

1936.

34e. Bands.

This year the military camps throughout New Zealand were in January.

On March 3 there was mention of thinking about the New Zealand centenary in 1940. (Good news for Bands).

(The new Labour Government was beginning to take hold, and relax purse strings, including for defence.)

March 6, 1936. The new Prime Minister, Michael Joseph Savage, was quoted as saying there would now be "commonsense" expenditure on Defence.

(During the Depression, as Hugh Crawford, the last Director of the Thames School of Mines (1923-54) told me, he was in charge of 16 overseers and 400 men on subsidised mining schemes for the unemployed over the Coromandel Peninsula.)

March 11, 1936. The Hon. P. Webb said mining make work schemes were "criminal and cruel." A living wage was wanted.

April 23, 1936. The R.S.A. was organising Anzac Day parade for the 25th, in charge of the Parade to be Major T. McCarroll. Said Parade "will include also the Hauraki Regimental Band, Volunteers, Cadets, United Services and other units. It was felt there was a major restoration.

April 27, 1936, re 25th. "The Parade was headed by the 6th Hauraki Regimental Band."

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1937.

According to the Thames Star of April 6, 1950, "But generally, during this post-war period, there was little activity in the Thames band world. Membership decreased and band instruments became worn. It was apparent in 1937 that an active programme of rehabilitation was necessary to save the band from an ignoble end."

April 6, 1937. There was a Coronation arch at Thames, for King George VI and Queen Consort Elizabeth. (Now the Queen Mother, in 1990). Thames celebrations went on for five days, with Band music in demand.

November 30, 1937. The Band held an Annual Meeting, as mentioned at the next Annual Meeting, which was not till 24th January, 1939, after which date Minute Books become available. It would appear that the Band, still the Hauraki Regimental Band, was successful in arranging a Contest to be held at Thames.

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1938.

According to the Thames Star of April 6, 1950. "Due to the efforts of Mr. C. Lidington, who was appointed bandmaster, its fate was postponed until 1941, when it made a more ceremonious exit by recapturing some of its old glory during service in a second world war."

The same source, re what happened in 1941, said, "The Hauraki Regimental Band joined the "old contemptibles" in 1941, when, at a citizens' meeting called by the Borough, the name was officially changed to the Thames Citizens' Band. At a meeting, Mr. A. Sutcliffe was elected bandmaster. The band from that time kept abreast of the progress of the post-war period," (Next 2 paras, same source.)

To return to 1938. "A judge's eloquent comments on the band's poor instruments during a South Auckland Brass Band contest, held in Thames, decided Mr. Lidington's course of action. Money would have to be raised to buy new ones."

"The Thames branch of the R.S.A. and the 6th Hauraki Regimental Band launched a combined queen carnival in June, 1938, raising over £1200. The public was eager and in the interest of the town - so it is alleged - prominent Thames businessmen forsook dignity and swelled the funds by competing in a special 'demon' race. With the money the new instruments were purchased and vested in the trusteeship of the town."

Things improved in Thames during 1938, as shown by perusal of Thames Star files, which also had more about the Band.