



*Māori and Royal Visits, 1869-2015:
From Rotorua to Waitangi*

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Abstract: This article examines the ways in which Māori met royal visitors to New Zealand. The New Zealand Government wished to present Māori as a loyal people who provided the country with a unique culture, and to show that New Zealand had excellent race relations. Māori had different concerns. They believed that Māori had a special relationship to the Crown because Queen Victoria was the other signatory to the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840. In honouring her descendants they would honour the Treaty. Some Māori also believed royalty might help challenge some of the actions of the settler government. After some difficulties on the three visits of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, in 1869-1871, these diverse aims were largely achieved on royal visits in 1901, 1920, 1927, 1934, and in the first visit of Elizabeth II in 1953 by one large gathering of the tribes at Rotorua. Not all Māori were happy about this policy, especially the Māori King, who wished to meet royalty on his own ground. From 1953 royal visitors did meet the Māori King at his home in the Waikato; and after that date the large Rotorua gathering ceased. Instead, gatherings of all the tribes began to occur at Waitangi, most notably when Elizabeth II visited for the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty in 1990.

Keywords: British royalty, royal visits, Maori

From the time of their invention in 1860, royal visits to Britain's colonies or former colonies have always been a political stage.¹ For government leaders who are the prime authorities in drawing up events and itineraries in association with Buckingham Palace, royal visits and tours offer the chance to present to royalty, and therefore by extension to both overseas press and a local audience, a desired view of their country. But visits also offer a chance for the local participants to express their hopes and aspirations. The story of Māori and royal visits to New Zealand in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries offers a fascinating example. The largely Pākehā (white New Zealander) leaders wanted to use Māori participation as an exotic addition to an image of "beautiful New Zealand," and to emphasise good race relations in the country. Māori had different interests. Many welcomed royalty partly because royals had great *mana* (prestige), and Māori consistently give honour to those with prestige and history behind them. More importantly, Queen Victoria was the other partner in the Treaty of Waitangi, which Māori and the Queen's representative, Lieutenant Governor Hobson, had signed in 1840. Māori are a Polynesian people who had

¹ On the origins of royal tours overseas, see: Charles V. Reed, *Royal Tourists: Colonial Subjects and the Making of a British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), xvii – xxv.

settled New Zealand in about 1300 from the Pacific. In 1840, just as large-scale European settlement was about to begin, over 500 Māori chiefs signed (or put their marks on) the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document of modern New Zealand. In that Treaty, Māori formally recognised the authority of the British Crown. In return, they were guaranteed their *rangatiratanga* or chieftainship, their lands, and fisheries; and they were given the rights of British citizenship.² In meeting and honouring royalty—the Queen’s descendants—Māori believed they were honouring the Treaty and their own special relationship with the Crown. Some saw this as an opportunity to express their dissatisfaction with the way the Treaty had been not fully respected by the local white rulers; others hoped to reaffirm the Treaty and publicly express their sense of loyalty to the Crown.³ The story of Māori and royal visits provides an intriguing tussle between Pākehā ideals of race relations and Māori aspirations.⁴

Visits of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, 1869-1871

Between 1901 and 1954, the concerns of both Pākehā governments and Māori were largely, but on the part of Māori never entirely, met by staging on each royal visit one huge Māori welcome at Rotorua. The development of this idea grew out of the experiences of the first royal visitor, Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. This visit was the least organised and most spontaneous. The Duke came as Captain of *HMS Galatea*, so the itinerary changed according to the weather and movement of the ship. The Duke visited the country three times. After a year’s delay as a result of the attempt on his life in Australia in March 1868, the Duke finally toured from 11 April to 1 June 1869. He stopped at Wellington, the nation’s capital at the bottom of the North Island; Nelson, Christchurch, and Dunedin, which were the major centres in the South Island; and Auckland in the northern part of the North Island. The next year there was a brief stop in Wellington from 27 August to 3 September; and a third visit was spent in the north of the country from 8 December 1870 until 16 January 1871. The Duke came at a time of considerable tension in relations between Māori and Europeans. In 1869, the country was in the final stages of the New Zealand Wars, a bitterly fought series of engagements from 1860. At the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 there had been about 2,000 Europeans in the country and probably 80,000 Māori. Māori were confident, in control of their lands, and keen to attract some European settlers to provide trading opportunities. They believed the Treaty provided them with protection for their lands, their chieftainship, and their traditions. But in the next quarter of a century, settlers flooded in, largely from the United Kingdom. By the early 1860s, the European population was over 200,000 and Māori numbers had fallen to some 50,000. More seriously much of their land had been lost, often through dubious sales. A movement emerged to stop land selling, and to set up a Māori King.

² See especially Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

³ On the view of indigenous peoples that Queen Victoria and her descendants might provide help in battles with settler governments, see: *Mistress of Everything: Queen Victoria in Indigenous Worlds*, eds. Sarah Carter and Maria Nugent (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 3-4; and Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 38-42.

⁴ For their perceptive comments which have greatly improved this paper, I thank Robert Aldrich, Cindy McCreery, Ross Calman, Peter Clayworth, Elizabeth Cox, Mark Derby, Paul Diamond, Emma Jane Kelly, Ewan Morris, Jane Tolerton, and the excellent suggestions of the anonymous reviewer.

The result was war in Taranaki following a contested land dispute, and then an invasion of the Waikato, the home of the Māori King, in 1863, which spilled over into the Bay of Plenty in 1864. An outcome of these conflicts was that much land was confiscated from Māori in those areas. Then in 1868, fuelled by millennial religious movements, two military leaders emerged: Titokowaru in south Taranaki, and Te Kooti in Poverty Bay. When the Duke arrived in 1869 both these conflicts were still unresolved; and there was considerable bitterness in the country because, as elsewhere in the British Empire, the British Government was withdrawing its troops and insisting on a self-reliance policy that required the colonists to provide for their own defence. In doing so, the New Zealand Government had drawn on the support of a number of *imi* (tribes), especially the local *imi* in Whanganui, Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāti Porou on the East Coast of the North Island, and Te Arawa around Rotorua.⁵ The New Zealand Wars disrupted the economic growth of the country and heightened fears about Māori attacks on Europeans, which harmed the country's reputation overseas and put off prospective immigrants. The Wellington Superintendent's address welcoming the Duke noted "The general financial depression ... and the sad tragedies which have recently been enacted at our very doors, have necessarily cast a temporary gloom over the country."⁶ "Pessimism was the leading note of public life," one journalist remembered.⁷ However, the government had conceded to Māori four seats in the colonial legislature in 1867 and were hoping to involve Māori in the governance of the country. So in 1869, the government was keen to emphasise the loyalty of many Māori; while many Māori in turn, especially those who had fought for the Crown, were keen to display their allegiance.

Thus Māori, both of their own volition and with the support of government, were prominent in welcomes at many places. From the moment the Duke stepped onto shore at Wellington, he was greeted with an enthusiastic *haka* (war dance) from a hundred local Māori, which the *Evening Post* declared, "must have astonished H.R.H. and his attendants."⁸ The next day there was a further *haka* in the Mt Cook Barracks before the Duke travelled to the Hutt, where once again he was met with dancing and singing and presented with an address from loyal Māori throughout the bottom of the North Island that deplored "this long war, which is destroying the pakeha and Maori" and paid "homage" to the "authority of the great Queen."⁹ Wellington displayed a transparency featuring a Māori stretching a hand of friendship to Prince Alfred.¹⁰ In Nelson too local Māori welcomed the Duke and presented an address greeting him, in a phrase that would be repeated endlessly, as "the white crane of rare appearance"¹¹ and warning him not to "be troubled by the rebellious work of the tribes in the other Island."

⁵ James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars: A History of the Maori Wars and the Pioneering Period* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1922-1923); James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986); Vincent O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800-2000* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2016).

⁶ "Arrival of the Duke of Edinburgh," *Evening Post*, 13 April 1869, 2. See also Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 98.

⁷ R. A. Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1902), 377.

⁸ "Arrival of the Duke of Edinburgh," *Evening Post*, 13 April 1869, 2; "The Duke of Edinburgh's visit," *Taranaki Herald*, 8 May 1869, 3.

⁹ "The Maori Address and Reply to the Duke of Edinburgh," *Wanganui Herald*, 22 April 1869, 2.

¹⁰ "Transparencies," *Wellington Independent*, 13 May 1869, 1.

¹¹ This phrase was a poor translation of the Māori "te kotuku rerenga tahi" meaning "the white heron of one flight," which was commonly used by Māori in reference to distinguished visitors.

The Duke's reply, in which he affirmed the Queen's "feelings towards her Maori subjects" and her hope that "Maori and pakeha ... may live in peace and harmony together," was also repeated endlessly in response to addresses from Māori throughout his tour.¹² Not surprisingly because it was the centre with the largest Māori population, the most elaborate welcome was in Auckland. Three Māori *waka* (canoes) paddled out to the *Galatea* and escorted it to land, where, as in Wellington, the Duke was met with a formal address of welcome, and then a *haka* involving 500-600 warriors.¹³ There, as in other places, the Government encouraged Māori attendance, by assisting with transport, paying for food, and arranging the postponement of a Land Court meeting.¹⁴ The next day, at Government House, some 200 Māori assembled and their chiefs were presented to the Duke. They gave addresses and gifts to him. One of these came from the Whanganui tribes and consisted of a white flag, showing a brown and white hand clasped in friendship. It had been sewn by the European women of Whanganui in gratitude for the local Māori who had defeated an attacking force on Moutoa Island in the middle of the Whanganui River in 1864.¹⁵ The Māori in turn offered this precious object to the Duke, as a symbol of their loyalty. Prince Alfred, wisely recognising its significance to the local community, politely refused it.¹⁶ Some days later he also met with Ngāpuhi chiefs who had come down from the far north.

There was strong evidence, therefore, of good feelings between Māori and the royal visitor. But local Pākehā were not entirely pleased. Some felt that there were too many Māori welcomes; and that they had played too prominent a role. "Maoriolatory" was the charge.¹⁷ There was criticism of the Mt Cook Barracks performances as being not "the real thing," and only being put on for the payment of £60. It was said that the next day there was supposed to be another *haka* for the Duke, but Māori refused to attend because the pay was insufficient.¹⁸ In Auckland too there was criticism that the speeches of welcome by Māori chiefs went on too long in a language the royal visitor could not follow. The translator at the Government House meeting had to warn them about this and also to avoid overtly political subjects.¹⁹

There was also a delay and considerable ill feeling about a possible meeting with the Māori King. At the time, the Tainui tribes of the Māori King had no further intention of involving themselves in armed conflict. Having been defeated at Ōrākau in 1864, the King and his followers retreated south into the King Country behind an *aukati* (border). But some Europeans feared they would shortly join in the revolts of Titokowaru on the west coast and Te Kooti on the east coast to lead a pan-Māori armed resistance. In this situation some Pākehā leaders believed it would be helpful for the Duke to meet King Tawhiao and thus obtain the King's acceptance of Crown authority. Governor George Grey had first raised the possibility

¹² "Visit of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh to Nelson," *Nelson Examiner*, 21 April 1869, 2.

¹³ "The Visit of the Duke of Edinburgh," *Daily Southern Cross*, 11 May 1869, 5; "Reception of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh," *NZ Herald*, 11 May 1869, 5.

¹⁴ "The Native Demonstration," *Daily Southern Cross*, 7 May 1869, 4.

¹⁵ James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars, Volume 2* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1922), 31-36. On the flag, see: Jock Phillips, *To the Memory: New Zealand War Memorials* (Nelson: Pottan and Burton, 2016), 21-22.

¹⁶ "Reception of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh," *NZ Herald*, 11 May 1869, 5.

¹⁷ "Maoriolatory," *NZ Herald*, 28 April 1869, 6.

¹⁸ "The Duke of Edinburgh's Visit to Wellington," *Hawkes Bay Herald*, 23 April 1869, 3.

¹⁹ "Native Korero at Government House," *Daily Southern Cross*, 14 May 1869, 4.

of a meeting as early as 1867, and his successor, George Bowen, repeated the invitation in the belief that a meeting would undermine the Māori King's claim to authority within the King Country.²⁰ There was evidence that Tawhiao too was keen to pay his respects to the Crown. The Māori King movement (or Kīngitanga) saw no contradiction between fighting imperial troops, establishing a Māori king, and accepting the *mana* and authority of Queen Victoria.²¹ Tawhiao hoped that a meeting might imply a recognition of his own status and lead to the restoration of confiscated lands. Two Waikato chiefs invited Alfred to meet the King at Ngāruawāhia. The Duke's visit to Auckland was delayed, and then when the boat was due to sail, a letter from prominent Auckland political leaders to the governor led to another delay. Eventually, Tawhiao decided that a meeting could not take place without a guarantee of the return of confiscated land and an acknowledgement of his authority. After five days *HMS Galatea* sailed from Auckland.²² There was much annoyance among Pākehā that nothing had eventuated.²³

For government leaders there were lessons for the future in this first visit, and the Duke's third visit in December 1870 and January 1871 provided a possible solution. On this occasion the Duke landed in Auckland and the government decided that he should visit the geothermal "hot lakes" district around Rotorua. This would allow him to see, and help promote, a tourist centre, and also meet Māori, especially the Te Arawa *īwi* based there. Although only one Te Arawa chief had signed the Treaty of Waitangi, they had subsequently joined the government side in the New Zealand Wars.²⁴ Governor Sir George Bowen wrote to the secretary of state, "Te Arawa have fought so long and gallantly for the crown, and whose loyalty will be at once rewarded and confirmed by a visit from the 'Son of the Queen.'"²⁵ The party landed at Tauranga where they were welcomed both by Te Arawa, and also the local *īwi* Ngāiaterangi, who had been allies of the Māori King in the early 1860s and who had been responsible for the famous defeat of the British at Gate Pā near Tauranga some six years before. Although the gathering of the two tribes led to an altercation between them over which tribe should have the predominant role in welcoming the Duke, the professions of loyalty from people who had previously fought the Crown was much noted.²⁶ The Duke proceeded to Rotorua, looked at the Whakarewarewa hot springs, visited the famous Pink and White Terraces, and promised Te Arawa a bust of the Queen that finally arrived in 1874.²⁷ The Duke

²⁰ "The Maori King and the Governor," *Daily Southern Cross*, 16 November 1867, 3.

²¹ Michael Belgrave, "We rejoice to honour the Queen, for she is a good woman, who cares for the Māori race": loyalty and protest in Māori politics in nineteenth-century New Zealand" in *Mistress of Everything: Queen Victoria in Indigenous Worlds*, eds. Sarah Carter and Maria Nugent (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 54-77.

²² *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (Wellington, 1869), A-12: 3. On these negotiations, see: Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 47-53; Michael Belgrave, *Dancing with the King: The Rise and Fall of the King Country, 1864-1885* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017), 21-2; O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand*, 558-560.

²³ "Postponement of the Departure of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh," *NZ Herald*, 28 May 1869, 3; "His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh," *NZ Herald*, 1 June 1869, 2; "The Visit of the Duke of Edinburgh," *Taranaki Herald*, 5 June 1869, 3.

²⁴ Vincent O'Malley and David Armstrong, *The Beating Heart: The Political and Socio-economic History of Te Arawa* (Wellington: Huia, 2008), 13-88.

²⁵ Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 390.

²⁶ D. M. Stafford, *The Founding Years in Rotorua* (Auckland: Ray Richards, 1986), 134.

²⁷ Mark Stocker, "An imperial icon Indigenised: the Queen Victoria Memorial at Ohinemutu," in *New Zealand's Empire*, eds. Katie Pickles and Catherine Coleborne (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016) 28-50.

won plaudits from Te Arawa because he consistently wore a Scots kilt, which reminded the tribe of the flax skirts they also wore. Despite the fact that once again there were some complaints about “the infliction he endured”²⁸ as a result of interminable speeches in the Māori language (and which one observer claimed were “not of the bland and complimentary style reported in the Auckland newspapers”),²⁹ the time in the Rotorua district was judged a huge success, both as a result of the positive feelings between Māori and royalty, and also because of the boost to New Zealand’s main tourist centre at the time.

Visit of the Duke and Duchess of York and Cornwall, 1901

The positive lessons from the Rotorua visit were not forgotten. The opportunity to implement them came with the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York from 10 to 27 June 1901. The Duke was Queen Victoria’s grandson, second son of Edward VII, and soon to become Prince of Wales (and later King George V). An invitation to the Duke had been made by Premier Richard Seddon in 1897, but this was not taken up. However, New Zealand’s enthusiastic involvement in the South African War stimulated a renewed imperial spirit within New Zealand and won plaudits abroad. So a tour was once again planned, and although the death of the Queen in January 1901 temporarily delayed it, the new King was keen to stimulate relationships and recognise New Zealand’s military service. Inspections of veterans just returned from South Africa became a feature of the tour.³⁰

The position of Māori in the thirty years since the previous visit had changed significantly. Except for the confrontation at Parihaka in 1881, there had been peace since 1872. While natural increase and continued migration had led the European population to reach over three quarters of a million in the mid-1890s, the Māori population had continued to fall, to just over 40,000, nearly all living in largely separate communities in rural areas. At that stage there was a belief that the Māori were a “dying race.” With no longer anything to fear militarily from Māori, many Pākehā New Zealanders began to look to Māori culture and traditions as an element of distinctiveness about their country which should not be lost. A Polynesian Society was formed, and some began to refer to New Zealand as “Maoriland.”³¹ Richard Seddon’s government had just established a Department of Tourism and Health Resorts, which regarded Māori as an exotic addition to “beautiful New Zealand”. In planning the royal visit, both local promoters and the government were therefore keen to display Māori as providing a distinctive element, and one that in the context of New Zealand’s recent rejection of federation with Australia offered something very different from the culture of Australia. The *Auckland Star* editorialised that in pursuit of “a most striking and unique display ... the Maori element should enter into the local greeting to our distinguished visitors.”³² The

²⁸ “Tauranga,” *NZ Herald*, 17 December 1870, 3.

²⁹ “Tauranga,” *NZ Herald*, 4 January 1871, 3.

³⁰ Judith Bassett, “‘A Thousand Miles of Loyalty’: The Royal Tour of 1901,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 21, no. 1 (1987): 125-138.

³¹ M. P. K. Sorrenson, *Māori Origins and Migrations: The genesis of some Pākehā myths and legends* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1990); Jock Phillips, “Musings in Maoriland—or was there a ‘Bulletin’ School in New Zealand?,” *Historical Studies* 20, no. 81 (October 1983): 520-535.

³² “The Royal Reception,” *Auckland Star*, 25 March 1901, 2.

Hawkes Bay Herald argued that “we have in the Maori race an object of interest quite unique ... a race of whom we are all proud.”³³ The *Poverty Bay Herald*, meanwhile, considered that “Maori displays and the Hot Lakes sights” would be the leading features of the tour and “far outweigh in interest the most elaborate arches, military reviews, etc.”³⁴ It was indeed remarkable how much Māori iconography featured in the gifts and decorations for the tour. In Auckland, one of the four ceremonial arches was in the form of the doorway of a Māori meeting house, and two of the others used the Māori language. The Windsor Castle Hotel featured a large transparency of a Māori scene. In Wellington there was another Māori arch, and lights on the Post Office spelled out “Kia ora” (hello), “Naumai e te Kotuku rerenga Tahī” (welcome to the rare white heron, seen once in a lifetime), which repeated an image from the Duke of Edinburgh’s visit.³⁵ As for gifts, Wellington women presented the Duchess with the model of a Māori *pataka* (food-house), while the official government address came in a greenstone and gold casket topped with a Māori canoe and adorned with a carved tiki and two Māori heads.

If the government and Pākehā leaders were keen to co-opt Māori culture to give the country an identity, they were also keen to present the royal visitors with an image of a peaceful and loyal Māori people. In his ministerial address of welcome, Richard Seddon said that “Both races are living in amity together, and it is with pardonable pride that we can state that the whole Maori race now fully adapt themselves to present conditions and environments. ... [T]hey are loyal to the Throne, happy, and contented, and their numbers are increasing.”³⁶ So how was such a felicitous situation to be presented? The most important decision was there would not be a number of different Māori welcomes as had occurred with the previous visits. The moment the tour was announced, Māori tribes from all over the country expressed their desire to welcome the royal highnesses on their own ground. Offers came in from Ngāpuhi in the Bay of Islands inviting them to Waitangi, from Kaiapoi Ngāi Tahu wanting to present an address in Christchurch, from Wairarapa Māori seeking their presence at Papawai, from Ngāti Porou and east coast *imi* inviting them to Gisborne, from Muaupoko asking them to come to Lake Horowhenua near Wellington.³⁷ All these offers were turned down. In addition, as we shall see, a major push from Pākehā and Māori alike to allow the Waikato and Māori King their own welcome was rejected. The government was determined to retain control and present the Māori in the way it wanted. There were to be only two Māori events: a major gathering at Rotorua of all tribes, and the laying of the foundation stone of the Queen Victoria School for Māori Girls in Auckland. No others would be allowed, and although in places Māori did gather at some railway stations as the royal train passed by to express their own welcomes by singing *waiata* (songs) “punctuated by an English ‘Hip, Hip, Hooray,’” the train did not stop to allow a formal event to take place.³⁸

³³ “The Maoris and the Duke,” *Hawkes Bay Herald*, 31 May 1901, 2.

³⁴ “The Duke’s Visit,” *Poverty Bay Herald*, 7 May 1901, 1.

³⁵ Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 127, 181.

³⁶ Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 16.

³⁷ “The Northern Natives and the Duke,” *Auckland Star*, 2 May 1901, 5; “The Maoris and the Royal Visitors,” *Press*, 6 April 1901, 7; “The Proposed Native Meeting,” *Press*, 25 February 1901, 5; “A Maori Invitation,” *NZ Herald*, 27 February, 1901, 5; “A Maori Request,” *NZ Herald*, 4 March 1901, 5; Internal Affairs. 1 815,17, 1901/195 (Archives New Zealand). Hereafter IA.

³⁸ Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 54.

The two sanctioned events were designed to communicate clear messages. The Queen Victoria College for Māori Girls event was intended to show that Māori were a progressive people. Fears that Māori were dying out had eased as the population increased, and a “Young Maori Party” had emerged of leaders committed to drawing on the best of European civilisation and culture for the welfare of Māori. The new school would give young Māori women a rich education that would ensure the “regeneration” of the race. The girls performed a *waiata*, and the beauty of their voices was interpreted as “a refreshing contrast to the gloomy predictions of the approaching extinction of the Maori.”³⁹

The major Māori event was the gathering of tribes at Rotorua. The success of the Duke of Edinburgh’s visit created a precedent. The Rotorua setting allowed the royal party and visiting press to see New Zealand’s tourist “Wonderland” and present Māori as a romantic addition to the hot lakes and bubbling pools. The government had built Rotorua as a tourist centre in the early 1880s and had actually taken over ownership of the town in 1888. Rotorua was also the home of Te Arawa, a loyal *ini* who had become used to hosting foreign visitors and tourists. When the Duke and Duchess arrived by train, they were greeted with a *haka* and *waiata*, and the next day they visited Ōhinemutu, which now displayed on its forecourt the wooden bust of Queen Victoria promised by Prince Alfred and beneath which the presents from the local tribes were laid out.⁴⁰ Then they visited the Whakarewarewa thermal area escorted by the famous guides, Sophia and Maggie Papakura.

The gathering on the racecourse, however, was the major event. The government agreed to pay for, and arrange, the transport for tribes from all round the country to Rotorua and James Carroll, the Māori leader and Native Minister, took charge of the arrangements, while the great white father, the Premier Richard Seddon, watched the proceedings.⁴¹ Some 5000 were present. All the elements of the gathering carried significant messages. Although different *ini* were not allowed to welcome the royal party on their own ground, each major tribal grouping was allowed to perform their own dances, songs, and performances with the *poi* (a light feathered ball on a string swung rhythmically). There was considerable rivalry between *ini* in their performances. But unlike the Duke of Edinburgh’s visits, there were to be no speeches lest Their Highnesses become bored.⁴² Much emphasis was given to the fact that the visiting Māori included many chiefs who had fought on both sides in the New Zealand Wars. James Cowan described “battle-scarred veterans” who had been “friendlies”; but also Hori Ngatai, who had led the Ngāiterangi at Gate Pā; Tūhoe, who had been on the King’s side at Ōrākau; and Ngāpuhi, who had fought the crown in the 1840s and now ignored ancient enmities to visit the home of their old enemies, Te Arawa.⁴³ The message was that enmities had been forgiven and former enemies had joined together to become enthusiastic supporters of the British Crown. The organisation of the camp at the racecourse was placed in the hands of leading members of the Young Maori Party: Apirana Ngata was on the executive committee, Dr Maui Pomare took charge of sanitation, Paraire Tomoana was in charge of the

³⁹ Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 46.

⁴⁰ D. M. Stafford, *The New Century in Rotorua: A History of Events Since 1900* (Auckland: Ray Richards, 1988), 14.

⁴¹ “Hon. J. Carroll,” *Poverty Bay Herald*, 24 April 1901, 3; Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 64; Māori Affairs, 25, 5/11 (Archives New Zealand). Hereafter MA.

⁴² “Mr Carroll at Rotorua,” *Auckland Star*, 17 April, 1901, 2.

⁴³ Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 72-74, 114.

distribution of food (much of which in the form of kumara, potatoes, and preserved seafood, had been brought by the *imi*), and the Reverend F. A. Bennett arranged morning and evening prayers. They set out to display the highest standards of cleanliness, good order, and lack of sickness, crime, and drunkenness. No liquor was allowed, refuse was buried, and pure water was piped in.

As regards the messages that Māori themselves wanted to communicate, there was much that was consistent with government aims. Māori were keen to display their ‘civilised’ qualities, and to affirm their loyalty to the crown. The relationship of Māori to the British Crown because of the Treaty of Waitangi was especially significant, with many Māori in the words of their *waiata* and *baka* seeking to renew and reaffirm the Treaty relationship with the new King, now that Queen Victoria had died. The address, which James Carroll presented, claimed: “today we make a new treaty—new and yet old—inasmuch as we confirm the old.”⁴⁴ There was much lamenting the death of Victoria, often drawing on Christian traditions. The Mataatua tribes from the Bay of Plenty sang:

Ascend, dear Mother, to the first heaven, from thence to the second heaven, and thence fly to the brink of heaven, where Christ the Saviour may receive thee. But who will give effect to the Treaty of Waitangi? Your son, King Edward the Seventh, will give effect to the Treaty of Waitangi, so that the Maori way of life may live in peace and prosperity.⁴⁵

But not all the words were quite so benign, and one wonders what Seddon would have thought had he been able to understand the Māori language when Ngāti Porou, a traditionally loyal *imi*, sang in Māori words which translated were:

Yes, we have suffered. First we strayed in the by-ways of the surveys; then we were lost in the maze of the Land Courts.... What availed it all, since our heritage was ruthlessly crushed within the maw of the land-grabbing Pakeha? ... And what is the Government doing? They are carefully concocting laws to swallow up New Zealand. Alas! ... Then welcome your bad laws, welcome your unjust laws; come gather ye together to Wellington, that den of lions which is ever gaping wide.⁴⁶

Some other Māori were also unhappy. In Parihaka, in south Taranaki, the old pacifist leader Tohu Kakahi refused to attend.⁴⁷ A more overt challenge came, as in 1870, from the Tainui *imi*, especially the Waikato tribe and the Māori King. Tainui were not opposed to British royalty—far from it, for they always had respect for a great chief and they continued to see the British sovereign as a potential route to solving their difficulties with the New Zealand government. For this reason, King Tawhiao had actually travelled to London in the vain hope of seeing the Queen “to have the Treaty honoured” in 1884.⁴⁸ But Tainui insisted that they should meet royalty on their own ground. They argued it was contrary to Māori tradition to

⁴⁴ “The Reception at Rotorua,” *NZ Herald*, 14 June 1901, 6.

⁴⁵ Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 375.

⁴⁶ Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand*, 372.

⁴⁷ “Te Kahui Kararerehe to James Carroll,” 21 March 1901, MA, 24, 5/11.

⁴⁸ R. T. Mahuta. “Tawhiao, Tukaroto Matutaera Potatau Te Wherowhero,” *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed 23 June 2017, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2t14/tawhiao-tukaroto-matutaera-potatau-te-wherowhero>. See also: Reed, *Royal Tourists*, 53, 167-172; Belgrave, *Dancing with the King*, 298.

welcome a royal visitor on other land than their own; and they had a particular opposition to travelling to Rotorua, since Te Arawa and Waikato had old enmities. So they refused to attend the Rotorua *bui*. Tainui indicated they were prepared to meet the Duke and Duchess at two locations: in Auckland where they had historical land claims, and on their own territory at Ngāruawāhia in the Waikato. The first option, of an Auckland meeting, was initially suggested by Pākehā members of the local organising committee for the royal tour in Auckland. Seeking to promote the idea of New Zealand as “Maoriland,” they suggested that a unique welcome for the royal visitors would be for *waka* (canoes) from Tainui to greet the royal yacht, the *Ophir*, on its arrival in Auckland.⁴⁹ Tainui agreed and promised to bring up from the Waikato their war canoe, Tehepetikiriki. The local committee asked the Government to cover the costs, while Tainui sought permission to hunt pigeons out of season to decorate the *waka*.⁵⁰ Both requests were refused as the Government stuck to its policy to “gather all the natives at Rotorua.”⁵¹ The *NZ Herald* editorialised about this “somewhat petty action” by the Government⁵² and Auckland’s Maritime Committee, committed to the idea of a unique New Zealand welcome, decided to raise funds for the purpose by public subscription.⁵³ But the Government held firm, and although the mayor also made an appeal, it was reported that the Duke of Cornwall and York would not receive a Māori display either at Auckland or at Ngāruawāhia, and claimed this was supported by other Māori chiefs.⁵⁴ Despite the fact that the public came forth offering money plus bags of potatoes and flour to feed the Tainui, and *waka* were actually brought to the station for transport, eventually the Māori King decided not to allow the event to occur and it was cancelled.⁵⁵ So the “one gathering” policy was maintained, and Rotorua became the major site where Māori honoured the Duke and Duchess.

Royal tours in the interwar years

This principle of one Rotorua gathering for Māori essentially held firm for the three royal visits during the interwar years. Each one brought to New Zealand one of the sons of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, who had become George V and Queen Mary in 1910. Their oldest son, Edward Prince of Wales (subsequently Edward VIII) toured from 24 April to 22 May 1920; their second son, Albert, Duke of York, came with the Duchess (later George VI and the Queen Elizabeth) from 22 February to 22 March, 1927; and their third son, Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, toured from 15 December 1934 to 29 January 1935. By the interwar years the cult of “Maoriland” had diminished, so there was not the dominance of Māori iconography that had occurred in 1901. A few elements remained, however, because many Pākehā New Zealanders were still keen to promote the uniqueness of Māori culture. In

⁴⁹ “The Royal Reception,” *Auckland Star*, 25 March 1901, 2; “Arrangements for the Reception,” *NZ Herald*, 27 March 1901, 5.

⁵⁰ “A Maori Offer,” *Press*, 4 April 1901, 5; “The Maori Reception,” *Auckland Star*, 12 April 1901, 5.

⁵¹ “The Royal Reception,” *Auckland Star*, 16 April 1901, 2; “The Royal Visit,” *NZ Herald*, 23 April 1901, 6.

⁵² “The Royal Reception at Auckland,” *NZ Herald*, 29 April, 4.

⁵³ “A Native Display at Auckland,” *NZ Herald*, 30 April 1901, 4; “Maori Aquatic Display,” *NZ Herald*, 10 May 1901, 6.

⁵⁴ “The Maori Ceremonies,” *Wanganui Herald*, 18 May 1901, 2; “Auckland’s Programme,” *NZ Herald*, 24 May 1901, 5; “The Auckland and Rotorua Receptions,” *Taranaki Herald*, 25 May 1901, 3.

⁵⁵ “Maori Canoe Display Abandoned,” *NZ Herald*, 11 June 1901, 5.

1920, the government's address to the Prince of Wales did have Māori designs on its border, but there was no mention of Māori in the words.⁵⁶ Instead, the service of the Dominion's soldiers in the Great War was mentioned, and in place of arches the only banner noted in Auckland did not have Māori words but the phrase "Welcome to the Digger Prince from New Zealand Diggers."⁵⁷ Recognising the returned soldiers was the primary purpose of the Prince's visit. The Prince himself wrote at the time: "Returned soldiers & shrieking people & school children are all that I shall remember of my visit."⁵⁸ In 1927, Auckland's gift to the Duke and Duchess of York was the model of a Māori *pataka* (storehouse), and there was one Māori decoration, on the *New Zealand Herald* building, but elsewhere their absence and lack of Māori words was notable.⁵⁹ They were also absent in 1934.

The Rotorua gathering was the main opportunity to expose the royals and their accompanying press entourage to Māori and Māori culture during these three tours. The same reasons that had led to this in 1901 remained. Rotorua was the home of the "loyal" Te Arawa tribe, and it allowed Māori to be presented alongside a scenic wonderland. The success of the Rotorua gathering in 1901 was also influential. There remained the fear that, if the Māori presence was not unified at Rotorua, there would be endless Māori requests for visits from other tribes. In general, the three Rotorua events followed very much the pattern established in 1901. There was a welcome at the railway station, a visit to Ōhinemutu where each of the royal visitors honoured the bust of Queen Victoria, and a walk around Whakarewarewa (where to the embarrassment of the hosts and the guests' annoyance the geyser refused to perform for the Prince of Wales). Large *hui* (meetings) were again held at the Arawa Park racecourse. They were presided over by the same "Young Maori Party" leaders who had been just starting their careers in 1901 and had become elder statesmen and Members of Parliament: Apirana Ngata, Peter Buck, and Maui Pomare. James Carroll also presided in 1920, although the Pākehā Minister of Native Affairs, Sir William Herries, presented the address in English, with Gordon Coates, another Pākehā, reading it in Māori in 1927.⁶⁰ In 1934, the Prime Minister, George Forbes, read the address in English, while Bishop Bennett also read it in Māori. Despite the fact that he had resigned as Native Minister just months before, Apirana Ngata was the main organiser and acknowledged leader in 1934.⁶¹ On all three occasions the government paid the transport of distant tribes to Rotorua, as had happened in 1901, and also contributed to food costs. Once again there was a desire to show off the good order and civilised modernity of Māori, and a pride in the cleanliness and lack of crime or drunkenness among the Māori visitors.⁶² Long speeches were omitted.⁶³ Most of the *ini* represented were those that had

⁵⁶ "The Prince's Visit," *Dominion*, 23 April 1920, 8.

⁵⁷ "Auckland Prepared," *Otago Daily Times*, 24 April 1920, 9.

⁵⁸ David Colquhoun, "Royal Scenes from the Empire City: The Prince of Wales in Wellington, 5-8 May 1920," *Turnbull Library Record* 41 (2009): 23.

⁵⁹ "Auckland City's Gift to Duke and Duchess," *NZ Herald*, 21 February 1927, 13; "Royal Visit," *Press*, 22 February 1927, 10.

⁶⁰ H. Hector Bolitho, *With the Prince in New Zealand* (Auckland: Edwin Sayes, 1920), 43; "Rotorua's Haeremai," *Auckland Star*, 18 January 1927, 10; "Native Welcome to Royalty," *Evening Post*, 28 February 1927, 10.

⁶¹ "Memorable Day," *NZ Herald*, 24 December 1934, 11; "Duke's Welcome," *Auckland Star*, 16 November 1934, 8.

⁶² Only in 1920 were there reports of a few Māori who had "partaken too freely of liquor," "Preparations at Rotorua," *Otago Daily Times*, 22 April 1920, 5.

performed at the welcome in 1901: Te Arawa, of course, as the hosts, the Mataatua tribes of the Bay of Plenty, Ngāpuhi from the far north, Whanganui tribes, Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Kahungunu from the East Coast, and a few Ngāi Tahu from the South Island. But there were significant additions: from 1920 the Taranaki *imi*, who had suffered confiscation of land after the New Zealand Wars and had stayed away in 1901, were present, including those who had acknowledged the *mana* of Te Whiti, the pacifist opponent of government, in 1881. Significantly, there were also some representatives of Waikato, the tribal group of the Māori King, on each of the occasions, even if they were described in an account of the 1920 tour as “sullen and few.”⁶⁴ Much was made of the presence of former enemies of the Crown.

There were also some differences in the arrangements. In 1927 and 1934, only selected tribal leaders were invited and transported, so that the gatherings were smaller than in the past (although, with several thousand present, not by as much as had been anticipated) and the visitors were housed at Ōhinemutu and Whakarewarewa *marae* (tribal meeting place) rather than on the racecourse. An outbreak of sickness at the racecourse camp in 1920 had been a salutary lesson.⁶⁵ Observers also noted some changes in ritual: European instruments, like fiddles and accordions, made an appearance; in 1920, the address from the *imi* was read in English; and in 1934 the tribes came together for the first time for a massed performance of a song of welcome, although performances by individual tribes were confined to those from the Rotorua and Taupō regions.⁶⁶ In 1920, consistent with the main purpose of Prince Edward’s trip, veterans of the Maori Pioneer Battalion from the Great War were inspected, and on the next visit in 1927, a major event in Rotorua was the Duke’s unveiling of a memorial to Te Arawa soldiers who had died in the war. The memorial featured Māori carving and was topped with a statue of George V. But these changes in general were small. Most observers noted that by 1934 the rituals of the one big Rotorua welcome had been firmly established.

The New Zealand government was well pleased with the formula; but whether it was quite so successful from the royals’ point of view is less clear. The only real evidence comes from the Prince of Wales’s 1920 tour. Lord Mountbatten, who accompanied him, described some of the dances at Rotorua as “purely wild, primitive outbursts,” and he described how the royal party acted out *poi* dances and *haka* on board ship after leaving the country.⁶⁷ The Prince himself wrote to Freda Dudley Ward (his mistress) about the Ōhinemutu and Whakarewarewa visits: “I had to go thro’ long & tedious Maori ceremonies at both the native villages and had to submit to being made to look the most hopeless RF [Ruddy Fool?], dolled up in mats & other things while inane Maoris danced and made weird noises at me!” The next day after the formal gathering at the racecourse came these words:

I’ve had such a terrible day of Moaries (sic) & all their comic stunts...a reception which lasted three hours, throughout the whole of which I had to wear a Moari (sic) mat over my shoulders, tho’ it didn’t (sic) make me feel a bit like a Moari! All I was thankful for was that YOU didn’t see me looking such a –

⁶³ “Duke and Duchess at Rotorua,” *Press*, 1 March 1927, 9.

⁶⁴ “Accord among the Maoris,” *NZ Herald*, 30 April 1920, 4; Guy H. Scholefield, *Visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to the Dominion of New Zealand, April-May 1920* (Wellington: W.G. Skinner, 1920), 42.

⁶⁵ IA 1, 3015, 158/214, part 1; Stafford, *The New Century in Rotorua*, 127.

⁶⁶ IA 1, 3015, 158/214, part 1.

⁶⁷ Philip Ziegler, ed., *The Diaries of Lord Louis Mountbatten: Tours with the Prince of Wales* (London: Collins, 1987), 40, 60.

fool, beloved, tho' they gave me some fine presents when all the hakas & poi dances were over!!⁶⁸

For all the interwar tours, the Rotorua gathering was intended to forestall separate Māori welcomes elsewhere. So were there any other Māori events on these tours? In 1920, although Prince Edward met councillors and Great War veterans at almost every stop in the small towns and cities of the country (and in some places like Whanganui and New Plymouth was introduced to mostly Pākehā veterans of the New Zealand Wars), there were no Māori welcomes despite several requests, including from Ngāpuhi inviting the Prince to Waitangi.⁶⁹ Māori did however appear in two localities. In Palmerston North (in the lower North Island), there was a gathering of Rangitāne and Muaupoko people beside the statue in the city square to Te Aweawe, a loyal Chief in the New Zealand Wars, under a flag presented to them when they had fought for the Crown against Titokowaru.⁷⁰ And in Petone just north of Wellington Māori took part in a historical re-enactment. The intention was that the first arrival of Māori to the country would be represented by a group of Māori rowing *waka* loaned from the Dominion Museum. They would “land, fall exhausted on the beach, recover, and disappear up the beach” to a model pā (fortified settlement) which had been constructed. Then Captain Cook would arrive. He would fire a pistol “and the Maoris show fright.” Finally, three boatloads of settlers would land to be welcomed by the Māori on the beach.⁷¹ As it happened the settlers did indeed land, but as the Prince advanced with them towards the pā, a reporter noted that “the public has become impatient of the tedium of the pageant” and they burst ranks, stopping the proceedings: “It is a great disappointment, especially to the Maori who have gathered ... to perform their *haka* and *poi* on a grand scale.”⁷²

In both 1920 and 1927, members of the Māori King's Waikato people gathered at Ngāruawāhia railway station to greet the royals who were passing by train. But on both occasions, while the train slowed and Māori performed appropriate *haka* and *waiata* at the station, the Government refused to allow the train to stop to allow a formal welcome.⁷³ An appeal from the Waikato leader Te Puea Hērangi to Governor-General Lord Bledisloe to allow a visit in 1934 also fell on deaf ears.⁷⁴ In 1927, the only other place Māori achieved a separate status was at Whanganui, where local tribes presented a tiki to the Duchess, and a mat and an address to the Duke.⁷⁵ By 1934, pressure for local gatherings became stronger. There were occasional roadside welcomes, as at the small community of Mohaka on the east coast of the North Island, when a group performed a *haka* that “was not part of the official programme.”⁷⁶ Others pushed for more official representation. Auckland Māori leaders argued that Auckland

⁶⁸ “Prince of Wales to Freda Dudley Ward,” 27 April to 2 May 1920, Alexander Turnbull Library Papers 8780-1-3.

⁶⁹ “Haeremai! Haeremai! Wanganui Welcomes the Prince,” *Wanganui Herald*, 3 May 1920, 5; “The Prince's Tour,” *NZ Herald*, 4 May 1920, 4; “A Maori Welcome,” *Evening Post*, 18 February 1920, 9.

⁷⁰ Scholefield, *Visit of His Royal Highness*, 78.

⁷¹ “Petone Pageant,” *Evening Post*, 25 March 1920, 6.

⁷² Scholefield, *Visit of His Royal Highness*, 124.

⁷³ Michael King, *Te Puea: A Biography* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 106-107; Bolitho, *With the Prince in New Zealand*, 33; “Maori meeting,” *King Country Chronicle*, 25 May 1920, 4; “The Royal Tour,” *Otago Daily Times*, 28 February 1927, 10.

⁷⁴ King, *Te Puea*, 182.

⁷⁵ “Maoris Welcome,” *Press*, 4 March 1927, 9.

⁷⁶ “Duke of Gloucester Triumphal Tour,” *Northern Advocate*, 21 December 1934, 8.

was a major centre of Māori population and they should be part of the city's welcome. While they did not oppose the Rotorua gathering, they argued it should not be the only Māori welcome: "It is like saying to all Scotsmen, 'If you are going to give a Scottish welcome to the Duke, you must all go to Dunedin.'" ⁷⁷ A month later it was announced that some Māori leaders would be seated prominently at the civic welcome in the town hall, but there were no speeches in Māori or performances. At Hawera in south Taranaki, Māori were allowed to perform a *baka* of welcome; and in Masterton north-east of Wellington, a Ngāti Kahungunu "Princess" presented the Duke with an ancient weapon, a taiaha. ⁷⁸ All these, perhaps, were allowed because they were places far from Rotorua.

The Duke also journeyed to Waitangi in the Bay of Islands, the site where the Treaty had been signed. Two years before the Governor-General Lord Bledisloe had presented the Treaty House to the nation, and the Duke visited the site in the company of Bledisloe. But while the Duke did go to the Treaty House and was presented to the daughter of one of the first white women born in New Zealand, there was no meeting with local Māori. The most extensive Māori participation came in Christchurch where there were canoe races on the Avon performed by local Ngāi Tahu as part of a riverside carnival, which included many other river craft and fireworks. ⁷⁹ The *Press* declared the Māori performance "picturesque in the extreme" and reported that their *waiata* and *baka*, for they were also allowed to conduct a formal welcome, were greeted with "tumultuous cheering." ⁸⁰ So pleased were local Māori at being given this honoured place in the city's welcome to the Duke that, after it was over, they invited the Mayor of Christchurch and the organisers of the carnival to Tuahiwi for speeches and presentations. ⁸¹ Pressures were mounting: could the "one Rotorua gathering" policy remain for long?

Tour of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, 1953-1954

The first indication that the policy might be questioned came in 1948, with the news that George VI and the Queen Elizabeth were intending to come to New Zealand on a four-and-a-half week visit in March 1949. An itinerary was drawn up that included five events to meet Māori: at Christchurch, Gisborne, Rotorua, Waitangi, and most significantly at Ngāruawāhia. We can but speculate on why the change was made. Certainly, it was partly because the King and Queen (as the Duke and Duchess of York) had previously visited New Zealand, in 1927, and had experienced a Rotorua *hui*, and partly because at that time the government was a Labour Party one, with very strong links to the Māori community, and had come to recognise tribal differences. ⁸² The Ngāruawāhia event was to include canoe races on the river, and Tainu's preparations went so far as to include scripting the address and a minute-by-minute programme. ⁸³ But when the King fell ill in November 1948, the tour was cancelled.

⁷⁷ "Maoris Left Out?," *Auckland Star*, 19 November 1934, 8.

⁷⁸ "Duke's Tour," *NZ Herald*, 4 January 1935, 10; "Gift from Maoris," *NZ Herald*, 5 January 1935, 10.

⁷⁹ "Royal Duke on Tour," *NZ Herald*, 19 January 1935, 12; "Maori Canoes on Avon," *Press*, 19 January 1935, 16.

⁸⁰ "Carnival on the Avon," *Press*, 21 January 1935, 14.

⁸¹ "Tuahiwi Maoris Entertain," *Press*, 6 February 1935 15.

⁸² "Royal tour – Final report," IA, 1, 184/2, part 1.

⁸³ MA, 28, 7, 9/31/1.

When the plan was revived for a month-long tour in May 1952, the itinerary was based on the four main centres to reduce the strain on the King, and this time one Rotorua gathering was reinstated and provincial Māori welcomes were dropped. Once more the King fell ill, and the young Princess Elizabeth set off in his place. But at the first stop, in Africa, Elizabeth learnt of her father's death. She was now Queen; and it was not until late 1953 that, with the Duke of Edinburgh, she set out to visit the Empire. The Queen and Duke were in New Zealand from 23 December 1953 to 31 January 1954.⁸⁴ The first itinerary for the tour reinstated the "one Rotorua gathering" policy. The provincial Māori receptions were dropped, even though the Queen, unlike the King, would visit those areas; and the Rotorua welcome was to be conducted by Te Arawa with only small representation from other tribes.

Why was this? It was partly that in 1949 the Labour Government had lost the election and the National Government had taken power with much less sympathy for, or understanding of, different Māori traditions or even for Māori culture. By this stage they, like most Pākehā New Zealanders, were keen to show off that New Zealand had "the best race relations in the world." This meant not displaying Māori culture, but showing rather that Māori had become "honorary whites" enjoying all the rights and privileges open to white New Zealanders. Māori and Pākehā were one people. So any evidence of unsightly Māori housing was to be hidden,⁸⁵ and, apart from the occasional "kia ora," there would be few signs of Māori language in the abundant decorations around the country. The guide book written by the Department of Internal Affairs for the royal visit included no mention of Māori arrival or settlement in the country, began with the country being "discovered" by Abel Tasman and presented James Cook as the first to land. The Treaty of Waitangi was mentioned as establishing a Crown Colony, not of guaranteeing rights for Māori, and the only mention of Māori in the history was a sentence which read: "Ensuing settlement ... was accompanied by some strife with the Maoris, but by 1870 peaceful settlement was well under way."⁸⁶ Māori culture was seen as an interesting relic of history, best forgotten, and tribal differences were ignored. It was assumed that a welcome by Te Arawa would serve for all Māori. Ministers believed that "To the average New Zealand European, a Ngati Porou *haka* is, except perhaps for vigour, the same as any other tribal *haka*," and there was a danger of Māori performances becoming "repetitious" and "tiresome."⁸⁷ This was an extraordinary claim given that, by departmental orders, every reception in the small towns throughout the country involved exactly the same Pākehā ritual: a greeting by the Mayor, the playing of the national anthem, a presentation to the Queen of a bouquet of flowers, an address of welcome, and a final three cheers.

Not surprisingly, Māori were very unhappy with these plans. As a concession it was emphasised that a few token Māori could be presented at local receptions to add "a little Maori

⁸⁴ For accounts of the whole tour, see: Jock Phillips, *Royal Summer: the Visit of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip to New Zealand 1953-54* (Wellington: Daphne Brasell Associates Press, 1993); and J. H. Richards, ed., *The Royal Visit to New Zealand of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh* (Wellington: Reed, 1954).

⁸⁵ *Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Orakei Claim* (Wellington: Government Print, 1987), 88.

⁸⁶ *New Zealand Journey: A Tour of New Zealand by Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh 1953-1954* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1953), np.

⁸⁷ IA, 1, 184/40, part 1.

flavour” as the Pākehā Minister of Māori Affairs, E. B. Corbett, put it. But the underlying idea was “to show the royal visitors the relationship existing between the two races—both forming what we call New Zealanders.”⁸⁸ There was continuing Māori unhappiness, expressed particularly in a meeting with selected Māori leaders on 16 April 1953. The biggest complaint at that meeting, raised initially by the South Island Ngāi Tahu leader, Eruera Tirikatene, was the omission of a visit to Waitangi. He led the charge once more at a meeting three weeks later. Waitangi, Tirikatene said, “was the spot where the treaty which brought unity between the Maori and Pakeha and of which the Maori people are proud.”⁸⁹ Māori anger was made worse when the Pākehā minister, Corbett, was sent to London to represent Māori at the Queen’s coronation. Eventually, the New Zealand organisers wrote to Buckingham Palace noting that the question of a visit to Waitangi “has aroused fairly strong feelings” and proposing that such a visit be included to avoid “difficulties from a racial angle.”⁹⁰ It was not a total concession. Northland Māori such as James Henare, Hone Heke Rankin, and Whina Cooper wanted a full Māori welcome with thousands of participants. The government insisted that the Waitangi visit was not an additional Māori function but a visit to “an historic New Zealand place in which both Europeans and Maori are equally interested.”⁹¹

The result was a day with an odd and rather uncomfortable mix of Pākehā and Māori ritual. Before a crowd of some 5000, equally divided between Māori and Pākehā, the Queen stepped from her car onto a kiwi feather cloak (which some Māori suggested was a violation of tradition). She was greeted by the Pākehā Corbett and passed through a pathway of Māori women. Pākehā ritual took over once again as she was escorted by a naval officer for the inspection of the royal guard, the band played the national anthem and a warship fired a royal salute. Then Māori reasserted themselves, and a warrior challenged the Queen, and there were *poi* dances and action songs. There were two speeches of welcome: one by the local Pākehā Member of Parliament, and one by Hone Heke Rankin of Ngāpuhi, in which he departed from his authorised script to make a plea that he accompany the royal visitors to the Māori King’s *marae* at Tūrangawaewae. The day ended with afternoon tea in the Treaty House.⁹²

The Rotorua gathering also attracted some controversy. Originally it was to be a Te Arawa welcome with only 200 from other *imi* invited, and it was to be a brief morning affair on 2 January 1954. There was pressure for more time and for fuller representation from other tribes. Eventually, the event was switched to the afternoon, and invitations to other *imi* became more generous, although the performances were confined to tribes nearby: Te Arawa, Tūwharetoa, Mataatua, and Ngāti Porou.⁹³ Te Arawa organised beds on fourteen *marae* that provided accommodation for 3500 visitors. There were also complaints that a Pākehā, Corbett, would present the address to the Queen from Māori.⁹⁴ The Labour Party paper, *The Standard*,

⁸⁸ MA, 28, 9, 11, 31/4/2; IA 1, 184/40, part 1.

⁸⁹ IA, 1, 184/40, part 1.

⁹⁰ “A. G. Harper to Michael Adeane,” 4 May 1953, IA, 1, 184/108.

⁹¹ “Prime Minister to H. H. Rankin,” 14 October 1953, IA, 1, 184/108.

⁹² “Historic Scene at Waitangi,” *NZ Herald*, 29 December 1953, 6; “Maoris meet their Queen on Historic Soil,” *Dominion*, 29 December 1953, 6.

⁹³ MA, 28, 7, 9, 31/1.

⁹⁴ “Maoris and Royal Visit,” *Auckland Star*, 9 October 1953, 2.

was scornful of “that same peroxide Maori who took upon himself the task of representing the Maoris at the Coronation,” but on this occasion the government held firm, drawing on the precedent of the earlier Rotorua gatherings.⁹⁵ In the end, over 30,000 predominantly Māori came out to the racecourse to welcome the Queen and Duke, with over 2000 performers representing all the country’s major *haka*. For the first time ever a woman, the Queen, was allowed to speak on a Te Arawa *marae*. The *haka* and *waiata* were well received, and even Corbett’s speech went without a whimper of complaint. The Queen was visibly moved and tour officials were delighted.

There was one other major issue involving Māori, and once more it had deep precedents. As we have seen, in the draft itinerary for the 1949 tour a visit to the Māori King’s *marae* at Tūrangawaewae had been planned. But when the itinerary for the 1953 tour was released, Tūrangawaewae was missing. The Kīngitanga (or members of the Māori King movement) were furious. Pei Te Hurinui Jones, Secretary of the Tainui Trust Board, issued a formal invitation but the Prime Minister turned it down. The addition of a Waitangi visit created a precedent and more protests flooded in. The government suggested that Rotorua was to be the only Māori reception and King Koroki was invited to attend. But Tainui suggested that for the Queen to drive past the gateway to Tūrangawaewae without stopping was a huge slight. For the King having been so ignored then to “stand on the *marae* of their erstwhile opponents” Te Arawa, was, said Jones, “tantamount to what is called in the vernacular of today ‘crawling.’”⁹⁶ Despite continuing protests from Māori and Pākehā leaders (especially from churches), the government continued to resist, and instead invited the King to Waitangi. Pressure of a different sort also occurred. On Christmas Eve, and only 40 hours after the Queen’s arrival in the country, the Wellington-Auckland rail express plunged into the Whangāehu River at Tangiwai in the central North Island. A lahar from Mount Ruapehu had swept away most of the rail bridge and 151 people died. The nation mourned, but Māori drew their own conclusions. The name “Tangiwai” was suggestive, the reverse of “Waitangi”—weeping waters. The gods were expressing their displeasure at the royal presence, and in territory that owed allegiance to the Māori King. Tainui meanwhile practised *waiata*, printed a programme, and inserted a formal invitation to Tūrangawaewae into the Queen’s morocco-bound programme for the Waitangi ceremony.

It is not entirely clear when an agreement was reached. Certainly, Hone Heke Rankin’s appeal at Waitangi did not help. Some have suggested that the Queen herself made the call, as Tainui came to believe, but this is not proven. A final commitment does not appear to have been made until 8.00am on 30 December. Later that day, with the Duke of Edinburgh at the wheel, the royal car reached Ngāruawāhia and turned into Tūrangawaewae *marae*, passing under a welcoming banner “Haere Mai” (welcome). The Queen and Duke walked by a wall of black-robed women, garlands of fern in their hair, who performed a traditional welcome. A carved stick was thrown down as a challenge and picked up by Rankin, of Waitangi fame. The party advanced and were led into the legendary meeting house, Mahinarangi. As they left and crossed the bridge, two *waka* appeared on the river with the paddlers dipping their paddles in

⁹⁵ “A Peroxide Maori,” *The Standard*, 14 October 1953, 6. Peroxide is a bleaching agent which makes brown hair blonde.

⁹⁶ “Pei Te H. Jones to Corbett,” 14 November 1953, IA, 1, 184/40, part 1.

unison. The well-known journalist of Māori affairs Eric Ramsden wrote, “Never before have I seen Maori people so delirious with joy.”⁹⁷ The government had planned a stop for three minutes that would not proceed beyond the point where the Queen got out of the car. In the end, the visit lasted seventeen minutes.

So the 1953-1954 tour established important precedents. The Kīngitanga had at last formally received royal recognition—which at this point satisfied them—and there had been for the first time Māori participation at Waitangi. But in future they would demand more, and although the Rotorua gathering had been a success, it was not at all clear that it could be repeated.

Royal Visits since 1954

In the years since 1954 there have been many royal visits. The ease of air travel and the desire to keep alive the connection with royalty encouraged fairly frequent tours. The Queen herself visited the country another nine times, and her children and grandchildren also made royalty a regular part of New Zealanders’ experience. The later visits resolved some issues. Never again would Rotorua host a major gathering as had occurred on every tour since 1901. There was little point in repeating the experience for the Queen and Duke, and other tribes were no longer happy for Te Arawa to represent all of Māoridom. Instead, Waitangi took on a new importance. Lord Bledisloe, the Governor-General, in 1932, had bought the grounds and house where the Treaty was signed and presented it to the nation, and from 1934 ceremonies were held there on 6 February, the anniversary of the signing. Stimulated by the Queen’s visit in 1953, the annual ceremonies expanded through the 1950s, and in 1960 Waitangi Day was officially declared for 6 February (although not as a public holiday). In 1963, Northland province, in which Waitangi sat, made it their provincial day (with a holiday) and in 1974, 6 February did become a public holiday. The next year, a Waitangi Tribunal was established to hear claims by Māori against the government and in 1985 the tribunal’s jurisdiction was backdated to 1840. What drove these developments was an increase in the Māori population, and a large migration of Māori into the cities where they not only gained improved skills and education, but also confronted discrimination and racist attitudes. From the late 1950s, an activist Māori movement emerged and it became more focused on public protest from the late 1960s.

In this environment, the demand that the Queen honour Māori by honouring the Treaty of Waitangi with a visit to Waitangi became louder. Waitangi was a place that, unlike Rotorua, all Māori could identify with. The response was quick. In 1963, the Queen and Duke returned to New Zealand; but this time the *Britannia* sailed into the Bay of Islands and the next day, 6 February, the Queen landed at Waitangi for the commemorations. A large camp had been set up at Te Tūi Waitangi *marae* close to the Treaty House, and over 4,000 bedded down. By the time the Queen and Duke landed, the crowd was 20,000, of whom some 5,000 were Māori. As in 1953 this was not wholly a Māori event. The Queen was greeted by the Prime Minister and visited the Treaty House where James Busby, the British Resident in the 1830s,

⁹⁷ Eric Ramsden, “King Koroki,” *Freedom*, 3 February 1954, 3; John Hardingham, *The Queen in New Zealand* (Wellington: Reed, 1954), 114-116.

had lived. Then, Māori leaders from all *hāhi* around the country, including from the Māori King's family, were presented to her; and that evening there was a challenge, speeches, action songs, and *haka*. Two speeches were notable. In welcoming the Queen, Sir Turi Carroll, President of the Māori Council, reaffirmed the Treaty and Māori loyalty to the Crown, and asked that the Treaty be embodied in the country's statutes and that 6 February, Waitangi Day, become a national holiday.⁹⁸ The other speech of note came from the Queen, who pledged to stand by the Treaty, and opened with the words, "Tena koutou katoa, Arohanui, ki a nui koutou" (Greetings and love to you all), the first time the Māori language had been used by a monarch.⁹⁹

Twenty-seven years later, on 6 February 1990, the Queen returned to Waitangi. It was the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty, which by now had become a central element of New Zealand life. Once again there were many thousands in attendance. Twenty newly-carved *waka* from all the main *hāhi* of the country were present to greet the Queen, along with a fleet of tall sailing ships. There was a dramatic re-enactment of the signing of the Treaty, and there was dancing, music, and drama from the country's multicultural communities. This was not simply a Māori event. But Māori were present in large numbers, and they made their feelings known. There were banners, "Honour the Treaty!" and when the Queen landed, a protestor threw a black t-shirt at her. The most remembered speech was one by Whakahuihui Vercoe, Anglican Bishop of Aotearoa, who said:

We have not honoured each other in the promises we made on this sacred ground. Since 1840 the partner that has been marginalised is me—the language of this land is yours, the custom is yours, the media by which we tell the world who we are—are yours.¹⁰⁰

The Queen in turn conceded that the Treaty had been "imperfectly observed." Such open acknowledgement was a long way from the hidden messages contained in the Māori *haka* at the welcome for the Duke of Cornwall and York in 1901.

There was one final lesson to be learnt from royal visits about how much had changed since 1954. It concerned the relations with Tainui and the Māori King. After the visit in 1953 to Tūrangawaewae the main grievance had been lanced. But bitterness about the confiscation of their lands remained among the Kīngitanga. In 1995 they agreed, at last, to a settlement. In addition to financial compensation for their loss of land, the Kīngitanga asked for a formal apology from the Queen. The Prime Minister, James Bolger, suggested, "Such an apology would be constitutionally unique. Her Majesty is not in the habit of apologising for the misdeeds of those who acted in the Crown's name." In 1995 a bill containing such an apology passed through the House, and the Queen, who was visiting New Zealand for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, signed the legislation herself.¹⁰¹ It was a

⁹⁸ The best description of the event is "Queen Elizabeth Visits Waitangi," *Te Ao Hou* 42 (March 1963): 23-30.

⁹⁹ The Queen's words can be heard at:

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/201831626/the-queen's-1963-visit-to-waitangi>.

¹⁰⁰ "We have not Honoured Each Others' Promises," *NZ Herald*, 7 February 1990, 9.

¹⁰¹ "Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee: Māori and the Queen," *New Zealand History*, accessed 29 January 2018, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/queen-elizabeth-jubilee/maori-and-the-queen>.

unique and moving moment. Not that the dignity of Tainui was permanently assuaged. When the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were due to visit Tūrangawaewae in 2014, the event was cancelled when the Kīngitanga found that the visit was to last for only 90 minutes. This was not “some carnival act to be rolled out at the beck and call of anyone” a spokesman said. But feelings were assuaged the following year when the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall did visit Tūrangawaewae to be greeted by a *powhiri* (a formal ritual of welcome) and saluted by paddlers in a fleet of *waka*. The Prince and Duchess wore cloaks that had been presented to the Queen at Rotorua in 1953, and the Prince congratulated Tainui on “putting aside the hurts of the past.”¹⁰²

Conclusion

In the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, Māori continued to play a significant role in royal visits to New Zealand. Māori welcomes were still loved by the press entourage. But it had taken almost one and a half centuries of experiment and social change from the first royal visit in 1869 to reconcile the aims of the New Zealand government and Pākehā organisers with the aspirations of Māori. For a long time, Pākehā had desired to show off the country’s race relations to royalty, and present Māori as an exotic element of “beautiful New Zealand”; and they had not wanted to overburden the visitors with too many Māori functions conducted in a language that the royals could not understand. Māori, for their part, wished to pay respects to the descendants of Queen Victoria, the other partner to the Treaty of Waitangi, and they hoped to use the royal visit to communicate their desire for the country’s rulers to respect the principles of the Treaty. For half a century and five royal visits, from the 1901 tour of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York to the first visit by a reigning monarch in 1953, these competing aims were largely satisfied by one large Māori gathering at Rotorua. But members of the Māori King movement were never happy with this solution. They wished to meet royalty on their own land. Increasingly, other tribes came to share this perspective and to resent the monopoly that Te Arawa appeared to have with Rotorua welcomes. Instead, the major site for a large Māori gathering was shifted to Waitangi, the place where the Treaty had been signed, and thus a place of significance to all Māori. This visit first occurred in 1963, and was repeated on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty in February 1990. In addition, royalty were welcomed to other tribal areas most notably, from 1953 onwards, to the Māori King’s home at Ngāruawāhia.

Of course, by the early 2000s, royal tours to New Zealand were not quite the huge public phenomena that they had been fifty years before. In the 1953-1954 tour, officials claimed that two-thirds of the population came out to wave their flags in honour of Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.¹⁰³ Now, royal visitors usually came for a short time for particular purposes, and they were not greeted by lines of cheering crowds. So the royal tour became less important for both Māori and government to communicate political messages.

¹⁰² “Prince Charles and Camilla visit Maori tribe in New Zealand,” *The Telegraph*, 8 November 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/newzealand/11982555/Prince-Charles-and-Camilla-visit-Maori-tribe-in-New-Zealand.html>.

¹⁰³ “Two out of Three in N.Z. have seen Queen,” *Christchurch Star-Sun*, 29 January 1954, 1.

Māori had other avenues to express their commitment to the Treaty, and their frustrations at government: there was a Waitangi Tribunal to hear claims, and by 2014, following the introduction of MMP (Mixed Member Proportional representation) in 1996, there were 22 Māori of 121 representatives in the New Zealand Parliament (which included seven in Māori seats). Battles over the identity of the country and Māori rights, which had been so important in previous royal tours, could be freely conducted in other forums. Since the first in 1869, royal visits had played a significant role in articulating the different aims of government and Māori. The historical importance of the debates around royal tours cannot be lightly ignored.



Figure 1: Edward, Prince of Wales, is greeted by Māori women at Ōhinemutu in Rotorua in April 1920. The man accompanying the prince is Maui Pomare, a prominent member of the “Young Maori Party” who had become by that time a government minister. Archives New Zealand, Ref IA31 Box 1/1.