

Keeping the peace

Government passing self-serving legislation to allow land to be confiscated without payment and protesters to be imprisoned without trial. On that fateful day in November 1881, the troops arrived with cannons, invading the village where they were met by children singing and the offer of food.

Te Whiti and Tohu were arrested, as were over 100 others who were taken to provide hard labour around the South Island. The village, crops and stock were destroyed, women violated, property looted. When the chiefs returned two years later, it was to a sorry version of the thriving community they had founded.

Undaunted, they started again, but though the new village had modern amenities like electricity and running water, there was not enough land left for it to be economic, and when the leaders died in 1907, it dwindled to the point where, in 1952, the Government closed it down: "All Maori people living on the marae were asked to leave their community and go and live in the cities," Maata sums up with admirable restraint. "We were told never to come back here."

We go through to eat, at the very same tables where Te Whiti and Tohu once sat, and as we're served a tasty and beautifully presented meal, Maata explains

that our presence here is part of a new initiative to make Parihaka self-sufficient again, to provide employment and encourage young people to return. She's done her bit towards that, her own children being the first to be brought up at Parihaka since 1952, and the contented baby being passed around his aunts and uncles is the first of the newest generation.

Back in the whareniui, we look at the photographs of the bustling village from over 100 years ago, at the paintings of the resistance showing uniformed men on horses trampling Maori men; and also at the signed rugby ball, the children's artwork, the carvings and family photos.

Outside, Maata has us look towards a low hill where the cannons were set up. We're standing where the children performed their haka and poi dances for the invaders, where the village people sat in silence as the troops rode in, spurning the offer of fresh bread.

We go up the rise to where a sturdy decorated pillar stands behind an iron fence: Te Whiti's grave. Maata recites his philosophy, symbolised by the three white feathers on each side of the column: "Glory to God, peace on earth, and goodwill to all men." There are feathers in her hair, too.

Pamela Wade was hosted by Venture Taranaki.



GRIM RECORD: A series of paintings in the whareniui depicts Parihaka's history.



RESTING PLACE: Maata stands before the grave of Te Whiti-o-Rongomai, whose philosophy is symbolised by the three white feathers on his monument.

CLOSE TO HOME

Make a splash

The new Big Splash ride at Rotorua's Rainbow Springs is an exciting and educational journey through time that explores the evolution of New Zealand.

Contact: 0800 724 626
On the web: www.rainbowsprings.co.nz

Garden discovery

Experience Whangarei's wonderful scenery, gardens and art during the Whangarei Garden Discovery trail, February 24-26.

Contact: (09) 435 3522
On the web: www.gardendiscovery.org.nz

Much merriment

The University of Auckland's 49th Outdoor Summer Shakespeare season presents the much-loved romantic comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*. The season runs 7.30-10pm, March 3-24, except Sundays and Mondays. Tickets cost \$18-\$25.

Contact: (09) 308 2383
On the web: www.maidment.auckland.ac.nz

Grapes of Gibbston

The annual Gibbston Harvest Festival on March 17 celebrates the wine harvest with a fun-filled family day out. Activities include wine-tasting, barrel-rolling, bouncy castles, face-painting and more.

On the web: www.gibbstonharvestfestival.co.nz

Coastal vibes

Drag out your tent and go camping on the south Wairarapa coast for the boutique music festival Tora! Tora! Tora! The family-friendly event will be held at the Tora Farm Settlement at Waitangi Weekend, February 4-6, and include old favourites and new acts.

On the web: www.cosmicticketing.co.nz
Heather Ramsay

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