

In the next couple of days the Band would be called upon for a much bigger event, the real end of the War with the surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945.

My own notes made at the time are used here. (It may also be mentioned that in the Pacific, including among the Maoris of New Zealand, rain is regarded as an auspicious sign.)

August 15. There was heavy rain in the morning.

In the afternoon, all was in tumult, with flags along the shore. An old fire-bell by the Foundry was refitted with pull wire by boys and a ladder.

In the street there was an impromptu Procession in rough fancy costumes, more moving than any set demonstration, and linked in a succession of arm rows.

August 16. In the afternoon there was little doing - people waiting for something to happen as soon as official initiative.

There were free moving pictures for children, but they were not able to get the films they would have liked, as everything was shut in Auckland.

In the evening of August 16 there took place: "Procession of four countries; England (John Bull), U.S.A. (Uncle Sam), Russia (Peter the Greatish individual) and China (Chinese residents in ordinary clothes and women in colourful Chinese dresses.) Some more multi-mixed lorries of nondescript significances. A spear-pierced hanging Tojo and big cannon, one with a water squirt. Procession given mass and real spectaculariness by 700 to 1,000 torch bearers - dry flax sticks."

Happy idea of going to the Hospital and stopping, while the BAND played selections.

Then to bonfire - like a high tree - manuka brush and good lasting logs - some one knew his business - fine show of hundreds of flaming spears of torches and paper streamers flung into the bonfire. Fireworks spoiled by dribs and drabs of penny packets of rockets here and there.

About 5,000 people. Home just in time for bed.

As regards the weather for the official celebrations on the evening of August 16, this was fine, with a bright moon in a serene sky. That meant little wind, which was fortunate for a private bonfire, as it was found to be close to a shed for storing gelignite explosives, but fortunately what wind there was was blowing away from it. The private bonfire was in a commanding position on the prow of one of the great heaps of mine debris which were later levelled to make the Moana Fairi Flat.

Near the official bonfire, the Volunteer Fire Brigade put on one of their time honoured acts of burning down a mock house. A fire of flax sticks was set under it, with a bottle of kerosene to get it going, and soon there was a fierce fire and it burned down completely.

(As referred to several times in these pages, there was long standing co-operation between the Band and the Volunteer Fire Brigade, whose spectacles were much enhanced by having music. Both "The Darktown Fire Brigade" and burning a house (with heroic saves etc.), usually the burning of a house as part of the Darktown, were much enjoyed, however much repeated over the years, with the same time hallowed jokes by Mr. Bones and his stooges. "And the Band played on.")

The Band Minutes would continue as if nothing had happened.