

The 1869 New Year races, postponed by rains, were held on February 15. (Possibly there was a similar reason for having held the anniversary races for the opening of the Thames goldfield, on August 1 1867, on August 15 1868.) This time the Thames Advertiser did not take bands for granted, having the novelty of "a band of Christie Minstrels," (Or their local blackface equivalent.) The venue was at the Pleasure Gardens of Thomas Spencer, around where the Racecourse is now.

But 1869 was the year of Grahamstown away to the north. And it was at that end that the first parades of Volunteers were held, as in "Thames 1867-1917."

There had been a further Hauhau scare ^{with Te Kooti} late in 1868, and subsequent organising resulted during March, 1869, of the first parade of the Thames Rifle Rangers at Tararu Point, around where the aged homes are now, by shooting Butts already in position, led by Major I.R. Cooper and Lieutenant Jackson. Shortly afterwards a general parade of Volunteers set out from the small Hospital. There were 27 Rifle Rangers with Captain Skinner and Lieut. Jackson, 30 Engineers with Captain Gwyneth, 63 in No. 1 Company with Captain Power, and 46 in No.2 Company with Major Keddell. Volunteer formations would supply Thames with bands for many years.

"Thames 1867-1917" noted that on March 31, 1869, the Theatre Royal and Hotel opened, to seat 950, Mrs. Robert Heir appearing in "Much Ado About Nothing." (She was a lady friend of the Prince of Wales.) There would be an orchestra.

On May 18, 1869, the Rev. Lush mentioned races, but rain in torrents forced cancellation till May 21, when around 5,000 attended at Tararu - very bandworthy.

~~June 10 (1936 source)~~
On October 8, 1869, the Naval Volunteers ("Thames Navals" were formed, and on November 23 the Rev. Lush recorded them on duty around James Mackay's house against rioting Fenians. Band went from scratch to fifes and drums to finally brass.

When American Charles Curtis set up his big Pacific Hotel in Grahamstown, with an adjoining Academy of Music, the latter had an outside balcony for bands.

The New Year of 1870 had a football match instead of a race meeting. (Whether that rated a band is not known.)

The Volunteer Hall was used for such performances as those of the Hauraki Choral Society. On January 27, 1870, the Rev. Lush recorded one with "about 60 singers and some dozen instrumentalists."

On May 2, 1870, the Rev. Lush, writing about a farewell concert to his Anglican organist and choirmaster for the last 18 months, Oughton, said, "The VOLUNTEER BAND gave their services and played extremely well." The Thames Advertiser referred on July 6 to No. 2 Company as of the "Hauraki Rifle Volunteers."

Thames at that time was one of the principal towns of New Zealand, and the Thames Advertiser told of a series of concerts by the world famed Madame and Mises Carandini for 6 nights from Saturday August 6. They were "singing to the piano," and "playing the piano etc.," suggesting other instruments.

On October 6, 1870, the Thames Advertiser recorded the new band of fifes and drums of the Naval Volunteers, to parade with at the Volunteer Hall.

November 16 Thames Advertiser referred to the formation of an Artillery Corps, and on November 30 to a Thames Rifle Association.

The 1870 Christmas sports took the form of Caledonian Games (no doubt with bagpipes, and likely band music.)

1871 New Year celebrations took the form of a Regatta at Shortland, described by both the Thames Advertiser and the Rev. Lush, without mentioning band music, but that was usually taken for granted for such occasions, with Volunteers around.

On January 3, 1871, the Rev. Lush recorded a Sunday School picnic with 200 at Parawai, or more. And visitors and children had both increased from the previous year. In later years the Sunday School "demonstrations" would bring out hundreds, over a thousand and more, with processions and band music.

On March 3, 1871, the Rev. Lush noted that "the returns from the Caledonian mine are still very wonderful." That was only the beginning.