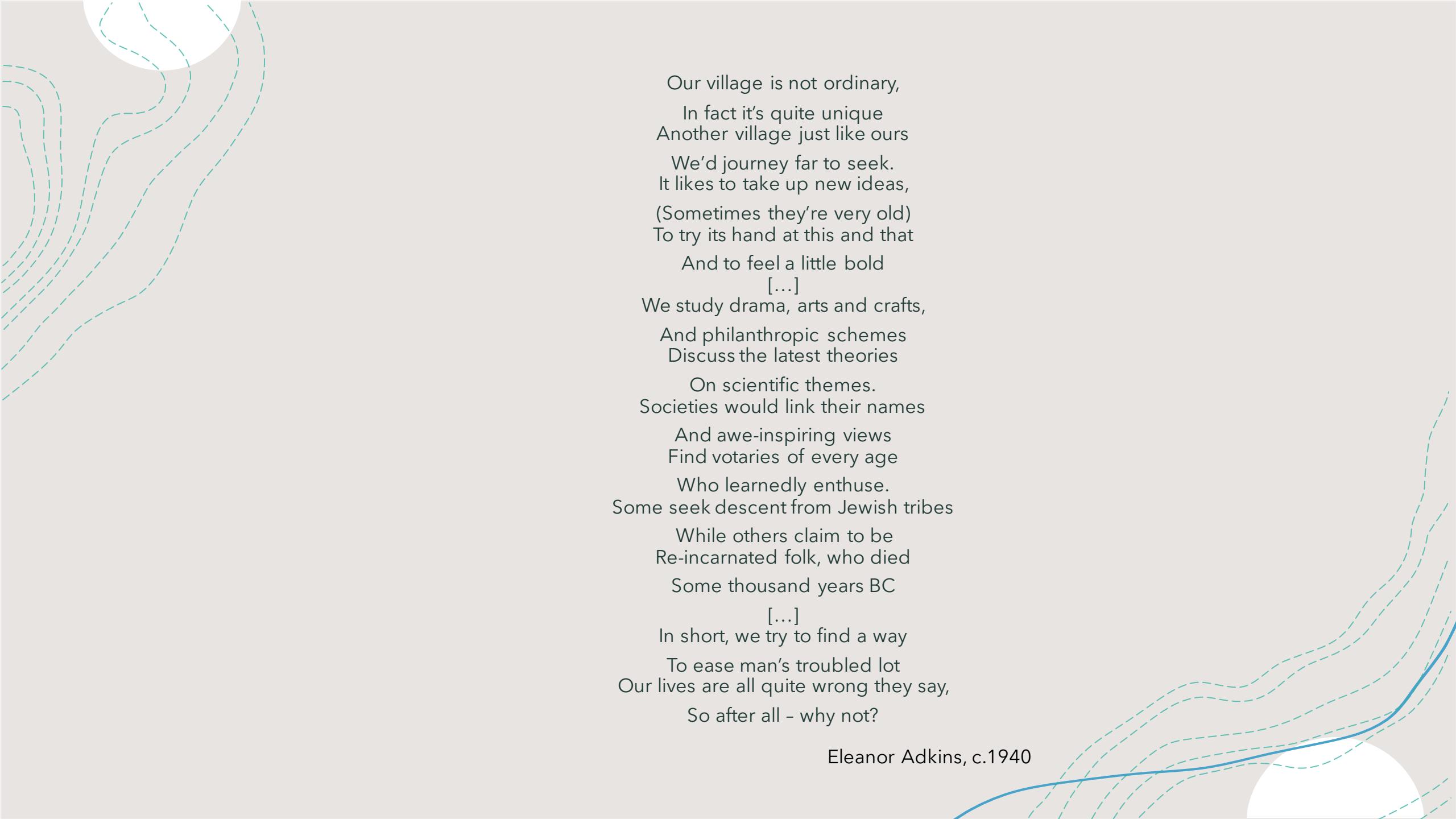


Havelock North: a Medieval Town in Aotearoa/New Zealand



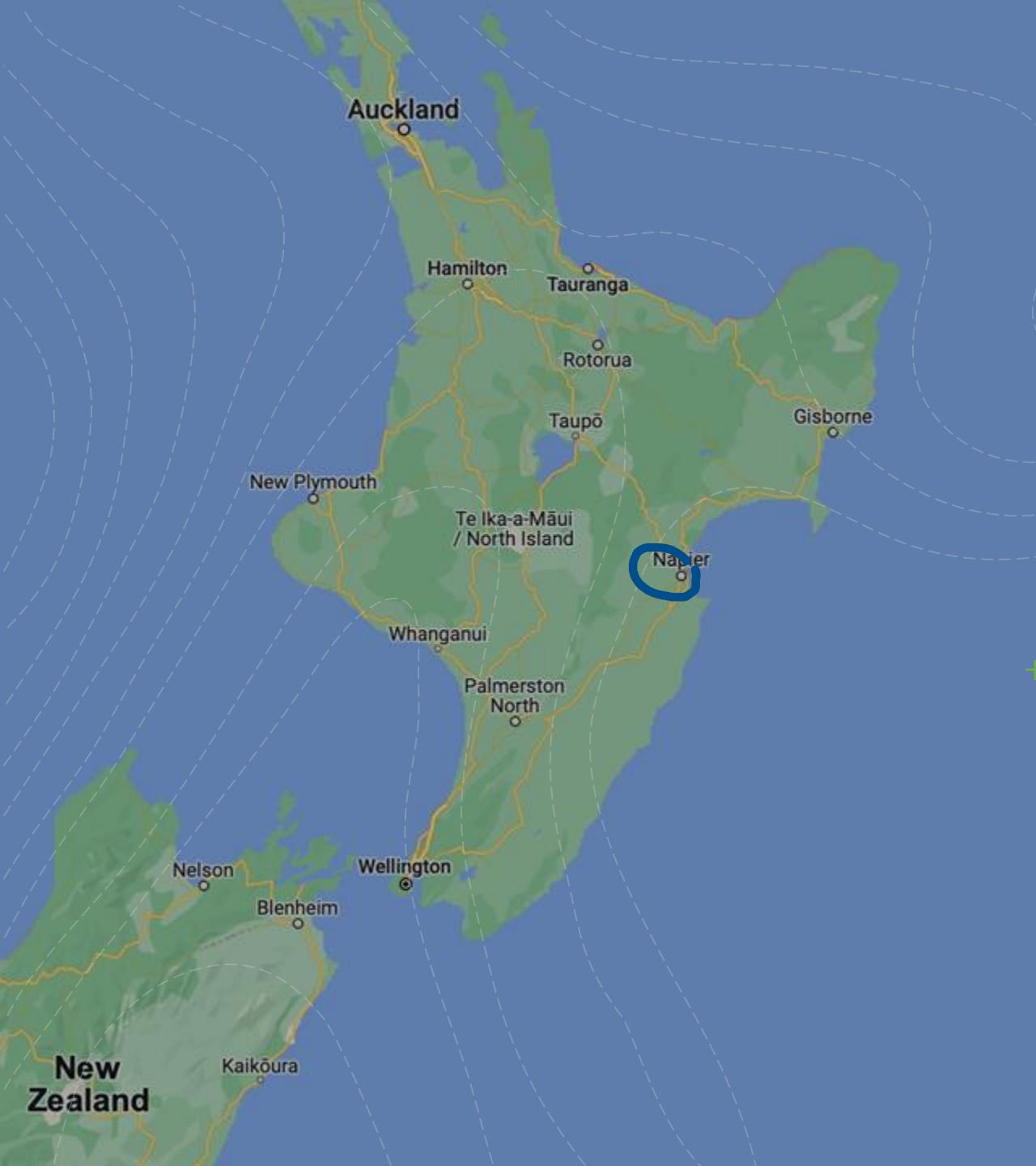
Dr Ellie Crookes

The University of Wollongong



Our village is not ordinary,
In fact it's quite unique
Another village just like ours
We'd journey far to seek.
It likes to take up new ideas,
(Sometimes they're very old)
To try its hand at this and that
And to feel a little bold
[...]
We study drama, arts and crafts,
And philanthropic schemes
Discuss the latest theories
On scientific themes.
Societies would link their names
And awe-inspiring views
Find votaries of every age
Who learnedly enthuse.
Some seek descent from Jewish tribes
While others claim to be
Re-incarnated folk, who died
Some thousand years BC
[...]
In short, we try to find a way
To ease man's troubled lot
Our lives are all quite wrong they say,
So after all - why not?

Eleanor Adkins, c.1940



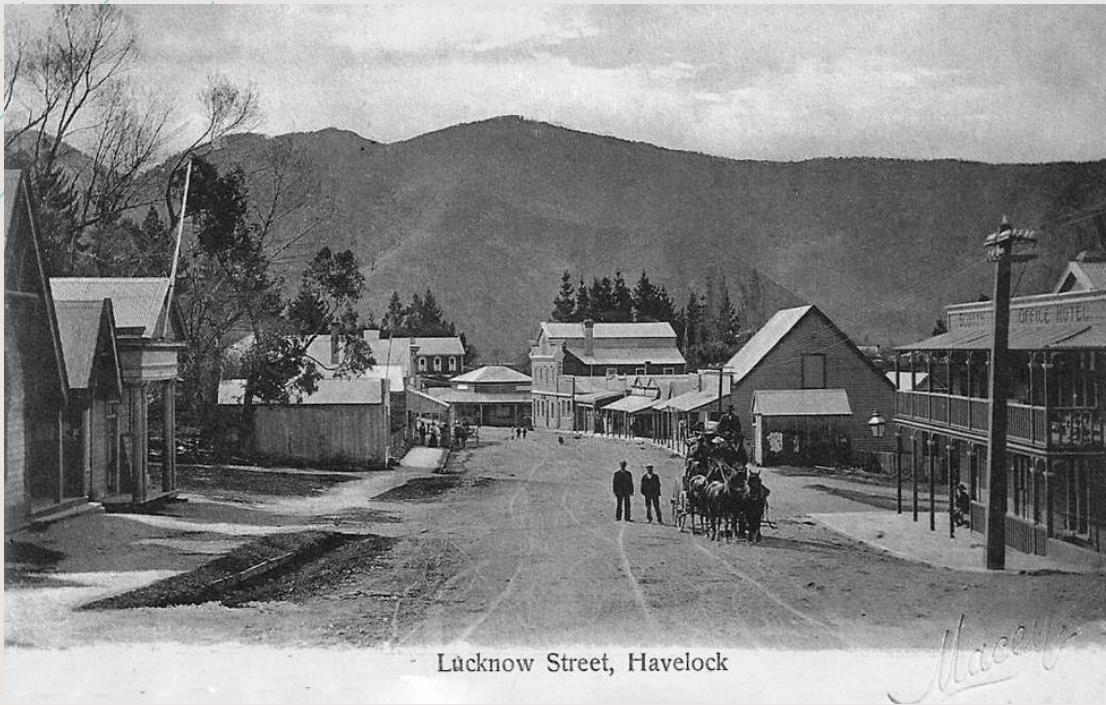
Matthew Wright, Havelock North: The History of a Village:

"There was never really an Edwardian period. Victorianism really held its grip on society until after the first world war. It was not until the 1920s when you had shorter skirts for women and Oxford bags at universities, clothing styles began to change and a lot of habits, morals and so on"

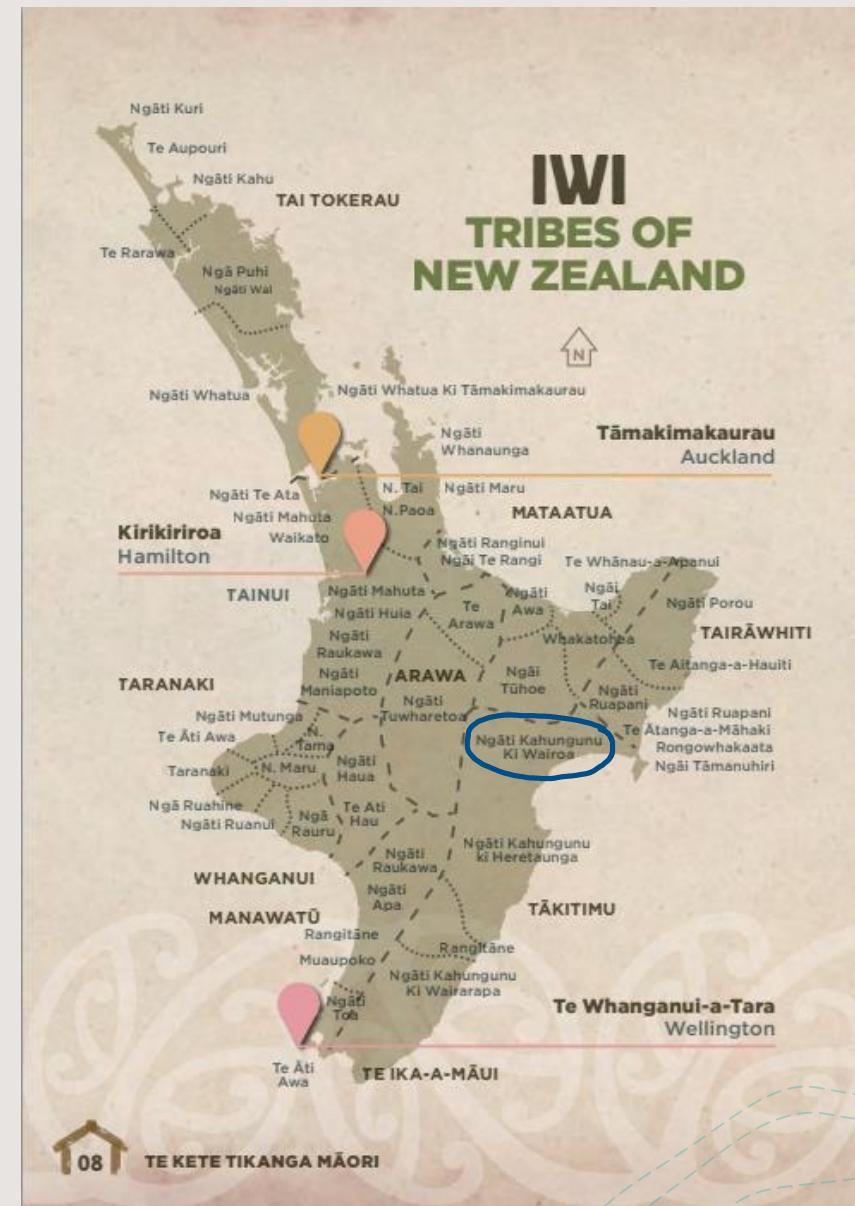
(Wright 1996, 97)

Medievalism

- + Medievalism is “[...] any post-medieval attempt to re-imagine the Middle Ages or aspect of the Middle Ages for the modern world, in any of many different media.” (Shippey 2012, 45)
- + This paper complicates the typical practice of *medievalismist* scholarship by examining a temporal/spatial exemplar – a small town in the early twentieth century - instead of a more concrete artifact of medieval reception.
- + The ‘text’ that I unpack in this paper is not a book, a poem, or a painting; rather it is the combined actions, activities and mythmaking of a town.
- + The town is the text.



Lucknow Street, Havelock



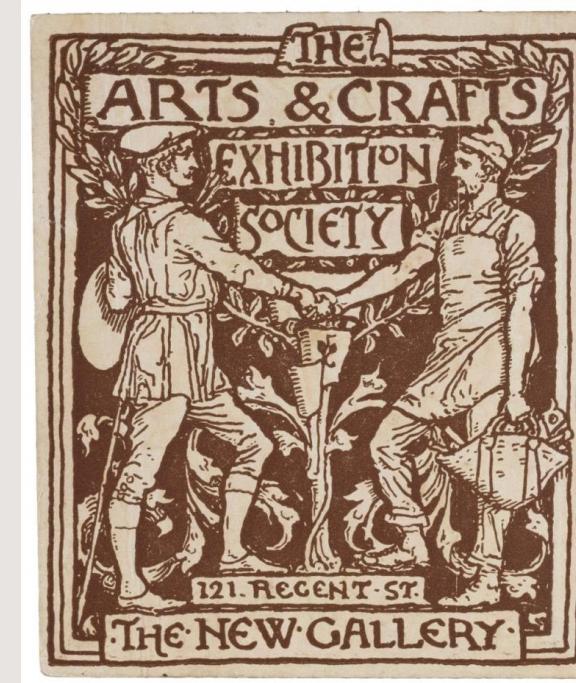
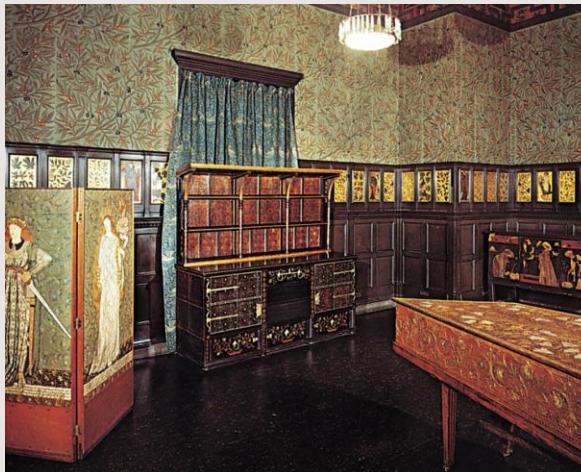
The Havelock Work



The homestead at Keirunga in the 1920s. Credit: Michael Fowler Collection

- Reginald and Ruth Gardiner opened their home (pictured) to the local community in 1908, holding meetings that would inspire The Havelock Work
- From around 1908 to the late 1910s, the Havelock Work functioned as an intentional though not fully-communal society, structured around the tenets of education, peace and harmony
- "[...] with its fervent, enthusiastic, deeply religious undercurrents [it] became an all-encompassing community movement that engulfed the entire village" (Wright 1996, 10).

The Havelock Work's Medievalist flavour: The Arts and Crafts Movement



Images of outputs from the British A&C movement

The Havelock Work's Medievalist flavour: The Arts and Crafts Movement

“the little town of Havelock in Hawke’s Bay and its own society of Roycrofters, or art-lovers”

(Timaru Herald November 1912, 6).

The Havelock Work's Medievalist flavour: The Arts and Crafts Movement

Upon a visit from the Prince of Wales in 1921,
Havelock North's gift to the royal was a medieval-style
bound book, described in *The Star* newspaper as
"most true to the type of illuminated missal, the
medieval craft which attained the most beauty"

(*The Star* April 1921, 6)

THE STAR, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 1921.

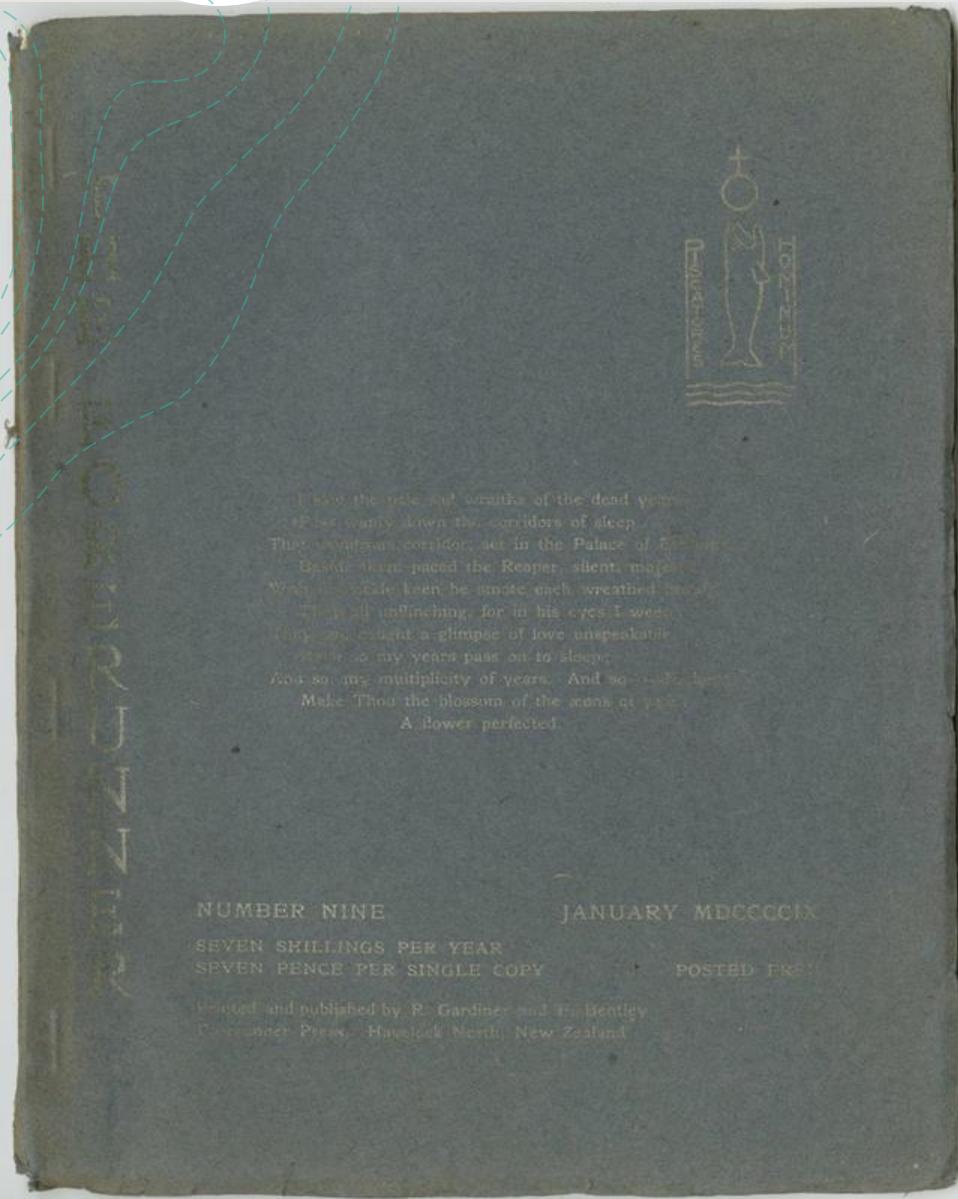
THE WEATHER.
BY RICHARD HARRIS.

THE WHIP HAND.
BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.
SHIPS FOR FARMERS.
MR RICHARD TRIPP'S PROPOSAL.
HERE AND THERE.
GENTLEMAN AS ORGANIST.
ROY LOUIS' RETIREMENT.
PRINCESS OF WALES' PRESENTS ON EXHIBITION.
PHOTOGRAPHIC FEAST.
WEDDING DAY AT BIRKBECK.
MEAT PRICES.
REDUCTIONS EXPECTED.
PRICES TRIUMPHANT ACTING.

THE STARS.
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 1921.

LOCAL AND GENERAL.
AT THE COMPETITIONS.
THE MUSICAL JUDGE.

A photograph is a North Island newspaper, featuring a circular seal at the top left. The page contains several columns of text and two small black and white portraits of men.



The Havelock Work's Medievalist flavour: The Arts and Crafts Movement

- + Havelock Work's literary vehicle *The Forerunner*
- + The magazine produced twenty-one issues and ran monthly from May 1909 until December 1914.
- + The first editions were hand-pressed and delicately handbound by Gardiner in his home. Subsequent editions were partly handwritten and partly typewritten, often with original watercolour illustrations, and published by a small press.

The Havelock Work's Medievalist flavour: Performing the Medieval

image included in Wright 1996, 111

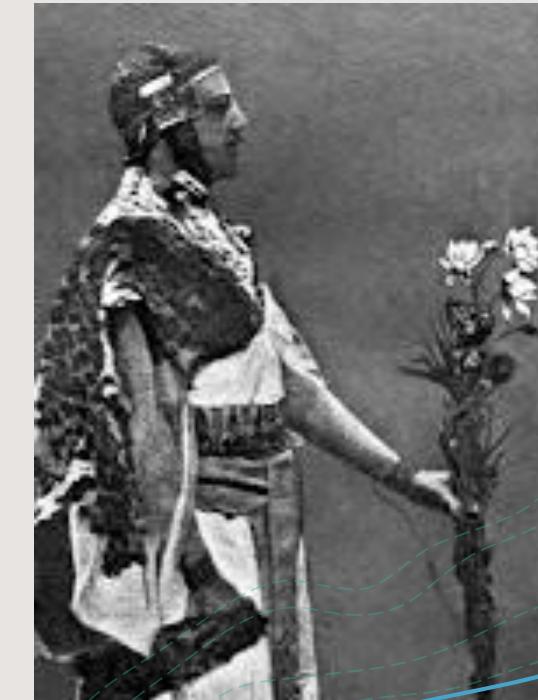
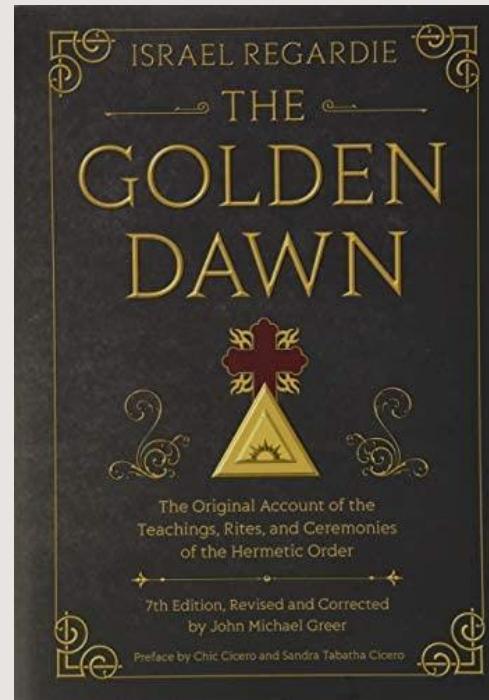
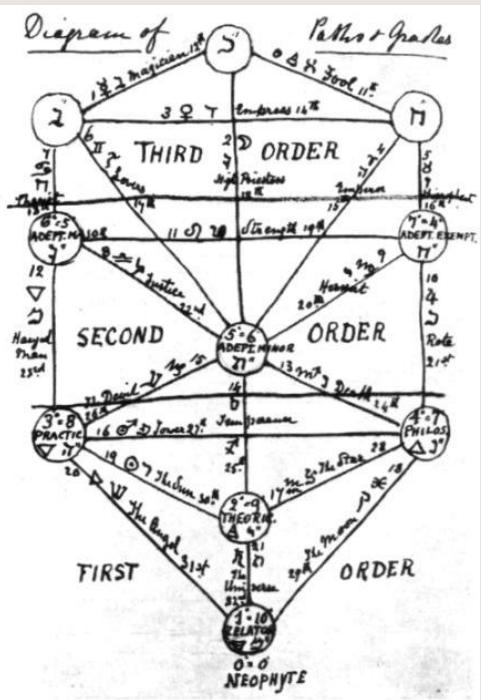
The Havelock Work's Medievalist flavour: Performing the Medieval

An anonymous article in *The Forerunner* said of the Shakespearean Festival that it was "aimed at cultivating a feeling for what was beautiful and true" because "behind the outward manifestation of things lay the ideal"

(quoted in Ellwood 1993, 169).



The Havelock Work's Medievalist flavour: Beyond performance

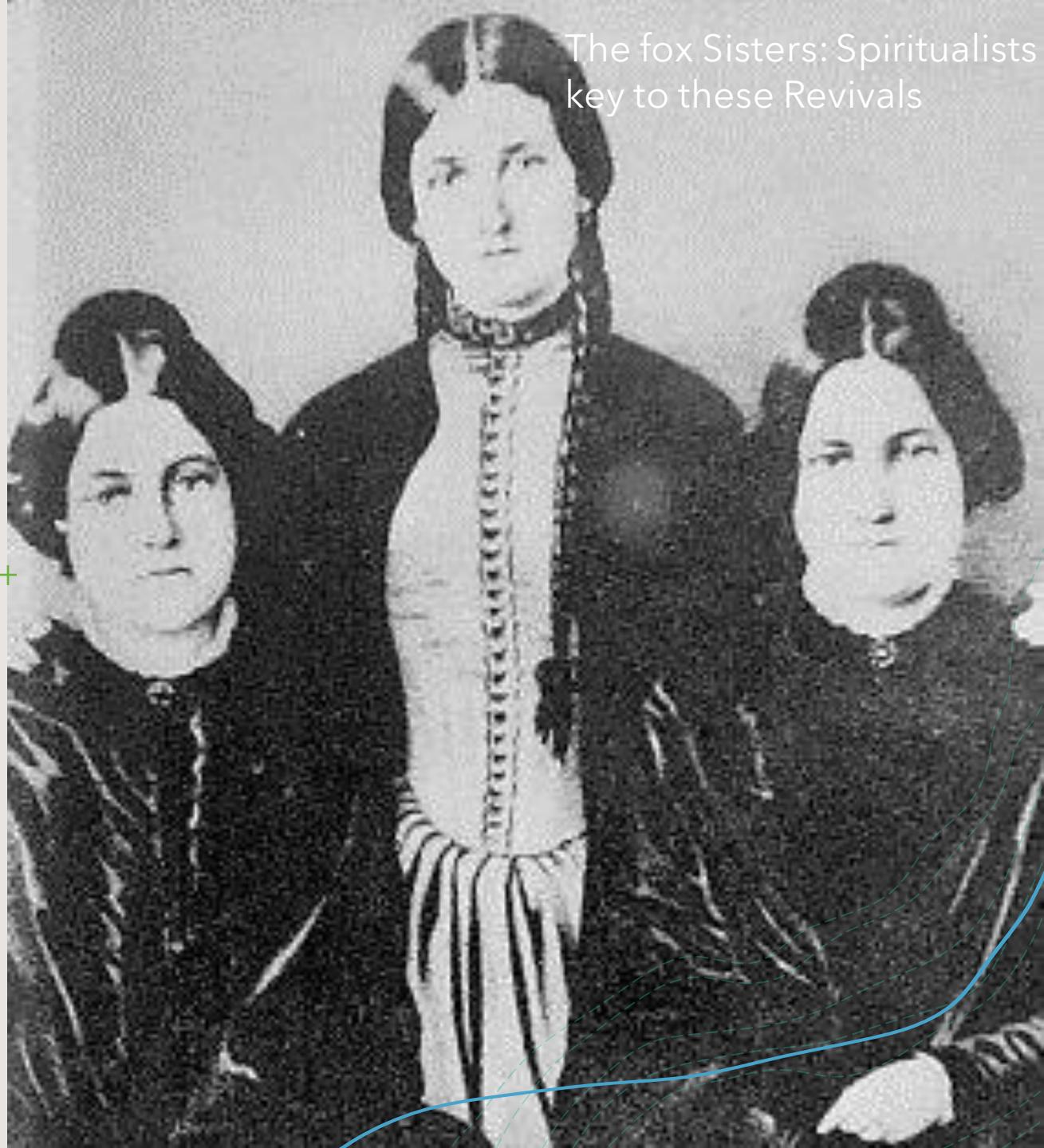


Liddell MacGregor Mathers
performing a HOTGD ritual

The Occult & Spiritualist Revivals

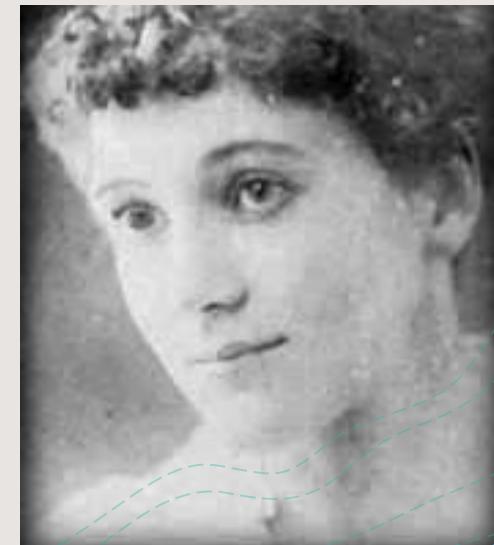
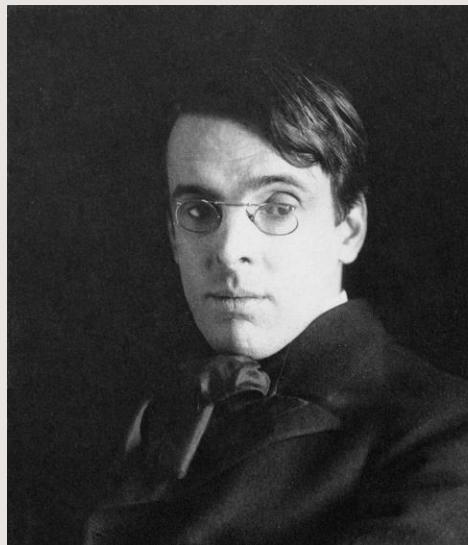
- Mid-nineteen to early-twentieth-century movements in Britain and North America
- So popular that by the late nineteenth century the Revivals were a major part of the cultural landscape of America, Britain and their colonies.
- Fragments of the Occult/Spiritual Revival reached the shores of Australia and New Zealand as early as the 1850s
- Shaun Broadley states that by the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, the popularity of occultism and spiritualism in New Zealand was so strong as to constitute a "cultic milieu" (1996, 119)

The fox Sisters: Spiritualists key to these Revivals



The Golden Dawn

- + The GD pulled together “all the bits and pieces of the century’s spiritual underground storehouses and made of them a coherent, progressive system, wherein, if one really worked, one could attain mastery of that strange world” (Ellwood 1993, 158-159).
- + Members of the London chapter included William Butler Yeats, Arthur Machen, Aleister Crowley, Algernon Blackwood, Constance Mary Wilde, Florence Farr, and Maud Gonne.



The Golden Dawn in New Zealand: The Havelock North Chapter – Smaragdum Thalasses

- + Smaragdum Thalasses was the last significant flourishing of the Golden Dawn, boasting, according to Robert S. Ellwood "more members, a finer temple, [and] greater ritual finesse" (1993, 156) than the British chapters
- + It lasted much longer than any other chapter, until 1978, while none of the British temples survived beyond the 1920s.
- + Whare-Ra, Smaragdum Thalasses' temple, was the only of the Golden Dawn orders to have its own purpose-built temple



Whare Ra, Tauroa Rd, Havelock North.

Felkin



Whare-Ra,
Smaragdum Thalasses' temple

The Golden Dawn in Havelock North

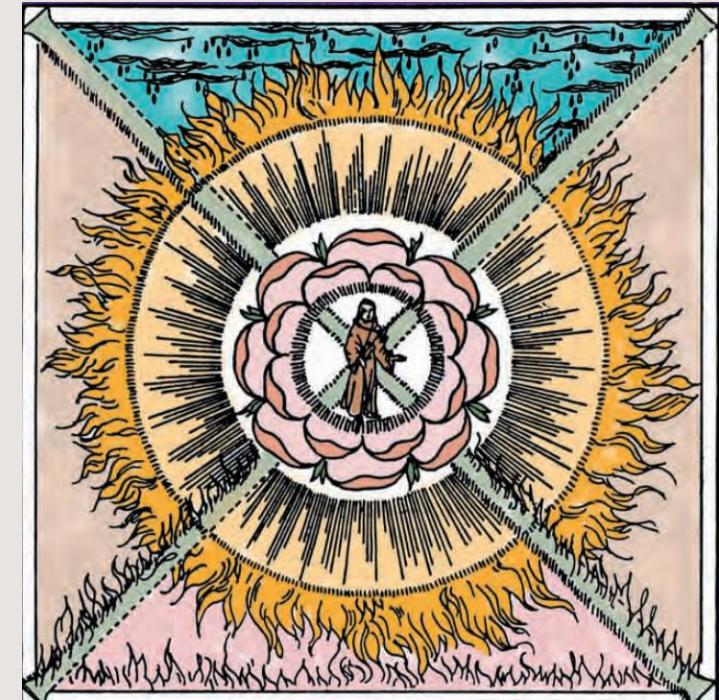
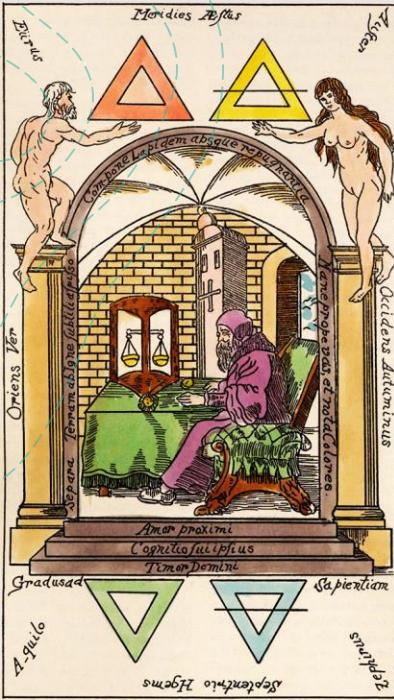
"Not only was it the case that a magical Order flourished in secret for so many years within a small and deeply conservative village in New Zealand, but the Order exercised an invisible influence within the local community so strong that it is hardly an exaggeration to state that, for a period at least, its members virtually governed every aspect of significance within the village of Havelock North, as well as occupying positions of importance in the larger neighbouring towns of Hastings and Napier. Besides two Anglican bishops and clergy, its members included the Mayor of Havelock North, the owner and manager of the local newspaper, head teachers of private schools in the area, wealthy farmers and many owners of local businesses."

(Fuller 2009, 285-286).



The Golden Dawn, Rosicrucianism and the Medieval

- + Christian Rosenkreuz: the 14th-century legendary 'founder' of the Rosicrucian Order (Order of the Rose Cross), which was supposedly 'revived' (but was really invented) in Germany in the 17th century and which then spread across Europe over the next two centuries.
- + Rosicrucianism: a worldwide brotherhood claiming to possess esoteric wisdom that had been handed down since the European Middle Ages.
- + The myths, rituals and traditions of Rosicrucianism were adopted by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.



The New Zealand Company's central aim was to transplant "everything of England, in short, but the soil"

(G.B. Parliamentary Papers 1852, 35 quoted in Sargisson and Sargent 2004, 13)

The Havelock Works said: FORGET THE SOIL!!!!!!

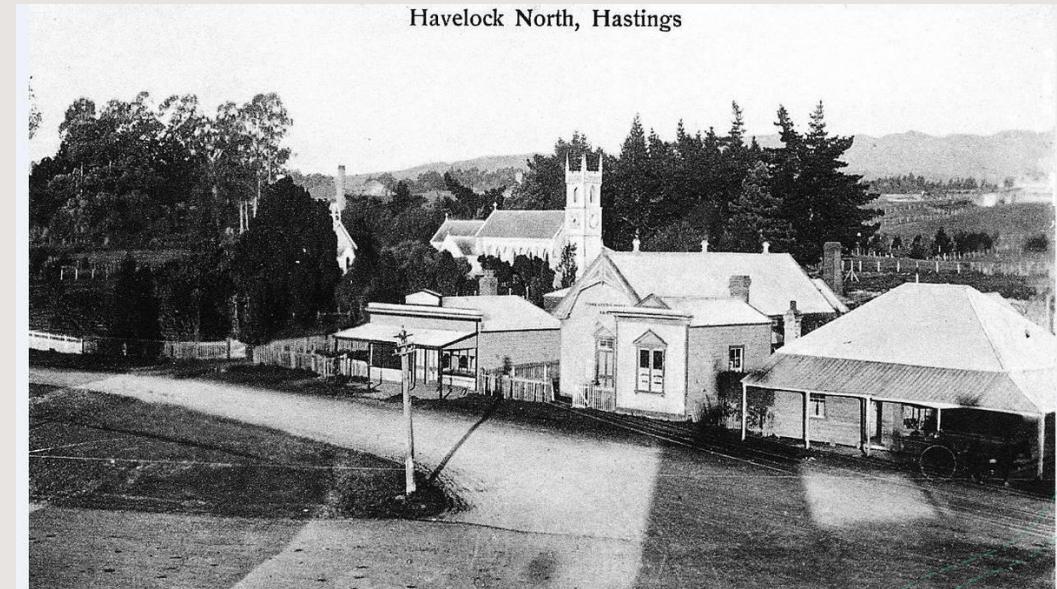


Smaragdum Thalasses, The Havelock Work, and Mystical Medievalism

Preliminary Address given by Felkin to members of the Havelock Work in 1912:

"We [the Order of the Golden Dawn] claim to bring to you the Message of Western Occultism as descended from the Middle Ages and a part of the very fascinating message which during the past 30-35 years has come from the East to the West"

(Quoted in Worrad 2020, 276).



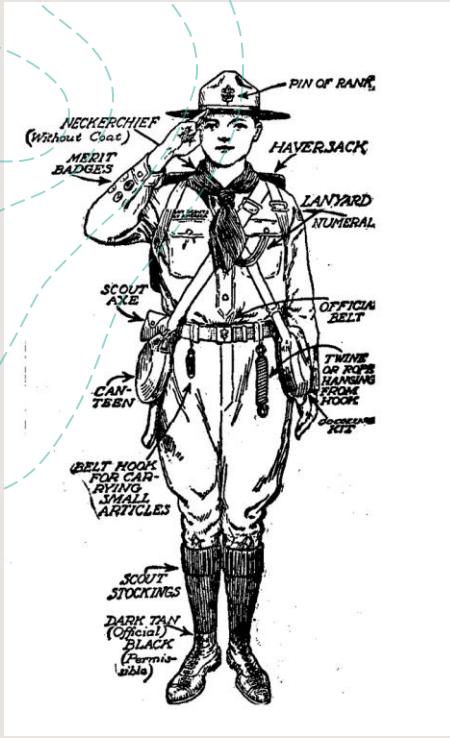
Havelock North, Hastings

The Order of the Table Round: (the SECOND medieval secret society in Havelock North)

- + The Order's headquarters was set up in an "Oblong building that feature[d] a round table on which the 12 knights of the ancient king's court are identified with the 12 signs of the zodiac" (Ellwood 1993, 184)
- + Note: Ellwood describes the building and the table in detail, but I have been unable to find any other information or evidence on the existence and/or design of either.
- + Meakin claimed that: "[...] the Order of the Table Round had been alive since the days of king Arthur, having been revived from its original founding by Joseph of Arimathea, and that he was its 37th grandmaster by virtue of a secret descent from the House of Tudor" (Ellwood 1993, 183).
- + The group was a "cult of the Grail" (Hanegraaff 2006, 436).



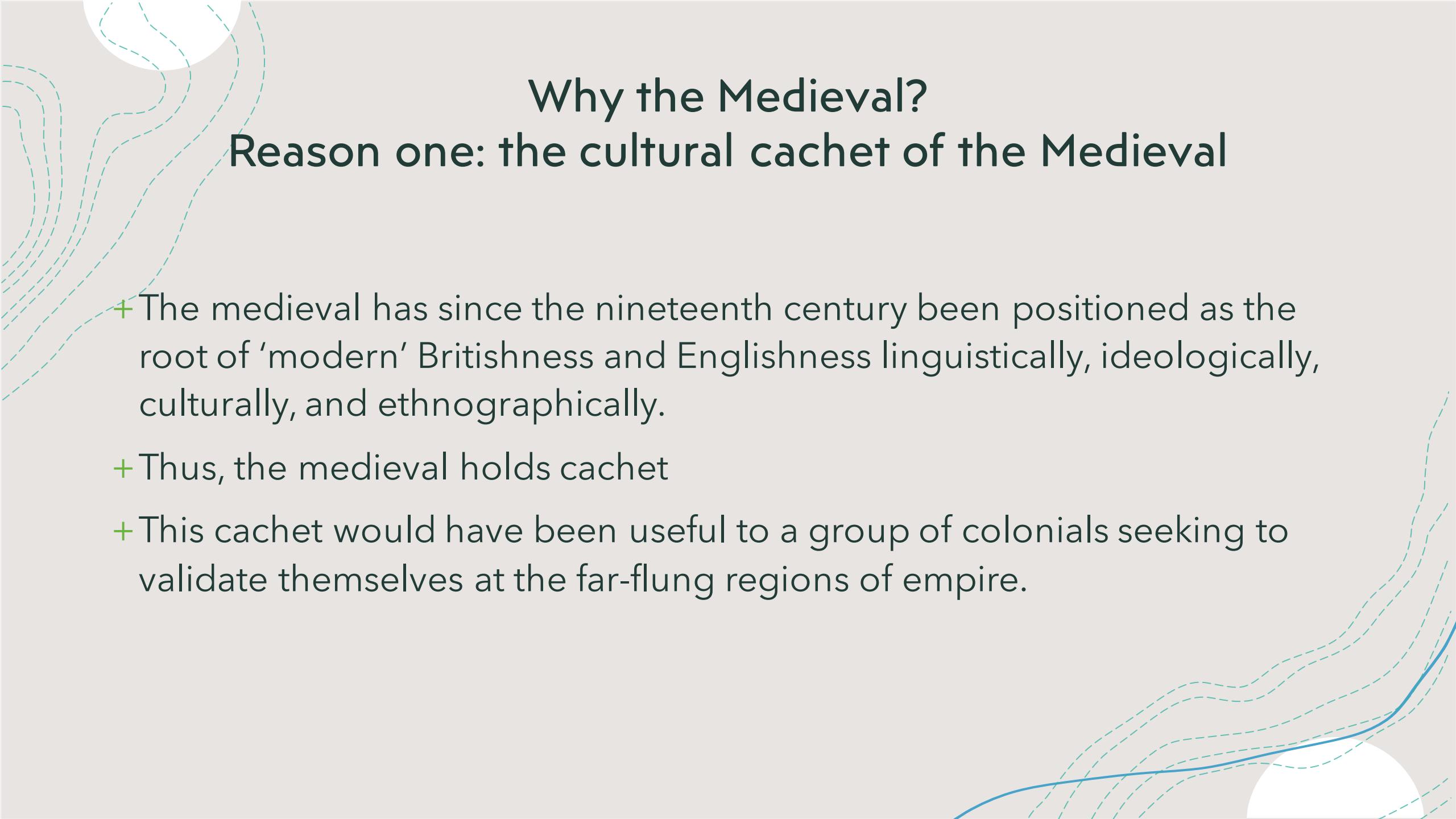
From BNF 112



The Chivalric Gentleman's/ Boy's Club

Medievalist/Arthurian mythology:

- + Image of King Arthur as an idealised militant Christian leader
- + The utopian kingdom of Camelot
- + Egalitarian fraternity of the knights of the Round Table



Why the Medieval?

Reason one: the cultural cachet of the Medieval

- + The medieval has since the nineteenth century been positioned as the root of 'modern' Britishness and Englishness linguistically, ideologically, culturally, and ethnographically.
- + Thus, the medieval holds cachet
- + This cachet would have been useful to a group of colonials seeking to validate themselves at the far-flung regions of empire.

Why the Medieval?

Reason two: the Medieval is magic, New Zealand is magic

- + The Middle Ages is often positioned as a magical time and place and in many ways so too was this 'newly discovered' land of New Zealand.
- + In an article in her magazine 'A Wayfaring Man', Felkin's wife Harriet includes illuminating sections from a report written by her late husband about his visit to Taupo and the thermal districts, some 160km from Havelock North. In the extract, Felkin reports that the hot springs were:

[...] full of the very queerest elementals I have ever seen. Both of us are fairly familiar with the inhabitant of earth, air, fire, and water, we have talked to dryads, and watch fairies at their play, and at work too, for no nature spirit is idle, but these fantastic creatures filled us with amazement. The old legends of dragons and griffons must have had their origin in some such place; reptiles with wings and birdlike heads, birds that were partly frog or lizard, monstrous parodies of human form with misshapen limbs and heads weird and horrible yet fascinating creatures, too alien for us to describe. We seem to have gone back to the primordial slime whence life and form first emerged

(Quoted in Ellwood 1993, 175)



Why the Medieval? Reason three: cultural erasure

- + To erase Māori presence in Havelock North and by extension, the Ngāti Kahungunu iwi's (people's) claims to the land.
- + The basis for such an argument seems to be: how could the land have been *stolen* from the Ngāti Kahungunu people in the 1860s if it is in fact a much older, magical space of white mediievality?
- + Māori language, labour and land were used in the construction of this magical medieval space, but Māori iwi were not granted access to it.

te mata o Rongokako Mountain



- + The village and indeed the whole of the nation of New Zealand is built on land that has been inhabited by Māori people since the thirteenth/ fourteenth century, when groups first arrived from East Polynesia
- + Thus, the land on which New Zealand is built has been inhabited by Māori groups since, in European terminology, the 'medieval period.'
- + One 'medieval' culture has been systematically erased for the sake of another.

Complicating this narrative even further:

If through the practice of magical rituals, the Pākēhā villagers of Havelock North believed that they did not simply *perform* the European Middle Ages but *became* medieval, what does that mean for the Māori iwi of the area; their culture and heritage, which can also be dated to 'the medieval'? Does their past and present cease to exist in this magical, medievalised space?



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