

TE WHAKATUWHERA I TE MARAE

FAIRFIELD COLLEGE



“ARATIATIA”

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MARAE

“TE IHO RANGI”

-

WHARENUI

PUBLIC OPENING

Saturday 9 December 1995

CHURCH SERVICE

Sunday 10 December 1995

THE MEANING

The following passage represents one attempt to capture the *ngako* (quintessential meaning) of our Marae. Many important discussions have happened over the years as together we have shared thoughts, feelings and our *mahi* (work). Most particularly for this *take* (challenge) I have drawn on *korero* (discussions) with our Kaumatua, Hare Puke and our Tohunga Whakairo (Chief Carver) Kereti Rautangata.

Kereti is preparing an in-depth treatise for later publication. If you are interested in finding out more about this, please contact the College Office and leave your name and phone number. The hope now is that you will find your own personal meaning from today's experience and indeed from your presence on many other occasions here in this place.

‘ARATIATIA’ is the name of the Marae as a whole. This descriptive name has deep significance locally, being associated as it is in tradition with the journey by the explorer Tia in a small canoe up the rapids of the Waikato River. It is said that the old river bed was a series of staircase-like ledges, each of which enabled Tia to negotiate every obstacle. In another sense the name “Aratiatia” may symbolise **AN ASCENDING PATHWAY** taking us progressively onwards and upwards as we travel along the journey of life.

‘TE IHO RANGI’ is the name of the Wharenui. This symbolic name with its special aura conveys a host of subtle meanings for people. Essentially, it transports our thoughts and aspirations beyond the immediately obvious or mundane to higher levels, opening our minds to a wider vision.

“Iho” is variously the essence, pith, kernel or heart of a thing, in this case no doubt the human heart. It is the link, the connector. It is the unifying force. It is strong.

“Rangi” in this context implies enlightenment, the supreme source, heaven, harmony, full potential, the ultimate, Truth.

Put simply then, “Te Iho Rangi” means **THE LINKAGE WITH TRUTH.**

If we take “Aratiatia” and “Te Iho Rangi” together, the image is of a pathway which leads us in unity to the place where we can connect with the Truth. To experience this we need openness, humility, sincerity. We must respect this place but we should also share it and use it to the fullest. It is a place for learning, a place for living, a place for enjoying. It is for everyone!

MORE ABOUT THE WHARENUI: "TE IHO RANGI"

When approaching the Marae ("Aratiatia") from the north along the pathway, entering through the gateway of the pallisade observed by and noticing the sentinels, you see directly to your front the exterior wharenuui carvings of the *mahau* (porch). Even from a distance you are drawn onto the *marae atea* (courtyard) becoming attracted towards and into the house. You feel welcome; you are welcome. Nau mail! Haere mail!

The **EXTERIOR CARVINGS** form an integrated unit depicting *te rakau o te ora* (the tree of life). Your eyes along with your consciousness shift upwards from the physical level at the base to higher planes above.

Three upright pillars provide structural strength, allowing the interconnections of ten power centres with all parts in harmony with the whole. The *poumua* (central trunk) is capped at the apex by the *koruru* (head). At your eye level, the *poumua* also embodies the pivotal figure representing the great spiritual teachers since time immemorial. The *poumua* links the two angled *maihi* which are outstretched all-embracing arms with their *raparapa* (hands and fingers) at their extremities. In turn the *maihi* connect with the vertical *amo* (side pillars) and thence to the horizontal carvings along the base, the *paepae-poto* and the *paepae-kainga-awha* towards the east and west respectively.

Carvings form an arch around the *whatitoka* (doorway) with the *pare* above and *waewae* on each side. Also surrounding the *matapihi* (window) are carvings, with the *korupe* along the top. Above is the *mahau* ceiling, the *heke* (curved rafters) and the extension of the inside *tahuhu* (central ridge-pole) adorned with painted and sculptured *kowhaiwhai* (scrolled patterns).

Thus, the front of this house manifests a warm invitation and draws you inside. In a sense this place is a map of the human heart, inclusive of all people and of every culture. The theme is "unity in diversity". You are free to enter with openness, humility, sincerity and respect and with a sense of belonging. You can find yourself here. This place is for you; it is yours!

As you step **INSIDE THE HOUSE** you see seven *poupou* (carved figures) along the wall on your right, the *fangata* whenua side. These *poupou* are pictorial representations of Maori spirituality or expressions of divinity. Their names will be known by all who are familiar with Maori cultural heritage. To your left along the eastern wall are also seven *poupou*. These are symbolic representations of the faculties of divinity as expressed universally. Underneath the *poupou* on both sides are small plaques showing the appropriate names. Complementing the *poupou* are *tukutuku* (woven panels) alongside all of them and above every unit are the angled *heke* on the ceiling with their painted and sculptured *kowhaiwhai*.

Perhaps you pause now and look back at the wall behind you where the more conventional art forms give a strong sense of historical heritage, protection, security. There is order here. However, you are building on the foundations of the past, turning again and realising that tradition is alive not static; it is current and dynamic.

As your eyes progress once more along each side in turn, you become conscious of a graduation as you are taken progressively on the journey from lower to higher, tangible to intangible, temporal to spiritual. Accentuating this process is the *tahuhu* (central ridge-pole) above you, which symbolically transports energy both ways through a pure, uncluttered channel. The elevating sequence of colours are also chosen meticulously for their aesthetic properties as well as their spiritual significance.

Before you now is the beauty of the far wall. Light. Virtue. Truth.

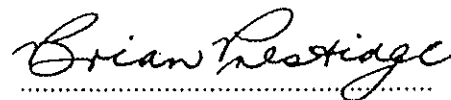
Integrating, harmonising, synthesising all elements is the *poutokomanawa* (centre-pole) which is designed to rotate so that as much as is humanly possible we can see it all at once. It has unifying force. It can reveal "the heart as the absolute abode of the spirit". We can be as one with our Creator.

The *mauri* (atmosphere, life-force or ethos) of "Te Iho Rangi" is characteristically that of *wairua* (spirituality) stillness, tranquility, beneficence, healing, integrity. Enjoy and respect this place.

Hutia te rito o te harakeke
Kei hea te komako e ko e
Ki mai ki ahau he aha te mea nui o te ao
Maku e ki atu
He tangata He tangata He tangata

People are the most important thing on earth says this proverb. If we cut out the heart of the flax bush it dies.. It cannot produce the flower which gives the bellbird its nectar. Without nectar the bellbird cannot sing, cannot live. If we ignore people we ignore the heart of this earth and without the heart all else is without purpose, without meaning.

Kia ora tatou katoa,



Brian Prestidge
PRINCIPAL

OUR MARAE - A BRIEF HISTORY

During this weekend of 9 and 10 December 1995, our Marae project reaches an exciting culmination with the public opening ceremonies and celebrations. The dreams and endeavours of many people are to be rewarded. I am sure that the beauty of the wharenuī and the potential of the whole Marae complex will be inspirational for everyone.

It was during the late 1970's that the concept of developing a Marae at Fairfield College as a suitable manifestation of the Maori dimension within the school was increasingly talked about and gained strong support. Following assurances being received of the support and blessing of Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikahu, discussions with Tainui kaumatua and representatives of the local Maori community, negotiations with the Department of Education and indications of enthusiasm from staff and students of the College, the decision to develop the Marae on its present site was taken towards the end of 1981 by the Board of Governors when Mike Hanaray was Chairman and David Hood Principal.

A key inspirational figure at the time was Erana Coulter, Head of the Maori Studies Department. Her words, written and spoken, gave a clear understanding of the original purpose (kaupapa) of the Marae and this vision remains firmly in place today and for the future. The Marae is a manifestation of the heritage which belongs to all New Zealanders and of which the Maori dimension is a vital and an integral part. From those earliest times, the educational purpose for the Marae has been clear with all New Zealanders having the opportunity to learn about things Maori. The development of positive attitudes towards Maori culture within students, teachers and amongst people in the wider community will help foster our total national identity as a bicultural, even multicultural society. The Marae will also serve as a meeting place on many occasions for people from the wider community. It is for all of us!

On 28 January 1982, the former church hall which had been purchased by tender from the Fairfield Baptist Church, was relocated as the foundation building on the present Marae site and became the basis of the Wharenuī. The Whakanoa was conducted on 5 March for the removal of the tapu and on 24 March, the inaugural meeting to form the Marae Support Committee was held with Brian Prestidge as Chairman. Within a short time plans were developed for the whole complex including the landscaping and other buildings were brought onto the site. The committee gained active involvement from a wide variety of people. In February 1984, Haimona Tawha became the Chairman and was followed into that position during February 1987 by Pine Campbell who had become the Head of Maori Studies in May 1983. Brian Prestidge has remained as Treasurer and the position of Secretary has been filled in succession by Ivan Pooch, Olwen Laurie and Caroline Bennett. Over the years a large number of people have given service on the committee or in support of it.

During late January 1985 Kereti Rautangata commenced work as our Tohunga Whakairo (Chief Carver). Kereti is of Tainui and Te Arawa descent, a past Fairfield College student and a qualified architect. He committed himself to the Fairfield College Wharenuī project and has shown great devotion as well as enormous artistic and teaching talent throughout the entire period since commencing his work during 1984. The Wharenuī in particular will make its own profound testimonial statement about his work and that of many others who have been trained and guided as members of his teams. Their satisfaction should be deep and life-long.

Funding for this project has come from a variety of sources. There have been many fundraising ventures and contributions from groups within the school such as the Past Students' Association, P.T.A., Maori Culture Groups, Student Councils, the Fairfield College P.P.T.A. branch and a number of other individuals and combinations of people. Boards of Governors/Trustees have of course carried the overall responsibility and on occasions provided financial backing in the form of credit or security for particular parts of the project.

Substantial support has come in the form of grants from a wide variety of Government agencies, both local and central: the Hamilton City Council, the Departments of Internal Affairs, Maori Affairs and Social Welfare. The Trustbank Waikato has made grants on a number of occasions from the Community Trust. Specific grants have come from the Department/Ministry of Education for some elements within the project, including electrical work, transit of buildings, sewerage and security.

Since 1984 the main work effort on site has been directed towards the adornment of the Wharenuī, featuring carving, tukutuku, heke and kowhaiwhai. This work has of course been the responsibility overall of Kereti Rautangata. In the main it has been organised through a variety of Department of Labour Works Schemes, some of which were conducted under the umbrella of the Tainui Trust Board and the last one, (RESTART Project) was managed by the Fairfield College Trust. Much work has also been accomplished on a voluntary basis. In these ways, the Marae project has provided training and work preparation for a large number of people, many of whom would otherwise have been unemployed for long periods of time. They have gained in skill, self-esteem and work ethics to a very high standard.

Mention should also be made of the vital support provided by influential elders, the full range of whom only Kereti would be able to name. In a recent article, for example, he referred to Paki Harrison as a vital source of knowledge, inspiration and support. Rongo Wetere, Vince Leonard and other people of the Aotearoa Institute in Te Awamutu have also helped in very important ways throughout the project. There are many others!

right from the start and throughout the entire period, an extremely important person has been our kaumatua, Hare Puke, former Board of Governors member and current Chairman of the Tainui Trust Board. Hare's astute, patient, wise and unwavering leadership has been vital. We will always appreciate the enduring value of the service given by Hare.

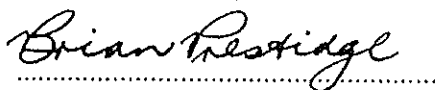
Thus, the Marae Project has received tangible backing from many sources as a major undertaking of real importance. The moral support received has also been impressive. Many notable people have visited and expressed admiration and support, including Hiwi Tauroa in 1983 when he was Race Relations Conciliator; the Rt. Hon. Koro Wetere and the Rt. Hon. Michael Bassett when they were Ministers of Maori Affairs and Internal Affairs respectively; the Mayors of Hamilton Sir Ross Jansen and Margaret Evans and many of the City Councillors; representatives of Te Arikiniui; Sir Paul Reeves when he was Governor General of New Zealand. Those people and many others have shown the strength of feeling about and support for the Marae project.

The overall responsibility and authority for Fairfield College as a whole rests with the Board of Trustees. Successive Boards chaired by Mike Hanaray, Ray Astwood and Garry Marquand have been conscious of the complex issues to resolve, differences of perspectives, risks to take, strong feelings to express, energy to be rekindled and resources to gather during difficult times. To the great credit of all concerned including the many who have worked behind the scenes as well as those with decision-making roles such as Board members, the way forward has always been found. The vision of a Marae-based Community Education Centre within Fairfield College, available to all, is being translated into reality.

Protocol for use of the Marae is in accordance with Tainui Tikanga and arrangements are to be ongoing for input from individuals and groups within the community. The establishment of a suitable management structure to ensure businesslike efficiency as well as inclusive participation in the best interests of all are pressing challenges. The priority is first the education of our students and second, the wider vision.

Ko te pae tawhiti
Whaia kia tata
Ko te pae tata
Whakamaua
kia tina

With one step at a time
We can achieve our dreams.


.....
Brian Prestidge
PRINCIPAL

HE WHAKINGA

E whakapuaki hohonu ana matou i nga tino maioha ki a koutou e te whanau, mo o koutou kaha, mākohakoha, awhina, pumau, me te whakapono ki te kaupapa, mai i te timatanga tae noa ki tenei ra. Ko te whare me ona taonga te koha ki a koutou. Ko tōna āhua me nga whakawhanaunga whakamiharo kua hangaia, hei māiatanga mo nga ra kei mua i a tatou.

Kia hora te marino

Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana

Kia tau te karohirohi i mua i tou huarahi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To all the many workers and supporters who have given time, expertise, commitment, loyalty and prayers, we express profound appreciation and offer grateful thanks. Your rewards are the Marae itself, the relationships which have been built and the wonderful potential for the future.

May the calm be widespread

May the sea glisten like greenstone

May the shimmer of summer dance across your pathway.