGE GREY AND PAPAITONGA.

Sir George Grey, who had a curiously strong desire to buy a New Zealand Island for a home, once endeavoured to purchase Papaitonga and its surroundings, attracted by the beauty of the lake and the island. He had tried to purchase Kapiti Island, but without success, and also Mokoia Island, in Lake Rotorua. In 1801 he approached the Maori owners of Papaitonga, intending if possible to make his home here; but at that time the section of the Ngati Raukawa tribe to whom it belonged were under the influence of the Maori King, and would not treat with the Governor's emissary. Later on Sir George bought Kawau Island, in the Hauraki Gulf, and lived there for many a year, far away from the distractions of the city. After Grey's time several Governors and others negotiated for the place in vain. In 1891 Dr Buller succeeded in becoming the purchaser of the property, covering about 1,300 acres, and here he made his home, in a delightful sylvan solitude.

AN ISLE OF MYSTERY.

There is something of mystic gloom as well as much arboreal beauty about that tree-clad island Papaitonga, sitting green and lone on the blue face of the Trembling Waters. It lies opposite the Buller homestead, a few hundred yards from the shore. The writer pulled across to it one day from the boatshed that stands on the reedy shore – close to the historic carved pataka “Te Takinga,” and the olden Wanganui war-canoe “Te Ranga” (lately presented to the National Museum by Mr Leo Buller). The island is perhaps thirty feet high, with a steep winding track, nearly obscured by the vegetation, leading up to its centre. A sense of somehow being on an enchanted, isle, a place of ghosts and wizardry, strikes in upon one. The bush overhangs the water; it is starred in the season of flowers with the pure white blossoms of the clematis and the pohuehue, and the climbing rata vine crimsons a treeclump here and there. In the deeper shades there is a soft twilight even in broad day. Karaka groves grow thickly, and there are dense shrubberies of mahoe, and the clumps of high flax, and cabbage trees. Everything is eerie and silent; there are kiwi on the islet, but you only hear them at night, and the doleful morepork keeps them company. At a turn in the path, in the glooms of the tapu grove, an eerie thing confronts one – a human skull, stuck up on a short pole, grinning as if in menace, a silent warning to “keep off the grass!” This, one finds, is an Isle of Skulls, a Maori Golgotha, and over the ancient battleground and burial ground that skull on its tapu stick mounts guard. A few yards further on, and in a little open spate on the summit of the island a memorial of another and more picturesque kind is found. A great canoe, an olden war canoe, carved and painted, rears itself above the trees; one end is firmly sunk in the ground and stoutly braced to keep upright. It is a stately memento more, tapu to the manas of the tribal dead.

Sitting here on this thrice-tapu island, with a Ngati-Raukawa companion from the little village of Muhunoa, a mile

or so away, one heard some thrilling tale of Papaitonga's past. For this quiet island was a lively spot in the cannibal days, the early twenties of last century, when Rauparaha and Rangihaeata and their musket-armed Northern warriors happened along. Papaitonga, like Horowhenua, and in fact all this country from Paekakariki to Manawatu and Rangitikei, was owned by the Muaupoko and Rangitane and some kindred tribes. The Muaupoko had a stronghold on this islet: a stockade or tawatawata encircled it. There were many canoes on the lake; when danger threatened the people withdrew to the island, taking all their dug-outs with them. It was in about the beginning of the year 1823 that Rauparaha and his Ngatitua and Ngati-Awa invaded and captured this district. Muaupoko brought their fate on themselves to a certain extent by a massacre in this vicinity; but the wily Rau' had intended to take the place anyway, so the murders only brought matters to a head a little quicker. One of the Muaupoko's prominent chiefs was Toheriri; another was Tanguru, the father of the late Major Kemp. They, or some of their fellow-chiefs, invited Rauparaha and his friends to a meeting at a place called Te Wi, near Papaitonga, promising him some of the canoes on the lake, and a great feast of eels. The Ngati-toa came – Rau' was greedy for canoes – but after they had had those eels they were treacherously attacked in the night-time by their hosts. Rau's daughter, Te Uira ("The Lightning") was killed, and he himself only escaped by the skin of his teeth, bolting naked from the fatal guesthouse in the darkness.

Muaupoko paid very dearly for their "kohuru," as the Maori terms a treacherous slaying. The Northerners assaulted and captured the island-forts on Lake Horowhenua, and the late owners thereof were mercilessly chevvied by Rauparaha and his musketeers. Papaitonga fell, and Kapiti Island was taken by Rauparaha soon afterwards.

HOW PATAITONGA WAS CAPTURED

The Maori story goes that this island was taken by the invaders in a daring manner. The Ngati-toa swam across – not finding any canoes – and stormed the pa with ferocious savagery. One of the warriors, Te Tipi, won fame by firing his double-barrelled flint musket as he swam from the mainland. Foes who could fire their guns whilst swimming were too much for the nerves of Muaupoko. The islanders had no guns and they fell, and there were some grim deeds of blood on this little island that day of long ago. To this day the place is a perfect necropolis of human bones; but they are concealed and protected by the dense growth of evergreen vegetation that now covers the site of the ancient pa. The island was never occupied after that disastrous day. The invaders from the North drove the Muaupoko back into the dense forests, where they made little clearings and lived a precarious and hunted life. Later, a remnant was permitted to settle at Lake Horowhenua, which is still the home of the small tribe that once were the lords of all the country hereabouts.

HOW MUAUPOKO BUILT AN ISLAND

There is another island in the lake, a smaller but not less beautiful one, lying near the western side of Waiwiri. We rowed along to it from Papaitonga. It is but a dot of an isle; its soil almost level with the waters of the lake. It is perhaps thirty yards or a little more in length; and no part is more than two or three feet high. It is so thickly clothed with karaka trees, ti-palms, tall flax, and beautiful ferns that it seems a tree-grove resting on the face of the waters. We landed under the karakas—they were planted here long ago—pushing our boat up through the flax, and explored what we could of the lovely little spot. This island, which is called Papawharangi, has a curious history. Like some of the islets in Lake Horowhenua, it is of artificial origin, it was built by the Muaupoko people in the ancient days, as a kainga and refuge place. This is how it was made, as described by a Maori of the Ngati-Raukawa tribe,

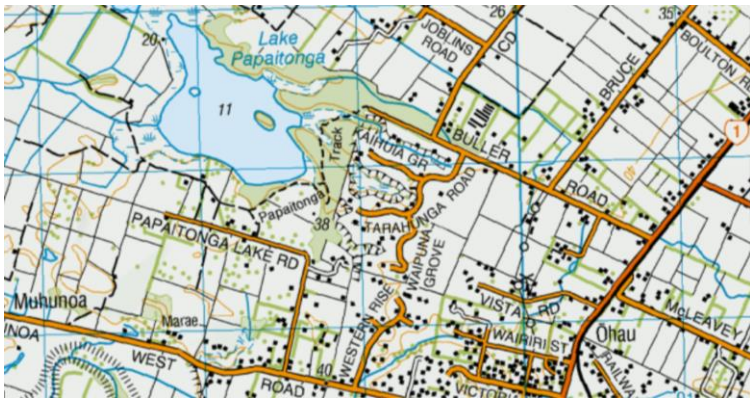
the successors of Muaupoko as lords of the soil: "First of all poles were driven into the shallow lake bottom to define the extent and shape of the proposed island. Then masses of 'niggerhead' bull-rushes, with the earth attached to their roots, were brought from the lake-edge and cast into the water within the line of the poles, and this was continued until a mound was formed level with the surface of the water. Next great quantities of kakahi shells from the refuse heaps of the kaingas were brought in canoes and cast upon the platform of 'niggerhead'; and after this many canoe-loads of soil were thrown on top. Then dry fern and more 'niggerhead,' and all kinds of rubbish were spread over the surface, and soon there was dry land in the midst of the lake. Upon the low island so formed huts were erected: there were four built on it. Formerly it was larger; it used to extend to where the raupo grows near the shore. The boundary poles are still to be seen there; and there are also many skulls and dead men's bones."

A BOTANICAL GARDEN.

At the Buller homestead on the lakeshore, the owner made a real botanical museum. Rare plants and shrubs from other parts of New Zealand were introduced and planted, with the intention of forming an epitome of the indigenous vegetation, Sir Walter Buller thus wrote of the place: "Here are brought together, and all in flourishing condition, the puriri and the kauri, from the Far North, and the pohntukawa, potted by himself and sent by Sir George Grey from his island home at Kawau; the large-leaved and now nearly extinct *Meryta sinclairii* from the Hauraki Gulf, and the beautiful *olearia angustifolia* from Stewart island; the graceful *todea superba* from the Ruahine Mountains. and the edible horse-shoe fern from the foot of Mt Egmont; the rare *toi* from the Murimotu Plains, and the *ti-tawhiti* from the Wanganui River: *Hoheria populnea*. with its wealth of "orange blossom," from the South, and flowering *pittosporums* of various species from all parts of the country."



Lake Papaitonga in 1906



Ohau, Muhunua and Lake Papaitonga (Waiwera), SE of Levin. NZ Topo map.

Ian St George is a retired doctor, naturalist and amateur historian.

Other books written, collated or edited

William Colenso

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3 editions of *Colour field guides* (co-editor)
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Editor *NZ Native Orchid Journal* 1988–2023: 150 issues
Editor *NZ Native Orchid Group Historical Series*: 22 issues.

Medical

Doctors writing
A special general practice
A history of the GP Vocational Training Programme (co-editor)
Assessing doctors' performance
Editor *NZ Family Physician*
Editor, 11 editions of *Cole's medical practice in New Zealand*.
Chapters in books, papers in refereed medical journals, commissioned papers, many editorials and articles in nonrefereed medical press.

Family

Fifty years a Taranaki doctor: George Hanbury Farridy St George
First chemist in the Wairarapa: Leonard Shaw St George
My father's uncle Frank: Frank Clarence St George
Grandfathersongs: for Violet Hilton, Eli Hooper, Elise Hinomoto
Our 16 of your 32 great grandparents
Cliff Porter: captain of the 1924 Invincibles: 100 years on.

Navigraphy

The Amelia Thompson
The first six ships

Miscellaneous

Articles in *NZ Listener*, *Katherine Mansfield Society Newsletter*, *Otago Daily Times*, *Turnbull Library Record*, *NZ Gardener*, *The Orchardian*, *the Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin*, *Forest & Bird*, *Victorian Naturalist*, *NZ Journal of Botany*, *AirNZ Magazine*, *Trilipedia*, *NZ Native Orchid Journal*.