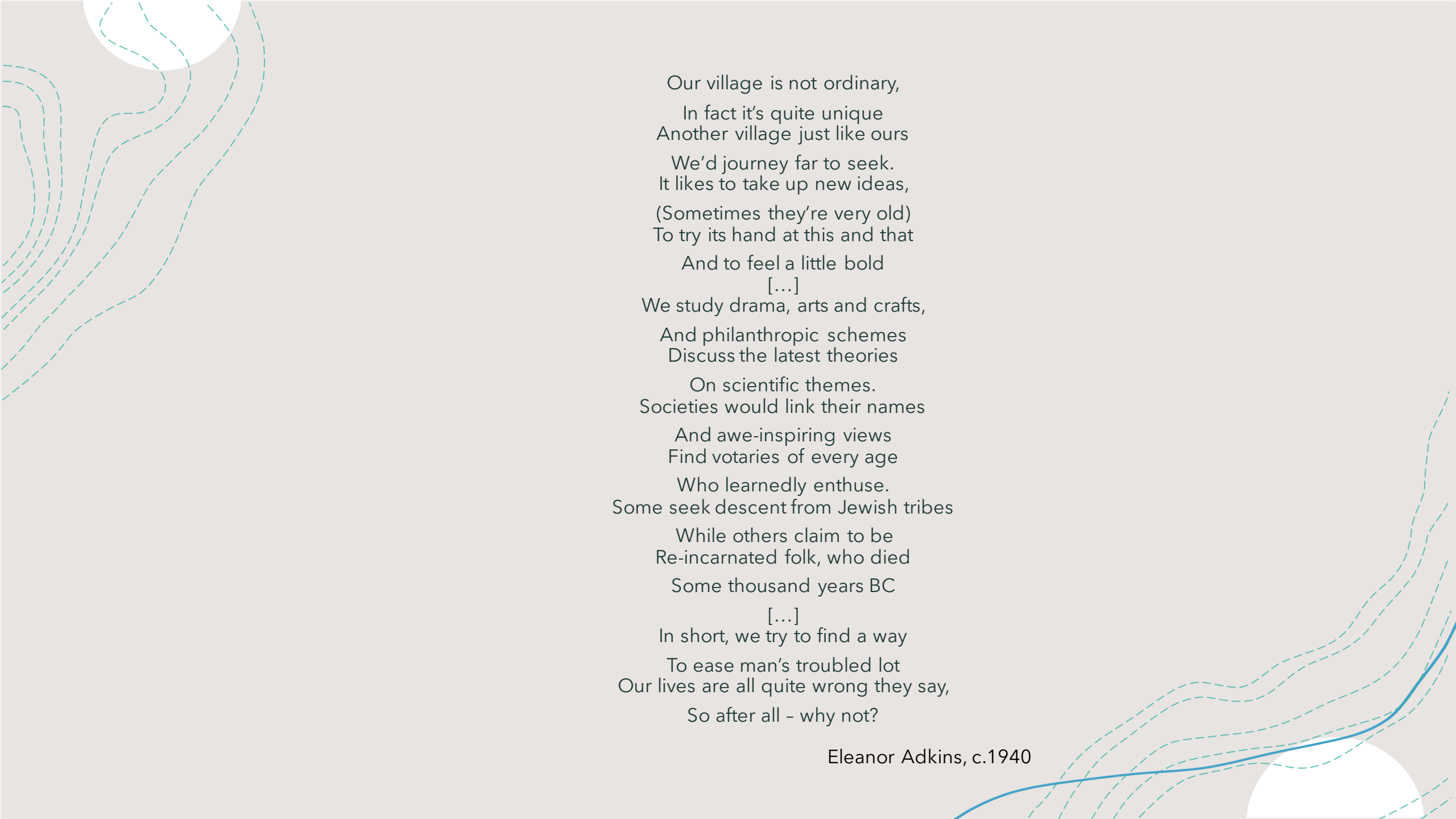


Havelock North: a Medieval Town in Aotearoa/New Zealand

+

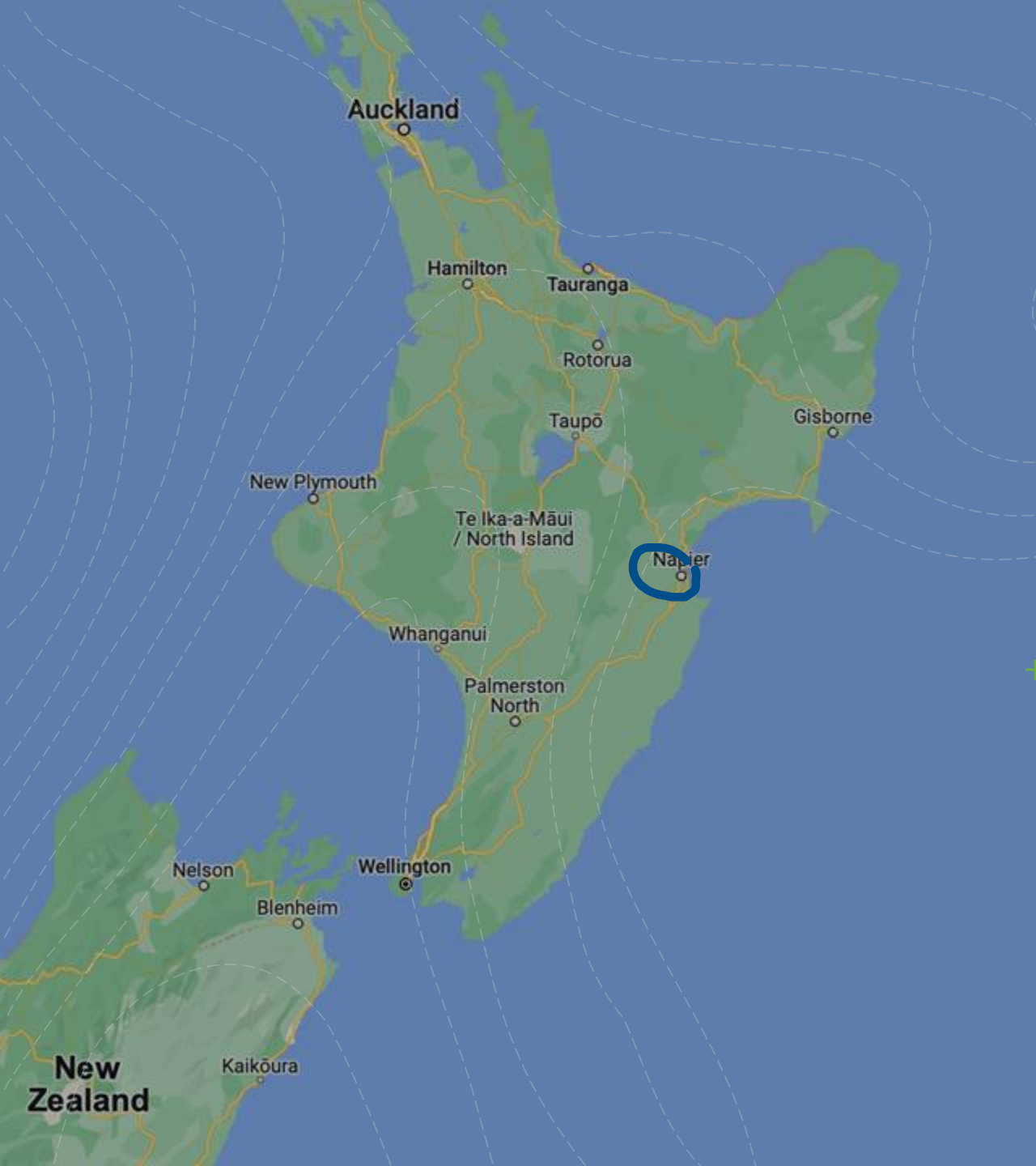
Dr Ellie Crookes

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





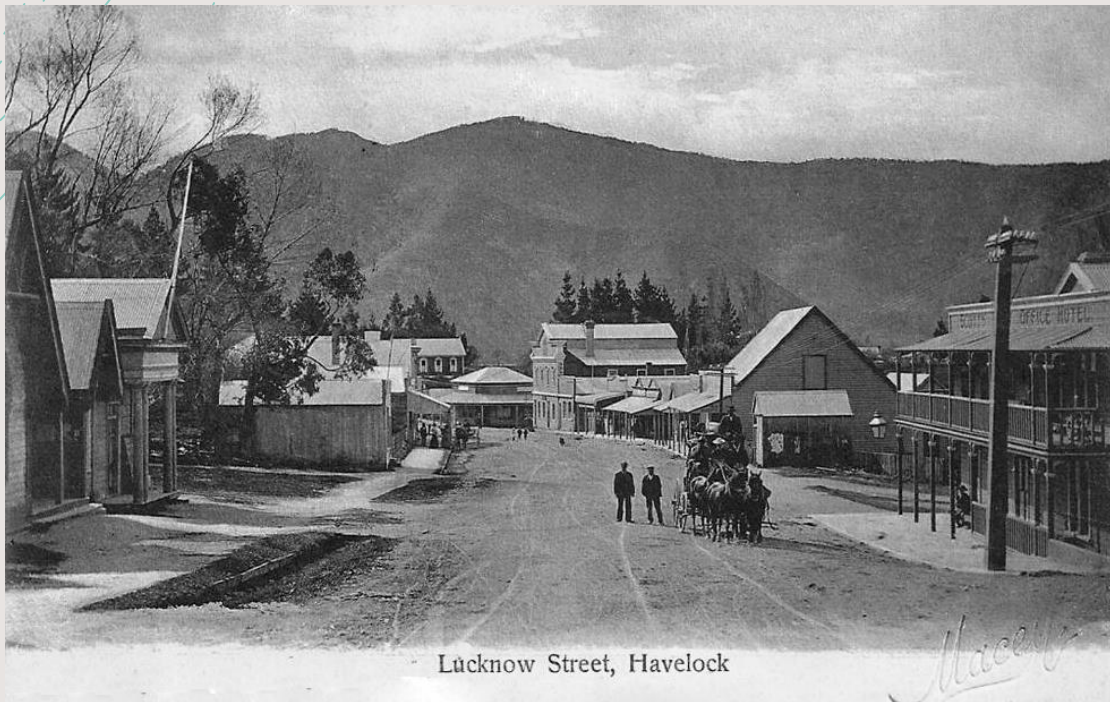
Matthew Wright, *Havelock North: The History of a Village*:

"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



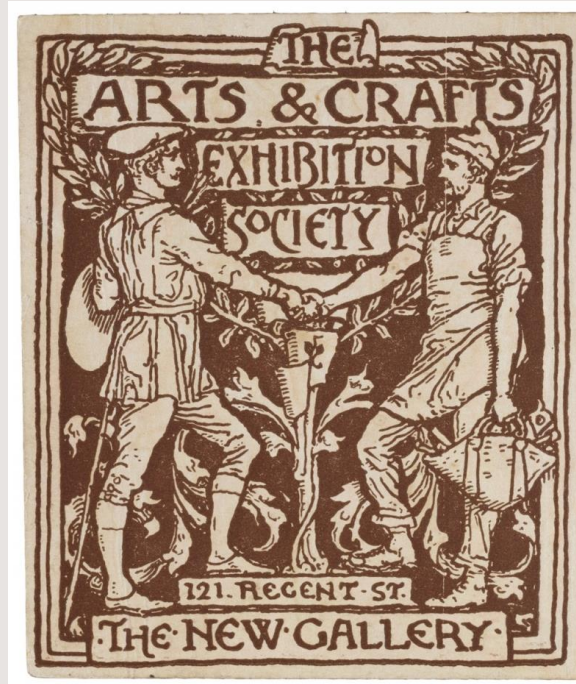
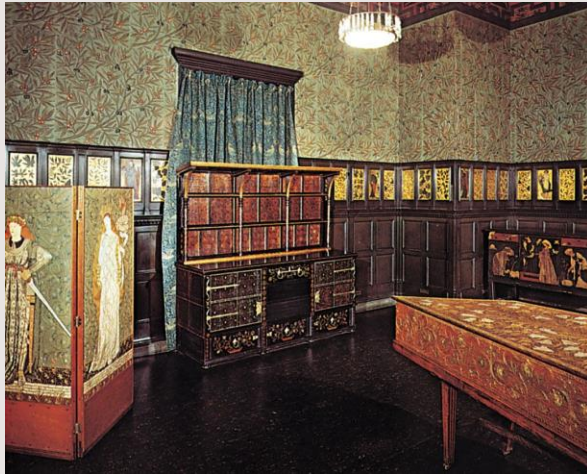
The Havelock Work



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

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



Images of outputs from the British A&C movement

(*Timaru Herald* November 1912, 6).

A. 2000

The conference of University Professors and Teachers held at Wellington last week, which was the first of its kind in New Zealand, was held in the Hotel de Ville, and was attended by 100 delegates from the South Island ports and the University of New Zealand.

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ment, without for that of any important part of the policy relating to education, and the Government, for stimulating the confidence of foreign investors in the country, has been the view of prices being taken. The Government has been able to show that these things would be favorable to the interests of the country, and the Government has been able to show that these things would be favorable to the interests of the country, and the Government has been able to show that these things would be favorable to the interests of the country.

When the blood becomes impure through excess of bile, such troubles as jaundice, indigestion, and flatulency are very common. REMEDY:—The only cure for this is to feed the blood—BLOOD—BLOOD—a scientific diet with Eric and Evelyn's, each of which is a complete blood tonic. It is delicious and strong. 25¢ per bottle.

A leading Chicagoan writes, "I...

He commenced an interesting letter, writes that, so far as he was able to judge, the mass of the German people are friendly towards Great Britain, and look upon a war with that country as a deeply feeling disaster to their country. He also writes that he witnessed the mobilization of 100,000 German troops near the Rhine, and mentioned that after the massacre of 100,000 Jews, with horses, guns and ammunition, were transported in special trains right across the country within twenty-four hours, scarcely interfering with the ordinary work of life. He was very much surprised at the thorough manner in which the German authorities and the

It's not every day that one gets a new silver pocket knife for nothing, and we are sure those needing one will be glad to learn that they can procure one from W. A. Pearson and Co., tailors, 115 Nassau and Tremble. The only provision is that goods to the value of \$1 must be purchased, and in addition to the above 10% in the \$1 discount is allowed on all purchases for cash only....

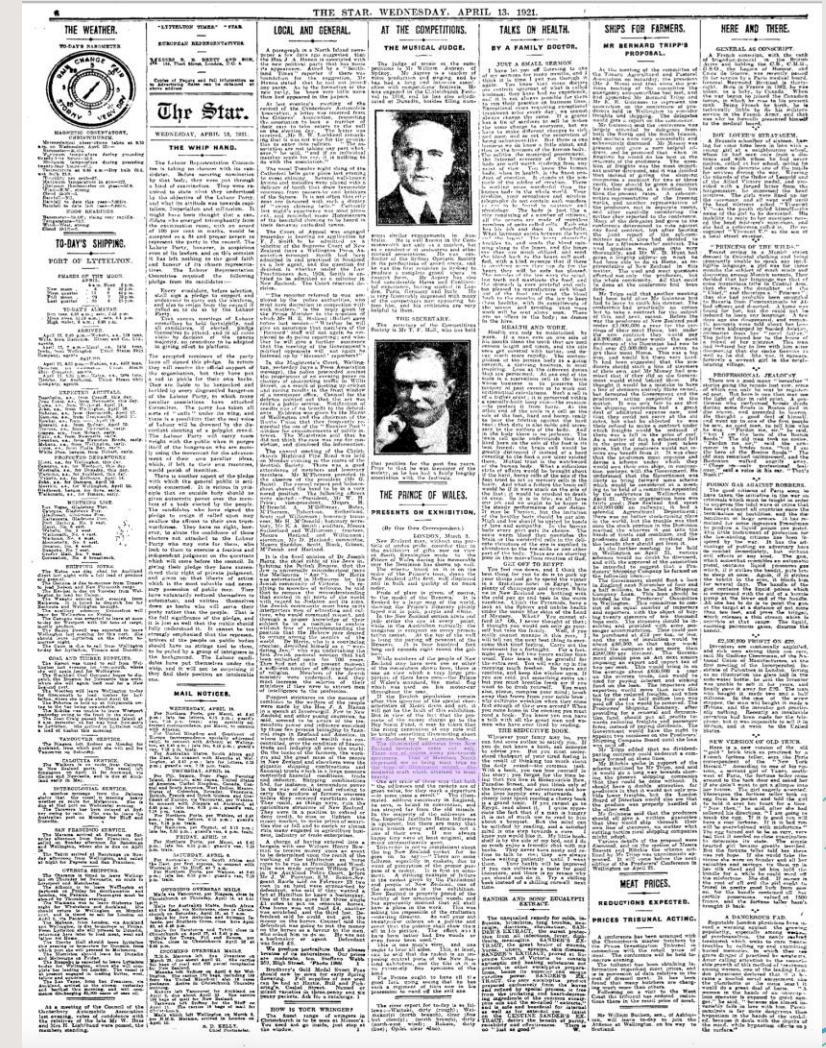
One fact of a pine tree is the garden of Mr T. F. Sutherland, of Hargreaves, in which there is a *fair* crop of fruit known, a number of small pods, almost an inch in length, have also grown. A probable explanation of this is in some tree cultivation was given to a "Press" reporter by an expert expert. Probably it was a disease, he said, known as "pencil pocket" or "bladder" (Kasson, press). The fruits attached the fruit soon after it was set, and the affected fruit then began to swell until it was from one to two inches in length, having no stone or pit, and was hollow. The fruit

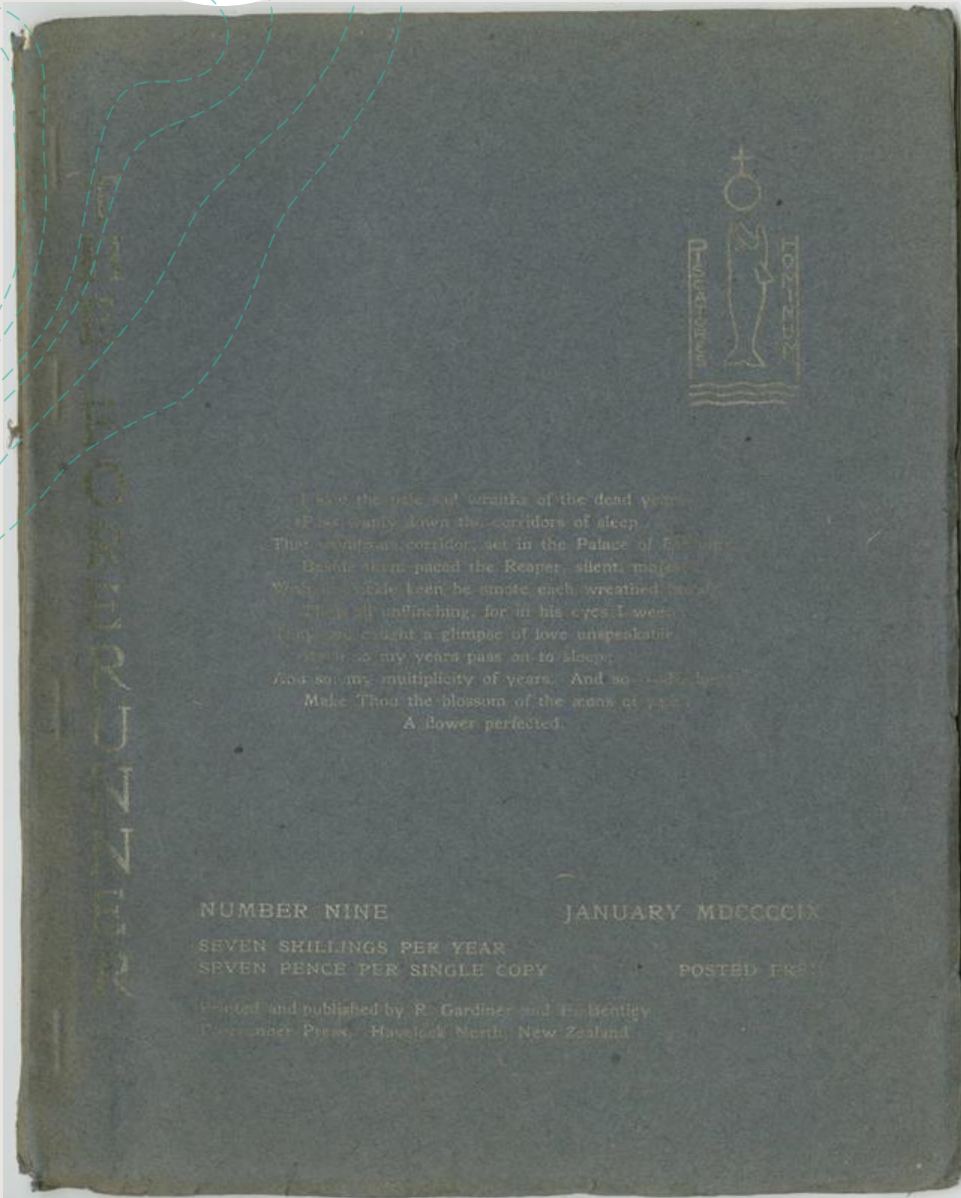
Zett's Cloth Ball cleans and preserves the most delicate colours without injury to the material. All light colour (creams, blues, fars, feather boss, light tan hair, white gloves, etc.) can be dry-cleaned and immediately worn by using the Zett's Cloth Ball. Price 6d and is sold at Baxter's Pharmacies, Tinsley and Fawcett.

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 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

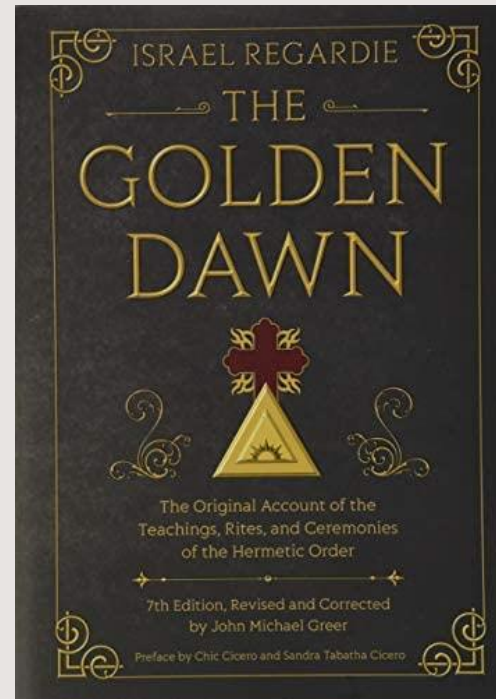
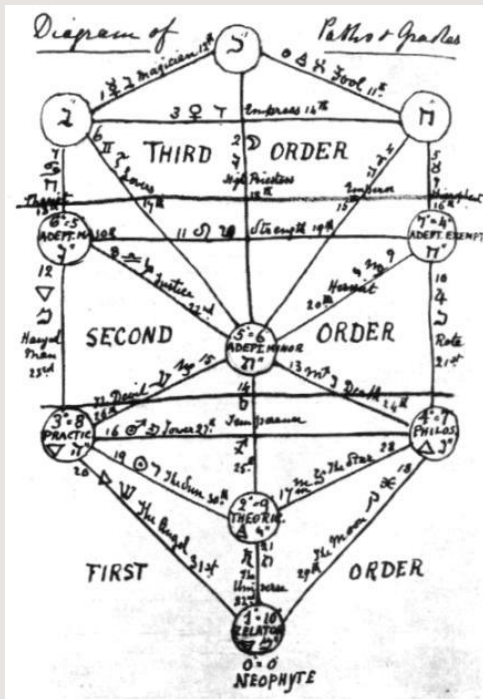
The Havelock Work's Medievalist flavour: Performing the Medieval

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

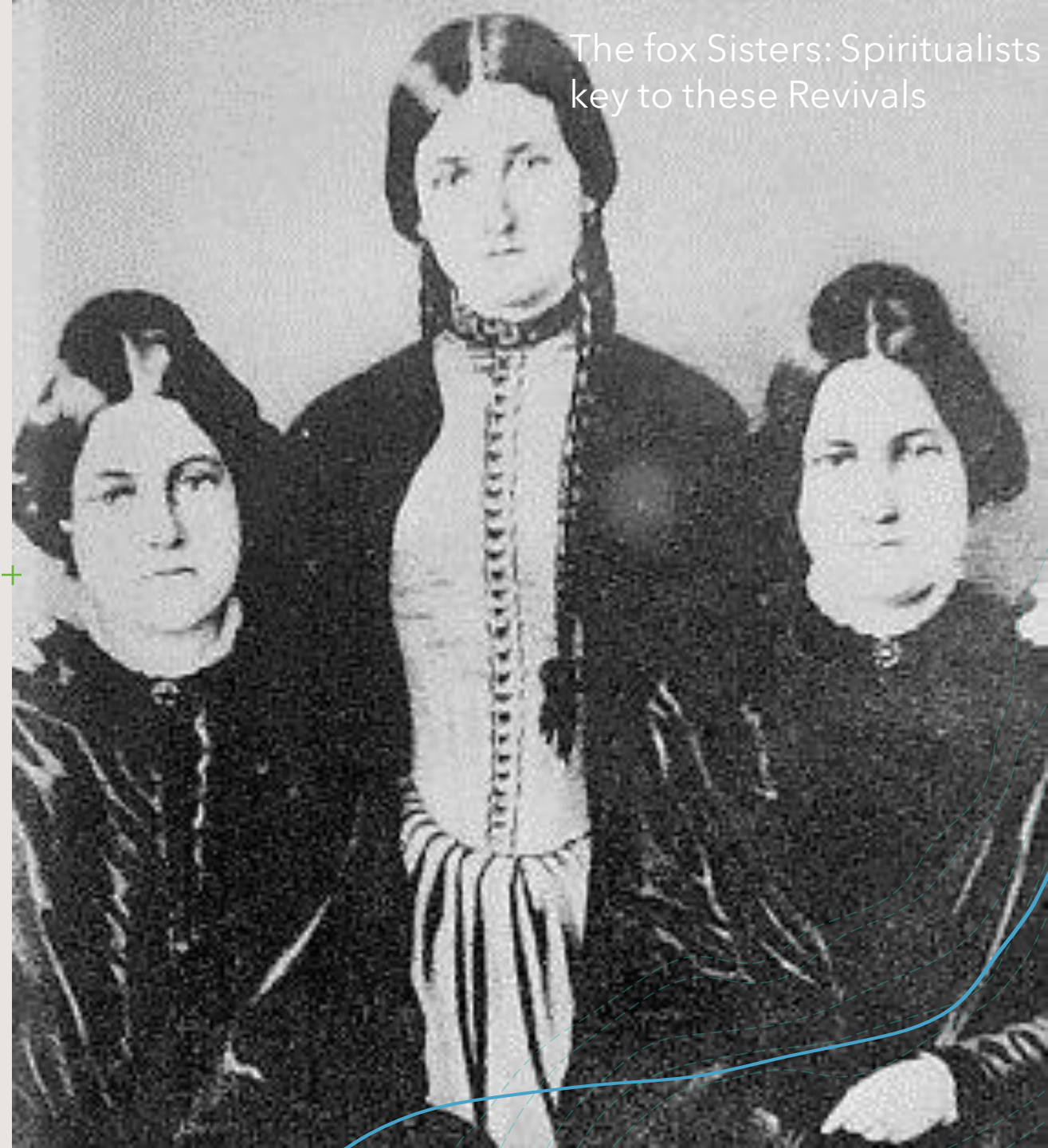


Liddell MacGregor Mathers
performing a HOTGD ritual

The Occult & Spiritualist Revivals

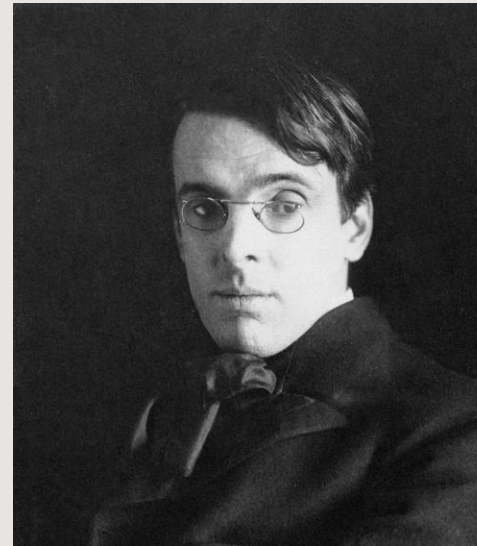
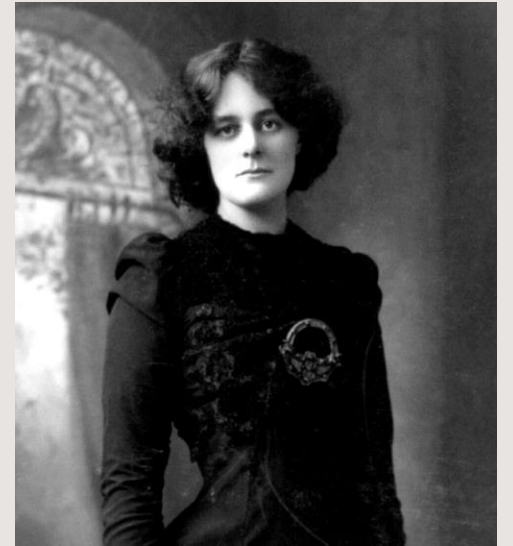
- Mid-nineteen to early-twentieth-century movements in Britain and North America
- So popular that by the late nineteenth century the Revivals were a major part of the cultural landscape of America, Britain and their colonies.
- Fragments of the Occult/Spiritual Revival reached the shores of Australia 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



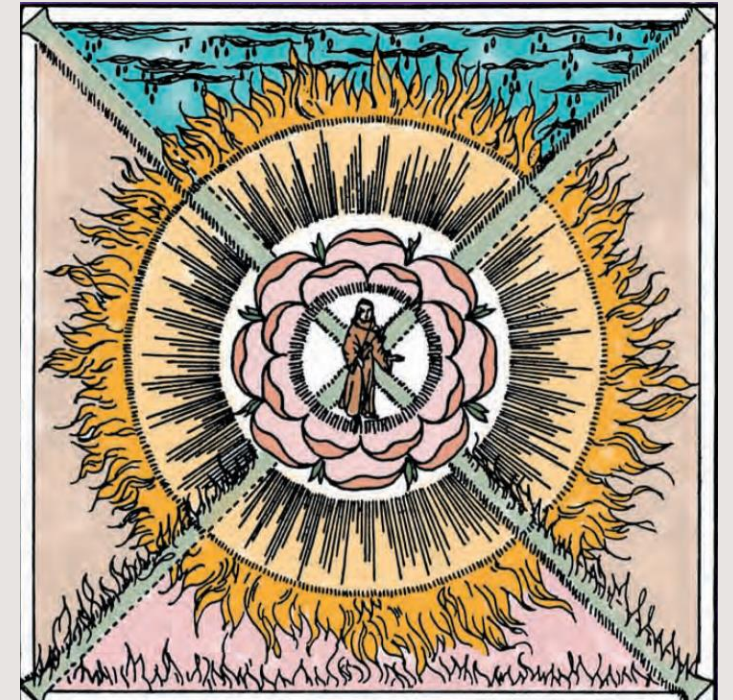
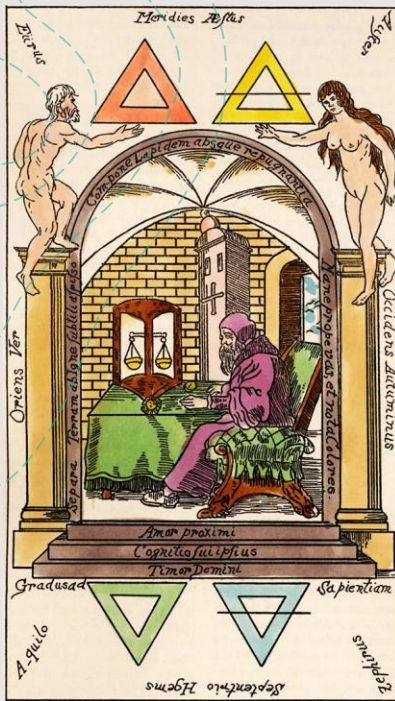
Whare-Ra,
Smaragdum Thalasses' temple

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).



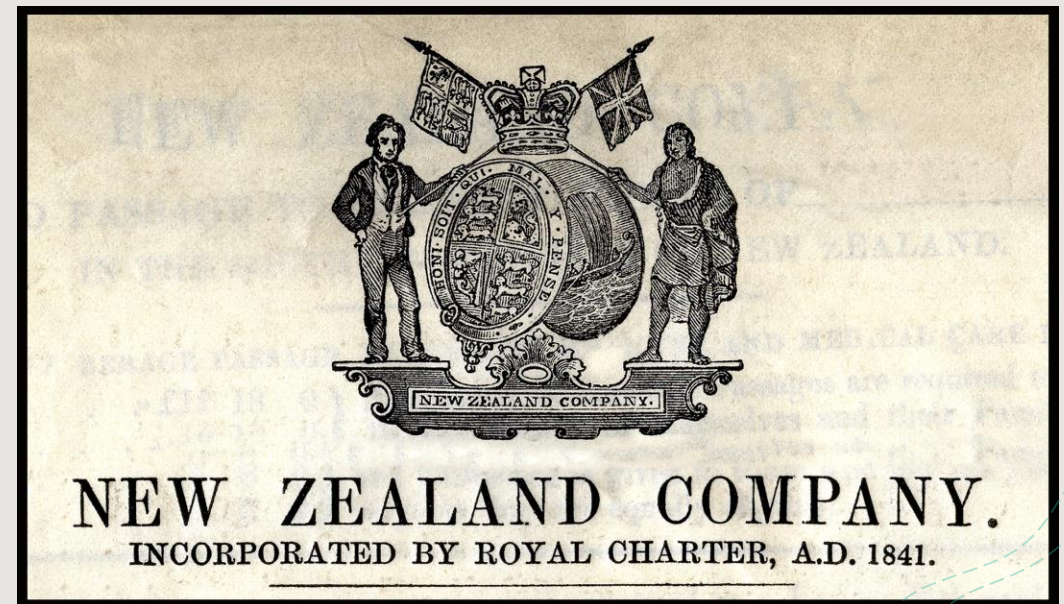


The Golden Dawn, Rosicrucianism and the Medieval

- + 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 Work said: FORGET THE SOIL!!!!!!

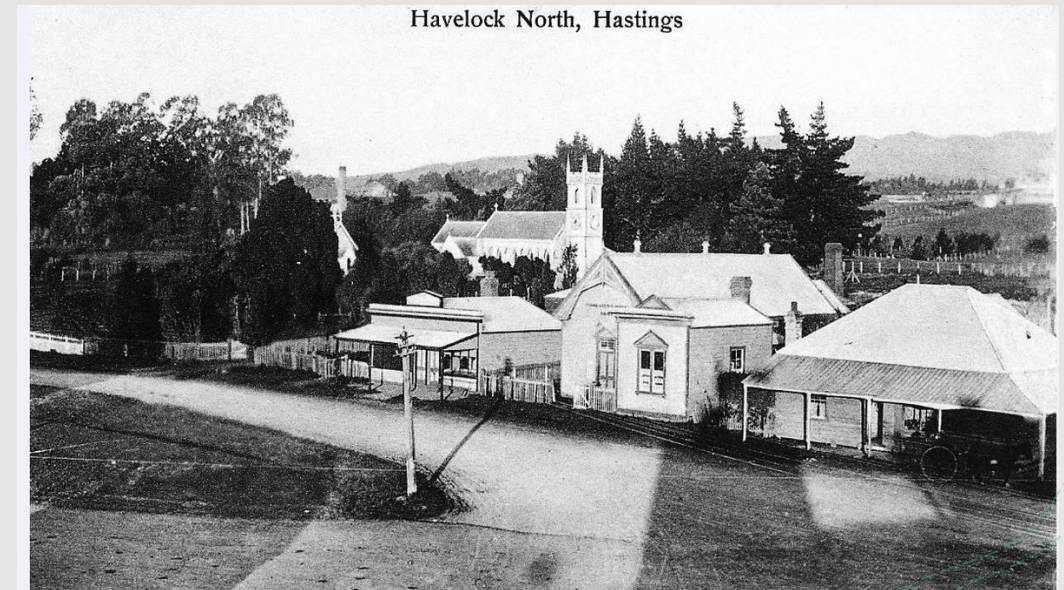


Smaragdum Thalasses, The Havelock Work, and Mystical Medievalism

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"

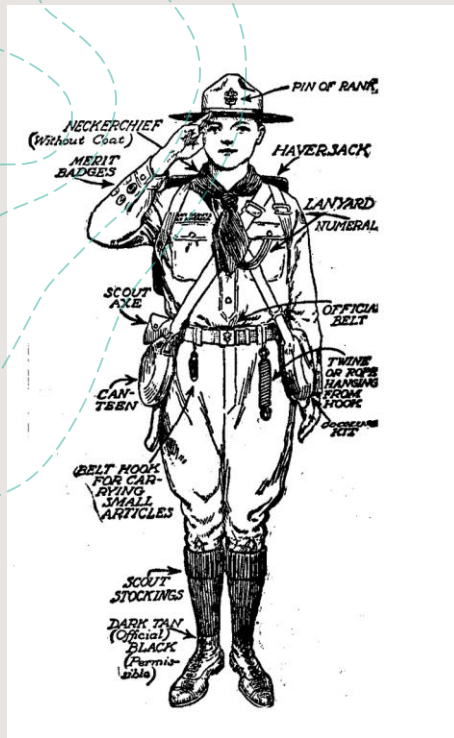
(Quoted in Worrall 2020, 276).



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).





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 mediocrity?
- + 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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