

Ans. 14-10-84

16 Enfield Road  
WAINUIOMATA

Friday 5 October 1984

Dear Chris, John & Tammy

Well, its been a long time since I promised you a letter, so I hope that some of this little bundle makes up for that.

Not all good news I'm afraid. K M Poynton is no longer listed in the new phone book, and somebody else has her number that we looked up in the old one, so she has slipped out from under just as we thought we had caught up with her. Curses!

Mrs Cordy, the poor soul, came home from her holiday with severe shingles, and we won't be visiting her for a few weeks yet. I gather shingles are not to be wished upon your worst enemy, so they must be pretty bad.

Enclosed is your copy of Isabella McILVRIDE, wife of John and mother of your grandmother Christina. You will notice that she is wearing your brooch, so it must have been one of her favourites, or else meant something special to her. Isabella died in 1899 aged 66, so how old does that make her when she received the brooch? And who do you suppose the lock of hair belonged to? Fascinating isn't it.

Enclosed is a copy of the Cemetery transcription which is current as far as the identities you are interested in are concerned, and here is Kate (Sinclair) Chambers description of "Moness":

...a farmhouse across the river from the 'Rock' on the flat facing the river. It was a two-storied house, with French windows opening on a wide verandah. The entrance was from the back, through a gravel yard, and past the hand-pump onto a porch. On one side was a long kitchen with a bay window in the end looking out over a very pretty flower garden. On one end of this room was a large open fireplace with many hooks hanging on chains, on which were strung big Kettles and pots. Even the frying-pan hung overhead. The vessels were raised or lowered according to the heat required. Next was a big baker's oven in which the large joints were roasted, pies cooked, and on two days a week quantities of bread baked. It was a bright room: every week the white wooden tables and dressers were scrubbed with silver sand and all the bricks around the fireplace rubbed with a half brick, which make them very red. On the dresser were arranged all the willow patterned meat dishes, plates and brightly polished brass candlesticks. Across from the kitchen was - what I thought - a very fascinating room. There were sieves for sifting the flour, and barrels for flour and for pickling and spicing beef. Bacon was also cured here, but the mutton was cut up at the woolshed. Four or five sheep were killed each week and each married man on the place was supplied with a quarter. Across the yard from the house was a large dairy. A large herd of cows was being milked and all the milk was set, for the cream to rise, in shallow pans on wide shelves around the room. Each pan was carried to a vat in the centre

of the room and skimmed by hand. My Aunt would not let any man set foot in her dairy, she carried all the milk in, and all the skim milk out into a room where the pans and buckets were washed.

From the porch, with the kitchen on one side and a storeroom on the other, steps led up to a passage. On one side of this was what was called the "big room", and on the other side were two bedrooms. These rooms all had French windows. A narrow winding staircase led to the top storey, which had four bedrooms and a large linen cupboard.

Most of the meals were served in the kitchen, except when we had company, and this seemed to be very often. The "Big room", with its french-polished walls and furniture (varnish would not have been tolerated in those days), and its deep piled carpets, made a fine setting for my grandmother's fine china, linen, and silver and coffee services. The one thing I disliked in that room was a big engraving of John Knox preaching in his black gown. I thought he looked like a large black bird. My father's people were dour Scotch - very capable people, but the only books in the house were the bible, The Pilgrim's Progress, Foxes Book of Martyrs and Robby Burns. I hated Burns because when I was a small child my father often recited 'John Barleycorn'. I thought he was a real man and that the cruelty was horrible.

Some distance from the house were the woolsheds and yards. The sawmill and store were across the river, just above the spot where Moores Valley River and the Wainui join. The mill was on one side of the road, and the store and cottages were on the other.

"Moness" must have been there for a number of years, as the fruit trees were all bearing, and the lilac was a mass of purple. There were peaches everywhere. I remember my grandmother saying "I wish someone would take a few barrowloads to the pigs". We children had great thrills climbing for almonds and black-heart cherries...

Lets see what you can do with that and the photo Chris.

Well, the pot belly is marvellous, as I said on the phone. It heats the whole house, and I warn you, the sitting room becomes extremely uncomfortable to sit in after a couple of hours - the heat given off is incredible. Bearing in mind that our sitting room is 20' x 12', and that the dining room and sitting room doors (at opposite ends of the room) are both kept open while the fire is going so that the heat isn't confined to the room (which would make it a sauna), that is a lot of heat. I wonder, therefore, whether behind your dining room door, even with the larger room, would be a practical place for it.

Another point. You would be keeping the dining room door open, both for easy access and to let the heat out into the rest of the house. Well, we have had a wooden bookcase unit built along the same wall as the potbelly, well outside the minimum distance away from the fire - yet the wood gets too hot to touch, and Ken is trying to devise some sort of shield between the fire and the case - at the moment we have a tall coal scuttle inbetween, but that is only protecting the lower part of the case. And we are talking about a distance of 27" between

bookcase and potbelly, so I don't know how your door would fare if it was opened back. Otherwise, the fire takes bigger pieces of wood than does the chip heater, and to keep it really stoked you would need to refuel every half hour, at the most. Less often for background warmth, and less still for coal, which we use when going out for a couple of hours.

See what John thinks about that!

I have been spending quite a bit of time at Turnbull on behalf of an aged relative, and haven't done much or any research of my own of late. However, that lot is nearly tied up so I'm looking forward to getting back into it all, and to visiting my in-laws again. How about yourselves? No doubt the garden is keeping you both occupied. My little established piece is, so I couldn't do justice to yours and my work though I suppose it helps to have two home working on it. How are the extensions? How did you get on with the carpet matching, and do I get an invite to pop up and admire?

With best wishes as always to you three

Vicky Alexander (Mrs)

PS:  
Photo was \$3.00 - hope that was okay. No charge for the photocopy work.

PPS John McLuride born 18-4-1833, d 10-2-1906  
married Isabella - 19-1-1855  
↓  
born 2-2-1833  
died 22-12-1899