

HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INC

LONGCAST

19 March 21 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Waiheke RSA
26 – 28 March 21 – Comms Reunion
9 April 21 - Navy Club Lunch – Remuera Club
9 – 11 April 21 – Cooks and Stewards Reunion
16 April 21 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Henderson RSA
14 May 21 - Navy Club Lunch – Remuera Club
14 – 15 May 21 - OP Grapple Reunion, contact Gerry Wright
gerrywright@xtra.co.nz
16 May 21 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at the Bays Club, Browns Bay
21 May 21 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Pt Chevalier RSA

Hi Folks

NGAPONA ASSN – WAIHEKE LUNCH THIS FRIDAY

Our March lunch will be held at the Waiheke RSA this Friday.

To assist with catering: Please advise Richard Maddix by phone: 021 369 904 or email: richardmaddix@gmail.com if you are attending.

The ferry leaves the downtown ferry building on the half hour. Suggest we catch the 1100 boat as this also calls at Devonport on the way.

The return sailings are on the half hour with the 1400 and 1600 sailings calling at Devonport.

Bring some friends and have an enjoyable day at Waiheke Island.

LUNCH AT THE BAYS CLUB

A special lunch is being held on Sunday, 16 May at the Bays Club. This is being held so that those who are unable to attend our Friday lunches can attend. Get a group together and relax at the Bays Club on Sunday afternoon.

NGAPONA ASSN FORMAL DINNER – 24 JULY 2021

The Ngapona Association is holding a formal dinner on Saturday 24 July 2021 at the Birkenhead RSA, Recreation Drive, Birkenhead, Auckland. The guest speaker will be RNZN's Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral David Proctor.

An invitation to attend the function is extended to all NGA Association members, all past and present members of NGAPONA and their partners/spouses. Tickets will be allocated on a first come first served basis. The cost of this function is \$50.00 per head. A cash bar will operate. There will be a buffet type meal of three courses. It is expected that Able Musician Rebecca Nelson will provide a brief performance during the evening. It is also expected that a rum issue will be held.

As this is a formal occasion, appropriate dress with miniatures is expected.

For planning purposes, please advise Expressions of Interest to Mr. Jerry Payne by email 'president@ngapona.org.nz' giving the names of attendees and a contact phone number

COMMS ASSN - REUNION

The RNZNCA Committee has decided to defer the Reunion planned for 26-28 March 2021 in New Plymouth until April 2022.

The intended venue for the Reunion will remain New Plymouth with the proposed dates of **8-10 April 2022**

THE LOSS OF THE SS ELINGAMITE

During the morning of 9 November 1902, the Huddart Parker steamer Elingamite encountered thick fog. Her captain immediately slowed the engines to half speed, starting fog signals and maintaining a sharp lookout. Her course had been set to keep her well away from any danger during her voyage between Sydney and Auckland with 136 passengers and 58 crew on board, carrying bullion to the value of £17,320. The ship was only five years old with some £70,000 having been spent on building and improvements, equivalent to many millions of dollars today.

She struck West Island of the Three Kings and sank in about 20 minutes. The chief officer's boat carrying 52 people reached Houhora the next day and raised the alarm. A total of 89 people were rescued from the islands on 11 November. Sadly, the searchers did not find a raft carrying 16 people until the afternoon of 13 November, by which time they had all suffered terribly from exposure and eight had died. One boat carrying approximately 30 people was never found, bringing the total loss of life to 45 people.

The grim details of the survivors' sad plight following the disaster were recorded in the judgement handed down by the court of inquiry. The findings gave rise to graphic publicity in the media of the time. For many years afterwards the harrowing experiences of those who were rescued after the accident lay heavily on the minds of mariners, politicians and the Marine Department.

LIGHTHOUSE OF THE WEEK – CAPE MARIA van DIEMAN

Position: 34°28'34"S 172°38'48"E

Characteristics: Fl(3)W 20s

Range: 9NM

Structure: White fibreglass tower

On 5 January 1643, the day after Abel Tasman called at Three Kings Islands, he named Cape Maria van Dieman after the wife of the governor of Batavia (now Jakarta) in Indonesia.

In 1874 the Commissioner of Customs ordered an examination of designated places around the New Zealand coast to determine the best positions to erect lighthouses.

There was no suitable site at Three Kings Islands so in their view, a light on the island named Motu Opao, just off Cape Maria van Dieman seemed best.

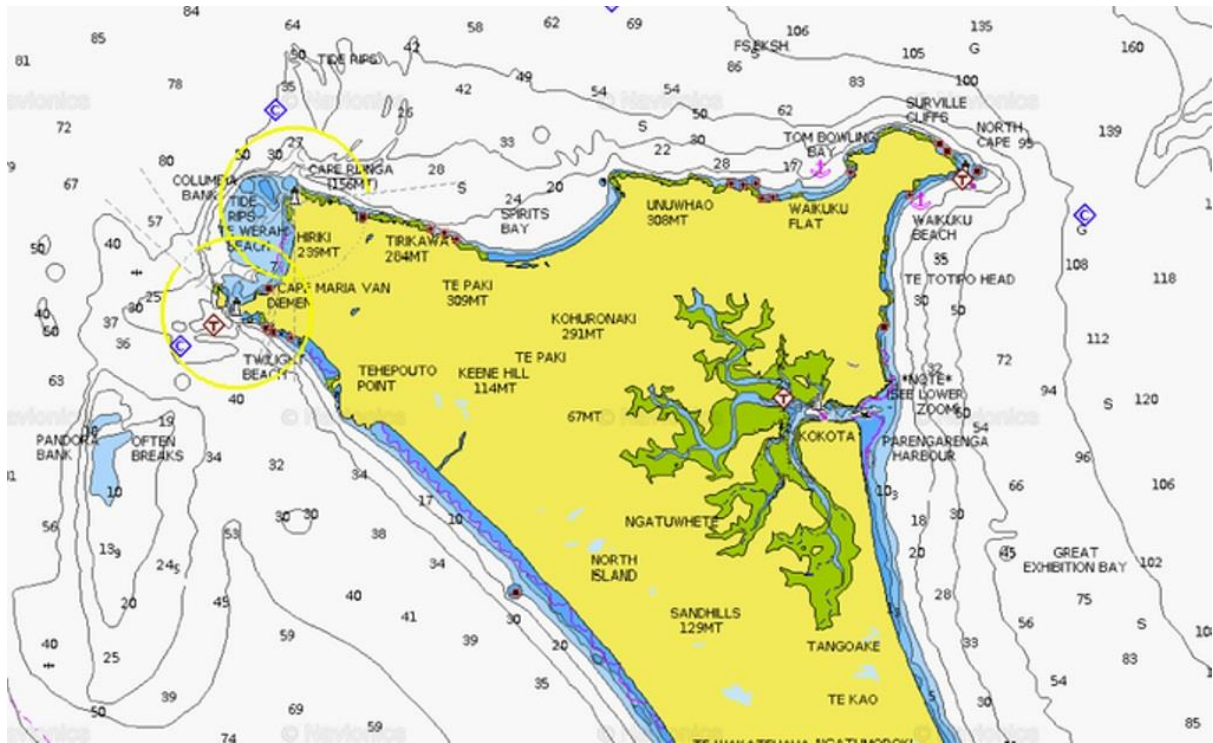
The lighthouse was designed by John Blackett and was identical to one erected at Centre Island in Foveaux Strait. The Motu Opao lighthouse was formally illuminated on 24th March 1879, the sweep being visible from a distance of 21NM. A fixed red sector was displayed from the tower to warn of the dangers of the Colombia Reef.

An aerial rope way was built in 1886 in a bid to improve deliveries of mail and fresh meat. A wire rope was stretched across the channel between Motu Opao and the mainland. Attached to the main cable was a hauling wire with a big wicker coal basket attached. The basket had to be wound across and back by hand. The Marine Department issued specific orders that the keepers were not to use the aerial conveyer for personal transport, though this order was not always obeyed.

Earlier reasons for needing a light situated here were still valid, but new technology required the installation of a radio beacon to guide approaching shipping in fog. A station such as this transmitted a unique radio identification signal followed by a long tone, on which ships could obtain a radio bearing. The convention of the day demanded that this radio direction finding (RDF) station operate 24 hours a day, as fog could be present anywhere within range of the station, though not necessarily visible. Because the area has always been notoriously prone to fog, it received top priority for the installation of a radio beacon. The RDF station built in 1927 became the first medium-wave transmitter station in Australasia. Its installation at the Maria van Diemen station was specifically to assist ships making the strait between Cape Reinga and Three Kings Islands in fog. A first-class radio beacon was required. It needed a constant and reliable source of power, which in turn meant carrying supplies of diesel oil over the beach.

In 1937 plans were made to relocate the lighthouse to Cape Reinga. Lighthouse engineers dismantled the lens and the lantern in 1941 and shipped them on the *Matai* to Cape Reinga, where the lantern now stands. The bare wooden tower on Motu Opao remains unadorned, without its dome or glassed lantern, clearly visible from the mainland.





Regards

Jerry Payne

Editor

HMNZS Ngapona Assn

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