

closing the Tuakau Hotel but commented that they had “no fault to find with the present licensee”. Throughout the 1880s, the hotel continued to be an important meeting place for local farmers and milk suppliers, who met in 1887 to discuss the establishment of a creamery. In 1892, a meeting is recorded of “our young men in the Tuakau Family hotel, kindly lent by Mr George Brown for the purpose of appointing a committee to superintend the management of a crew to take part in one of the big canoe races at the Mercer sports...” Over the years, the hotel saw some rough times and by 1894 received a much-needed repaint and papering.

Bruce Graham, current president of the Tuakau Museum committee has lived in Tuakau for 70 years and has known all the publicans during that time.

“Times have changed so much,” he recalls. “Over the 1950s-60s, there was 6 o’clock closing – the 6 o’clock swill they called it. It was the same all over New Zealand. At that time Tuakau Transport had 25 trucks and they used to cart all the beer in crates of big bottles from Auckland – Dominion Bitter, Lion Red and Brown. There were no cans, no little stubby bottles. It was a big occasion when the beer arrived and was unloaded on a hand trolley six or seven crates high. Lots of people got drunk, but it was great for the Boy Scouts. We could get one shilling for a crate and one penny for each bottle, 3d for big lemonade and ginger ale bottles for our bottle drives. The train would leave an empty wagon at the station on Friday and take it away on Monday full of empties.

“There was no beer garden in the hotel, just a public and a carpeted private bar where beer was bought by the jug. It was crowded and noisy, there was a thick haze because most people smoked, and the floor was sloshing with beer. There were always fights outside after 6. The private bar was almost aristocratic compared to the public bar. Business people would meet after late trading on Friday night, dressed in their three piece suits and sipping whiskies.”

The upstairs accommodation at the hotel was in regular demand from travelling salesmen who arrived by train and by

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Pictures

1. Opening celebration for the first Tuakau Bridge in 1900. Luncheon was provided at the hotel before the procession to the bridge site. At the right of the photo are members of the “Maori band” who provided music for the celebration.
2. Tuakau bar staff dressed for the part, outside the Private Bar about 25 years ago: Ike Williams, Harry Hopkins, Bill Gascomb, Bob Grey, Reg Chapman, Sol Thorn
3. This photo, taken about 1908, shows Green and Colebrook’s grocery store opposite the hotel. The railway station was at the end of the street where the level crossing is now while Enright’s boarding house and bakery were situated behind the hotel.
4. Best Beard contest 1965 for Tuakau District Centennial. (Back) Ken Batkin, Gary Welch, John Nicholson, Ray Hewitt, Peter Walter, Bob Welch, Ray Russell, Paul Murray, Bert Neil. (Middle) Frank Hewitt, Peter Morrison, Bernie Frame, Doug Monteith, David Orr, Ron Jones. (Front) Dennis Welch, Max Burling-Claridge, Terry Lipscombe, Lin Jones, Ben Middleton.

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