

A Short History of Lochmara (Marlborough Sounds)

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'To know a place fully means both to understand it in an abstract way and to know it as one person knows another'. [Yi-Fu Tuan, Topophilia: a study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1974].

Although it still has farms and forestry, New Zealand's Marlborough Sounds are best known now for their waterways and bush-clad hills, dotted with water craft and holiday accommodation. A century ago, the Sounds were better known for their sheep farms, when more than a quarter of the land area of the region (which totals 1400 km² including D'Urville Island) was sown to English grasses carrying more than 200,000 head of sheep¹.

The history of one bay, Lochmara, and its neighbourhood offers some insights into the development of the Sounds. It may also hold pointers to the future of the Sounds.

Lochmara Bay is one of the many drowned river valleys that make up the Marlborough Sounds. It takes its name from that of the pastoral run established by C W A T Kenny (who was to become a Commissioner of Crown Lands and, later, a long-serving politician) when he took out a depasturage license in 1857² over all the land in Queen Charlotte Sound between Torea and Onahau Bays and in Kenepuru Sound between Te Mahia and Portage [Figure 1]. The name appears to reflect the

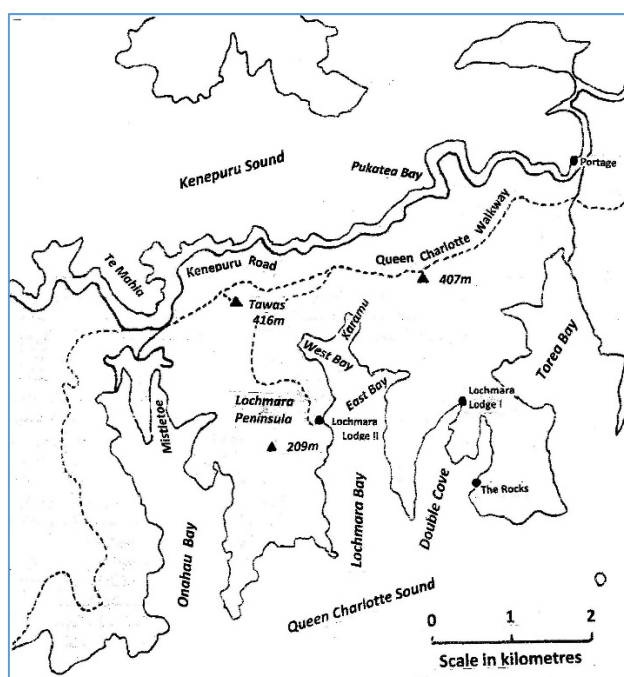


Figure 1: Lochmara Bay and its neighbourhood

Base: Department of Conservation Marlborough Sounds Parkmap 1:100,000 336-07 edition 4 2006

Formed tracks are shown by broken lines; roads by unbroken lines

¹ 'The Marlborough Sounds', *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1901*, p 517 et seq. Online at https://www3.stats.govt.nz/New_Zealand_Official_Yearbooks/1901/NZOYB_1901.html

² Kenny had become a leaseholder according to the Marlborough electoral roll of 14 July 1857

Scottish and probably Irish connections of the Indian-born Kenny (1835-1905)³ and of his Scottish-born wife and cousin Georgina Kenny (1835-1899).

This short history arose out of a long-standing query about the origins of the name 'Lochmara'. I've been visiting Lochmara Bay since 1949, and during 1961/62 I carried out extensive fieldwork in the Sounds in the course of preparing a master's thesis in Geography⁴. Since observing at first hand the effective end of regular grazing around Lochmara during that time I have continued to visit the place and to wonder about the origins of the name.

While looking into these origins in 2015 I took the opportunity to look at other information now available on the place and to reflect on this information and on my observations over seventy years. I thought it useful to summarise in this short history what I have learned, in part as a way of thanking Megan Ross and Melanie Newman of the Archives of the Marlborough Museum in Blenheim for their help in this project during 2015.

I should add that, while I have sought to be rigorous with the material at my disposal, I cannot pretend that my story is necessarily complete or completely accurate. In particular, it does not draw on the current or archival records of Land Information New Zealand (formerly Department of Lands & Survey) and it relies to an extent on memories that may not mesh with the memories of others. Where possible I have checked my memories and this is reflected in the many footnotes.

Pastoral development

Until the 1860s Lochmara Bay was known officially⁵ as 'Pehautangia' and this Maori name was noted on the Department of Lands & Survey map index to crown grants in the Linkwater Survey District (in which Double Cove is shown as Double Cove Bay). That name translates (aptly when there are nor-westerly gales) as a 'place of roaring winds'⁶. Although the bay did not have the significance to the Maori of either Onahau or Torea (both of which led to canoe portages between Queen Charlotte and Kenepuru Sounds), there is evidence of dwelling pits both on Hautehoro Point at the western entrance to Lochmara Bay and on a saddle north of West Bay, perhaps used as look-outs.

Kenny's 'Lochmara' run was of about 2000 hectares but, after he resigned his captaincy in the British Army (1860⁷), he disposed of some of his run and converted around 1766 hectares to more secure leasehold and freehold tenures [Figure 2]. This was a process said by Buick⁸ to have 'ruined' most other Marlborough run-holders and it may explain why Kenny's 1868 mortgage of 1236 ha of his run to the NZ Trust and Loan Company Ltd [Figure 3], was later foreclosed⁹.

³ All birth and death years cited in this short history are confirmed in New Zealand death registrations at <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/>

⁴ I J S Bowie, *Land Utilisation in the Marlborough Sounds*, unpublished M A thesis, University of Canterbury, 1963 [copies are held by Marlborough Museum and the Library of the University of Canterbury; accessible online at <https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/15727>]

⁵ In electoral rolls from 1857 which are accessible online at www.ancestry.com and in a land sale notice in *The Colonist*, 16 July 1858

⁶ David Bowie, personal communication 2015.

⁷ *Belfast News-letter*, 1 January 1861 (and elsewhere)

⁸ T Lindsay Buick, *Old Marlborough*, Hart & Keeling, Palmerston North, 1900, p 447. Accessible online at <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=SAIKAwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22t+lindsay+buick%22&hl=en&sa=X&output=reader&pg=GBS.PA477>

⁹ Under deed 4053: Melanie Newman, personal communication 2015

The 'Lochmara' run was the first significant area on the northern side of Queen Charlotte Sound to be taken up for grazing. It was close to Picton and, while it had little flat land except at bay-heads such as at Mistletoe and West Bay where there may have been some millable podocarp trees, though none are noted on the 1880 block sheets of the Department of Lands & Survey, its hills were not particularly high¹⁰ and much of their native vegetation (other than the beech forests of the Lochmara Peninsula and on the slopes of the higher hills) was amenable to being cut down and burnt in windrows.

Although electoral rolls and annual sheep returns for 1879-1930¹¹ provide a framework for a history nothing specific is known about the first two decades of Kenny's run. However, the 1880 block sheets show bush-clearing lines that suggest that he had cleared nearly half of his land by then, on the Lochmara Peninsula, in Torea and around Double Cove, and in a swathe running from West Bay to Pukatea Bay in Kenepuru Sound [Figure 4].



Figure 2 Crown grants to C W A T Kenny

Extract from Department of Lands & Survey, Crown Grant Index map of Linkwater Survey District, courtesy of the Marlborough Museum [embedded image]

Note: The black lines mark the western and eastern limits of Kenny's holdings

¹⁰ Along the ridge between Lochmara Bay and Kenepuru Sound, the westerly summit reaches 416 metres and is referred to here as 'Tawas' for it was known thus to the Marchant family in the 1950s (though it has also been called 'Te Mahia' and 'Onahau Lookout', and was known to 1940s guests at Te Mahia as 'Snifter'); the more easterly summit reaches 407 metres and is sometimes called 'Lochmara'; the peninsula between Lochmara and Onahau Bays rises to only 260 metres and is referred to as the 'Lochmara Peninsula' in early newspaper reports. Indications of the pre-existing native vegetation of Lochmara Bay and its neighbours are annotated on the Department of Lands & Survey 'Block Sheets' for Linkwater of 1880.

¹¹ Annual sheep returns are to be found in *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, accessible online at [www.http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/atojs](http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/atojs)

It appears (from the several electoral rolls of the 1860s) that Kenny initially free-held his sections at the head of respectively West Bay and East Bay (then in Pehautangia). It is not known where he established his first homestead buildings and yards but it seems likely that this was in West Bay (where there was a house, orchard, woolshed and yards until a century later¹²). Although it does appear that had Kenny had established his home at 'The Rocks' (in the eastern arm of Double Cove) by 1871¹³ it is unlikely he had yards there.

In 1879, the annual sheep returns [Figure 5] show Kenny to have been running around 1000 sheep in Torea and around Double Cove while his manager, Robert Davidson, was running another 1000 from Lochmara, the total representing about 3½ sheep per cleared hectare. Only after 1883, when Kenny disposed of his land in Kenepuru Sound and on the Lochmara Peninsula to members of the Gullery family, did sheep numbers start to rise in the neighbourhood.



Figure 3: Kenny's 'Lochmara' run in 1868

Extract from deed 2267, mortgage by C W A T Kenny to the NZ Trust and Loan Company, courtesy of the Marlborough Museum [embedded image]

From 1883, Kenny ran a smaller sheep farm from 'The Rocks' until his death, with leasehold in Torea and some 170 hectares of freehold around Double Cove (it is not certain whether and needs to be confirmed that Kenny had yards in the western arm of Double Cove on the site of what, much later, was to be the first 'Lochmara Lodge'¹⁴). Meanwhile, former saw-miller J J Gullery (ca 1819 -1899) ran a small flock from 'Portage'¹⁵ and his son S J Gullery (1851-1942) ran another flock from Lochmara, slowly clearing steeper land of bush.

¹² The homestead [see note 30], woolshed and yards had all gone by 1958 when the aerial photography used for Department of Lands & Survey, NZMS 3, 1:15,840, sheet S16/7 Portage photo mosaic) was run

¹³ Birth notice in *The Colonist*, 15 September 1871 (and elsewhere)

¹⁴ The first 'Lochmara Lodge' was established in Double Cove as a family-owned holiday camp before World War II and is owned currently by Lochmara Lodge Ltd ('Lodge enters sewerage system in Enviro Awards', *Marlborough Express*, 12 January 2013). The second 'Lochmara Lodge' was built on the western side of Lochmara Bay in 1997 and is operated as a commercial enterprise by Lochmara Lodge and Charter Co Ltd (www.lochmara.co.nz).

¹⁵ 'Portage' was principally an accommodation house by then. Henry D Kelley, *As High as the Hills: the Centennial History of Picton*. Cape Catley, Whatamongo, 1976, p 51, suggests that James and Mary Gullery had been accommodating guests in their farm house since before 1876

By 1890 the combined sheep numbers reported by Kenny and the Gullerys had doubled to 3930. By 1894 the combined numbers reached 6747 and they remained at over 6000 for the next four years, with Kenny's farm apparently carrying around 13 sheep per cleared hectare¹⁶ and S J Gullery's farm reaching nearly 7 sheep per cleared hectare in 1896.

It is not known what drove the surge but it seems likely that factors in play included bottlenecks locally in getting stock to a freezing works, coupled with strengthening meat and wool prices¹⁷. More importantly, with fire replacing felling¹⁸ as the main means of both clearing the last remaining beech and other forests (excepting a few pockets) and maintaining English grass pastures there, plans deposited with the Department of Lands & Survey up to 1910 show that almost the whole of the remaining bush around Lochmara had been cleared for pasture by then¹⁹.

After 1898 the combined sheep numbers dropped sharply, to 3533 in 1902 in what appear to have been cooler years than the 1890s. Although they recovered somewhat in subsequent years, they

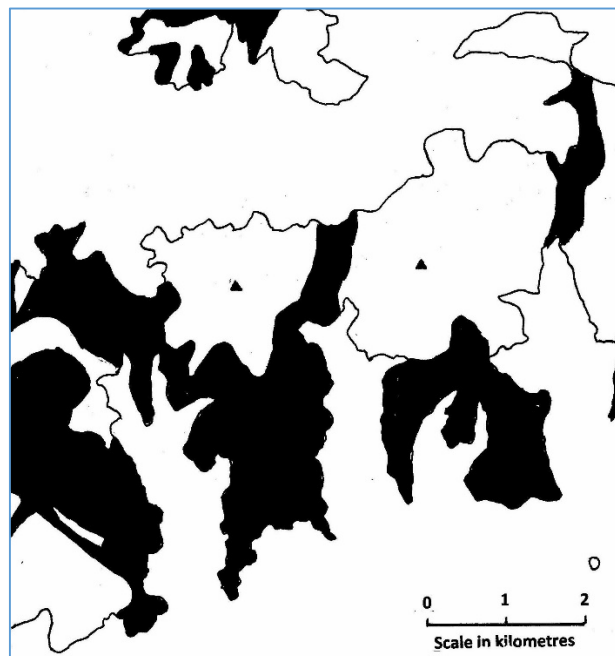


Figure 4: land cleared of bush around Lochmara Bay and its neighbourhood, 1880

¹⁶ Including cleared land along the western side of Torea

¹⁷ John Singleton, *An Economic History of New Zealand in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Economic History Association, 2005 (<https://eh.net/encyclopedia/an-economic-history-of-new-zealand-in-the-nineteenth-and-twentieth-centuries/>)

¹⁸ The *Marlborough Express*, 25 March 1881, reports Kenny as burning on his run while as late as 1892 the *Marlborough Express*, 19 July 1892 (et seq), was carrying advertisements by Gullery seeking labour to assist with timber felling

¹⁹ Deposited Plans with the Department of Lands & Survey. See I J S Bowie, *Land Utilisation in the Marlborough Sounds*, unpublished M A thesis, University of Canterbury, 1963, Figure 14, and Glen A Lauder, *Coastal Landforms and Sediments of the Marlborough Sounds*. PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1987, p 50. Accessible online at <http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/4518>

Source: Department of Lands & Survey Block Sheets for Linkwater Survey District

Note: the small triangles demark ridge summits at 416 and 407 metres above sea level.

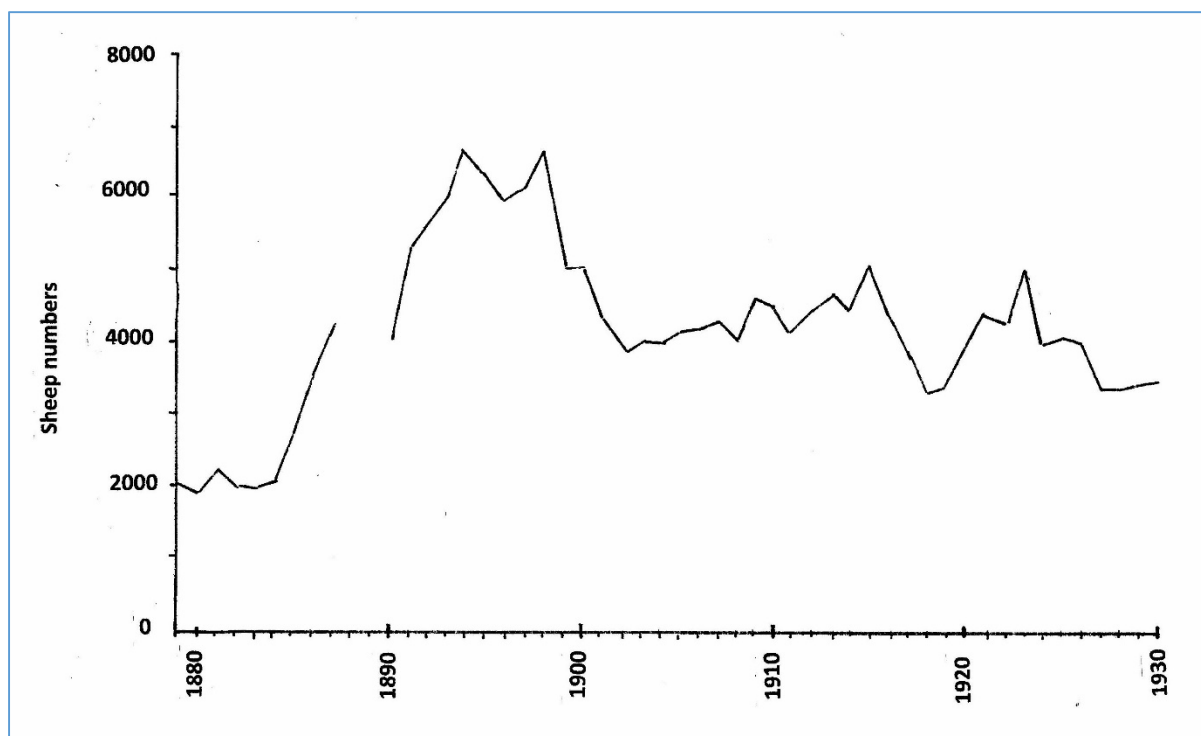


Figure 5 Combined sheep numbers around Lochmara Bay and its vicinity, 1879-1930

Source: annual sheep returns in Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives ([www.http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/atojs](http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/atojs)) [embedded image]

Note: some small flocks may have been overlooked for years during and after World War I

only once again exceeded 5000, in 1915 after which they again fell sharply. After fluctuating into the 1920s sheep numbers appear to have entered a downward trend after 1925. By 1930 there were only 3463 sheep in the combined area around Double Cove, Lochmara Bay and adjacent parts of Kenepuru Sound, about 2½ sheep per cleared hectare.

The most likely cause of the falls was a decline in carrying capacities, related to increasing use of fire for clearing and pasture management. By 1910 the Sounds more widely was 'a log-strewn landscape with blackened stumps of forest relics'²⁰. The initial effects of fire on carrying capacities have now been well studied for more than a century across New Zealand²¹. Poynder neatly summarises them in the Sounds, thus:

The farmer...had no other weapon than fire to remove the last of the bush cover from his steep slopes....[Then] grass seed was sown onto the ash-enriched leaf mould soils and for the first two or three years the grass crop would be an exceptional one until the leaching of water and sun, the close cropping of sheep and the tramping of the many hoofs started the erosion process²².

²⁰ E E Owen, *New Zealand about 1916: a Land Transformed*. Unpublished M A thesis, University of Auckland, 1956, p 133

²¹ Robert Peden, 'Fire and Agriculture'. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 2012 (<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/fire-and-agriculture>)

²² W Frank Poynder, *A Labyrinth of Waterways: the Forgotten Story of New Zealand's Marlborough Sounds*, Wenlock House, Blenheim, 1986, second edition, p 101

In effect, after the dissipation of soil nutrients released for grass growth by initial burns, pasture production and therefore carrying capacity fell. Without over-sowing and supplementary fertilisers soils reverted to their naturally low nutrient status, enabling prolifically-seeding invasive native weeds such as bracken and manuka to compete with English grasses and to spread over what had been 'clean' (ie essentially weed-free) pasture.

Maintaining carrying capacities

In pasture management, bracken is easily enough managed by periodic controlled burning but without sufficient grass growth it becomes impossible to run the stock numbers needed to trample the new shoots of other invasive, woody weeds such as manuka and, around Lochmara, tauhinu on sunnier slopes and the introduced gorse and Spanish heath elsewhere. These were less amenable to control by burning.

With repeated and often hotter burns in attempts to control woody weeds, soil structure as well as nutrient statuses broke down. With an annual average rainfall of around 1250 mm (much of it in the winter half of a year and often in intense downpours) and the thin soils disturbed by sheep and feral animals, soil erosion and siltation of waterways also followed [Figure 6].

Siltation was particularly in evidence at the head of West Bay where eventually, around 1950, it ended punt access to the woolshed jetty in the southwest corner (and, more generally, covered sea grasses and shell beds, something exacerbated by coastal erosion due to launch and ship washes and which accelerated the depletion of fish stocks from the 1950s). The scene was set for a rapid decline in sheep numbers on the Lochmara Peninsula and on the higher hills around Lochmara Bay and Double Cove [Figure 7].



Figure 6. Erosion on Kenepuru slopes, 1962.

This 200 metre slip developed one night after heavy rain on land above Puketea Bay.



Figure 7. A relic of bush clearing, Karamu Bay, 1962

High above Lochmara Bay the trunk of a burnt beech stands over scrub now dominated by manuka scrub many years after a hot burn. The ridge had recently become part of The Rocks Scenic Reserve.

Locally, other factors may have exacerbated the situation. The opening of a freezing works in Picton in 1901²³, offered a market for sheep but affected the supply of the casual labour needed for pasture maintenance and stock management activities on farms. As suggested by both census returns and electoral rolls the Lochmara farms now carried only small regular workforces, seldom more than from one family (although there were enough children to warrant an aided school at Lochmara during the 1890s and in 1921-7²⁴), probably at the head of West Bay where there were a chimney and other remains of the earlier homestead in 1950.

Also, subdivisions and changes in ownership in the area between Torea and Onahau may have influenced sheep numbers: Kenny's farm was sold by his estate in 1908 to G H Broadbridge; T J Gullery (Tom, 1886-1960) and J J B Gullery (John, 1881-1948) assumed the management of their father's Lochmara farm; and small flocks came to be run also on other sections in Onahau and Torea Bays and Kenepuru Sound that formerly had been part of the 'Lochmara' Run²⁵.

By 1910, separate flocks were being run on the Lochmara farm, by Tom Gullery from West Bay and by John Gullery on the Peninsula farm. There is evidence of former yards at the second 'Lochmara Lodge' and fabric in the restaurant building there which suggests that John had a homestead there²⁶.

²³ *Marlborough Express*, 28 December 1901

²⁴ Annual reports of the Minister of Education. Accessible online at [www. http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/atojs](http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/atojs). Locality details from censuses are accessible at http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/snapshots-of-nz/digitised-collections/census-collection.aspx details

²⁵ Eg parts of the Te Mahia run, on sale in 1910, *Marlborough Express*, 25 July 1910 *et seq.*

²⁶ Shayne Olsen, Lochmara Lodge, personal communication, 2002. Some of the timber used by John Gullery for farm buildings in Lochmara came from Picton's first Methodist chapel which was replaced by a new church in 1910. *Methodism in Marlborough 1840-1965*, Wesley Church, Blenheim, 1965, p 140.

However, around 1913, John sold his farm of 295 hectares carrying capacity of 5 sheep per hectare to W G Foster²⁷ who may have operated his farm from 'Mistletoe' in Onahau Bay.

In 1917, S J Gullery bought back the peninsula farm (now reduced to 267 hectares)²⁸ and by the late 1920s it seems that the two Lochmara properties were once again being run as a single entity, by Tom Gullery, though with sheep numbers that fell from 2121 in 1915 to 1070 in 1930.

There is no obvious explanation for this spate of subdivisions and sales and it may have owed as much to individual circumstances as to any changes in seasons or prices. It may have been an expression of a more general optimism about the future of farming but it might also have reflected opportunities to cash in on farm improvements while there was the chance. For the hey-day of farming around Lochmara was now well past.

The sheep returns and sale notices from the time suggest that farmers were now fighting a battle to maintain pasture growth. For examples the Portage farm was advertised in 1920²⁹ as carrying only 3 sheep per hectare although E C Lawrence (1895-1975) did increase this after he took over; and by 1930 Tom Gullery's farm was carrying fewer than 2 sheep per hectare.

The end of farming

Not a lot is known about farming around Lochmara in the decades of the 1930s and 1940s but by the time that E E and M M Marchant (Ted, 1911-1963, and his wife Mary, 1919-1996) took over the West Bay farm about 1950 (and built a new house there, to the south of an earlier house which is shown in a 1938 view from 'Te Mahia Hill'³⁰) theirs was effectively the only farm remaining in and around Lochmara. During these decades sheep numbers across Sounds County were in steady decline³¹ and that certainly seems to have been the case around Lochmara.

1942/43 aerial photography run during World War II shows pastures to have become widely infested with weeds, particularly on the Lochmara Peninsula and around Double Cove where a number of areas had reverted fully to scrub by then. A 1945 study shows that infestation wasn't just by bracken and manuka; Lochmara now had also a well-established infestation of the particularly aggressive woody weed, Spanish heath³² [Figure 8]

By 1950, pasture on the Lochmara Peninsula and the hills surrounding Double Cove had mostly succumbed to a cover of low woody weeds which was almost impenetrable except along tracks tracing the routes of shared ('party') telephone lines, while the stock routes that formerly linked Torea and Double Cove to West Bay and Onahau were disappearing into the encroaching scrub. It is unlikely that the West Bay farm then carried many more than 1000 sheep, a measure used then by lending agencies as a criterion of economic viability

²⁷ *Marlborough Express*, 14 July 1913 *et seq*

²⁸ *Marlborough Express*, 20 April 1918

²⁹ *Marlborough Express*, 7 August 1920 *et seq*

³⁰ *Auckland Weekly News* 9 November 1938, <https://digitalnz.org/records/38522309/a-view-from-te-mahia-hill-across-lochmara-bay-and-queen-charlotte-sound>

³¹ I J S Bowie, *Land Utilisation in the Marlborough Sounds*. Unpublished M A thesis, University of Canterbury, 1963, Figure 10

³² Betty Toynbee, *Picton: its site, form and function*. Unpublished M A thesis. University of New Zealand 1948.



Figure 8. Spanish heath above Lochmara Bay, 1962

Four years after a hot fire heath has become the dominant vegetation. See Figure 12

At this stage, bracken was still the dominant weed on the slopes of Tawas and on the shady slopes above Karamu, and tauhinu was common on the sunnier Kenepuru slopes. These were more-or-less under control through manual removal of tauhinu and controlled burning of bracken. However, a controlled burn on the eastern slopes of Tawas in the mid-1950s and aerial topdressing and over-sowing on the Kenepuru slopes did little to lift carrying capacity.

Clean pastures were maintained on the flatter lands of West Bay and at Mistletoe and these were the sites of two attempts to experiment with intensive agriculture – growing flowers at Mistletoe in the 1940s³³ and a crop of potatoes in West Bay in the 1950s [Figure 9]. These experiments failed for a number of unrelated reasons but they demonstrated that the sour and shaded soils even of more level land in these areas had little agricultural potential.

By 1960, the process of reversion had progressed to the point where maintaining a viable farm in and around Lochmara had become impossible. The 1960 the Portage farm was separated from the guesthouse property and, then, the flatter lands along both the coastline of Kenepuru Sound and at the head of West Bay were subdivided for holiday housing.

Under a Crown policy of buying back degraded farmland, in 1961 the Marchants negotiated for the Crown to resume the higher land on the Lochmara Peninsula (which became the nucleus of what was to become the Lochmara Bay Scenic Reserve) and the higher land between Karamu and Torea and around Double Cove (which was to form the nucleus of what became The Rocks Scenic Reserve).

The Marchants then moved from West Bay across the hill to Kenepuru Sound and the long-established stock route between West Bay and Kenepuru Sound was abandoned. Occasional grazing

³³ S Frew, 'Horticultural crops in the Marlborough Sounds district', *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*, Volume 83, 1951, pp 381-4

of sheep from a farm in Onahau Bay continued for a while but soon the lower slopes of what had been the West Bay farm were also reverting to bracken and woody weeds.



Figure 9. West Bay in 1962

A field of thistles marks an attempted potato crop a few years earlier. The land had been subdivided for holiday houses but at this stage there was only the Marchant's homestead from the 1940s.

By 1973 all of the higher land on the Queen Charlotte Sound side of the area around Lochmara had been resumed by the Crown as a contiguous scenic reserve, with a further reserve (Aorangi) on the Kenepuru slopes of Tawas being created about 1973³⁴. These reserves were absorbed into the Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park which was formed in 1973 to administer scenic and other Crown reserves in the Sounds, many of which above Queen Charlotte Sound were also resumed during the 1960s. For political reasons the Park Board was 'dispensed with' in 1987³⁵.

One of the great achievements of the Maritime Park Board was the creation of the Queen Charlotte Track, formed about 1982 along the summit above Lochmara. This track which became part of the Queen Charlotte Walkway in 1991³⁶ initially had no more relevance to Lochmara than had the Kenepuru Road which had been completed between Te Mahia and Portage in 1964³⁷ along the overgrown route of late nineteenth century bridle paths³⁸ [Figure 10].

³⁴ Department of Lands & Survey, 'Map of Marlborough Sounds 1:100,000'. NZMS 236, 1982. The Department has published many topographic maps of the Sounds, which show the emergence of a system of scenic reserves. A number of earlier editions, from 1953, 1963, 1969, 1973 and 1977 are accessible online at <http://natlib.govt.nz/items?i%5Bsubject%5D=Marlborough+Sounds+%28N.Z.%29+---+Maps&page=6>. Lochmara reserves are described in L W McCaskill, *Scenic Reserves of Marlborough*. Land & Survey Department, Blenheim, 1981.

³⁵ This wording was reported at <http://www.vdig.net/hansard/archive.jsp?y=1987&m=11&d=19&o=57&p=63>; the disestablishment was a perhaps unintended consequence of the reorganisation of local government at that time. See also <http://www.guardiansofthesounds.co.nz/2008/sounds-management/integrated-management/>

³⁶ <http://www.qctrack.co.nz/the-track-surrounds/track-history/>

³⁷ Ken Berry, *Scrutiny on the County*, Marlborough County Council, Blenheim, 1986, p 158

³⁸ Neil K Phillips, *Bridle Paths in the Marlborough Sounds: their history, use and interpretation*. Unpublished Dip PRT dissertation, University of Canterbury, 1981; the Kenepuru bridle track is referred to in the *New Zealand Official Yearbook, 1901*, p 520

However, in 1997 an access track between the Walkway and the newly constructed second Lochmara Lodge was formed³⁹ to give a more permanent link between Lochmara and Kenepuru after the stock route from West Bay to Kenepuru Sound was abandoned than the occasional tracks bulldozed, by the Marlborough Electric Power Board (1968) when it brought to an end an age of kerosene lamps, and by New Zealand Telecom in the course of replacing party lines with connections to the Picton automatic telephone exchange (early 1970s).



Figure 10. The Kenepuru Road west of Puketea Bay, 1976

This road opened up remote parts of the Sounds and enabled subdivision for holiday housing in Kenepuru Sound, over the hill from Lochmara Bay, after 1964 [embedded image].

Holiday housing

At the same time as the farms were being subdivided around the time of the first world war, land along the coastline of Lochmara and its neighbourhood began to be subdivided into lots which, from their small size (seldom more than a few hectares), appear intended for residential purposes. It seems reasonable to suppose that the subdivisions were intended to help farmers supplement income or perhaps realise capital.

By 1917 'townships' had been surveyed on the eastern sides of both Lochmara and Onahau Bays⁴⁰ and, while most of the lots in these townships never came to fruition⁴¹ and disappeared in subsequent subdivisions, a few lots created after World War I were taken up by well-known Marlborough families – including the Vavasour, Perano, Marfell and Dillon families and Dr and Mrs Julian (Thaddeus 1887-1973 and Helena 1892-1992) – who built houses or shacks on them.

After World War II more subdivided lots, some smaller than a hectare, came to be created and taken up for holiday housing by families which now included people from further afield as railway

³⁹ <http://www.lochmara.co.nz/uploads/pdf/Wedding%20Pack%202015-16.pdf>

⁴⁰ Department of Lands & Survey, *Linkwater Survey District cadastral map*, 1906 revised 1917. Go to http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE3655902&dps_custom_att_1=ilsdb

⁴¹ Several lots in the Township of Lochmara were resumed by the Crown according to the Department of Lands & Survey scenery preservation report for the year ended 31st March 1931.

connections to Picton from Christchurch were completed (1945⁴²), roads improved and the passenger services between Wellington and Picton became more frequent and more reliable.

Often in the 1950s holiday housing was little more than cabins on patches of flat land excavated out of the hills, some of which survive to this day, but as engineering techniques developed and as it became easier to get building materials into the bays by punt and sometimes even by helicopter some holiday houses became more substantial, more comfortable and sometimes more spectacular in their settings. Others were more modest, such as on the multi-lot subdivision of 1961 in West Bay [Figure 11].



Figure 11. West Bay in 2002.

Holiday housing developed, albeit slowly, on this multi-lot subdivision (see Figure 9)

Holiday housing also started to grow in numbers. In Lochmara Bay, where there were twenty houses in 1950, Google Earth shows there now to be five times that number. Mostly this housing was for holiday use but there has been a trend toward retirees making their holiday houses their permanent homes. Thus the population of Lochmara and its neighbourhood, both permanent and seasonal, has grown markedly since the 1950s.

Although most holiday housing was built for owner-occupation, the first Lochmara Lodge (in Double Cove) was an exception, starting as a camping ground and from about 1946 having former air force huts to rent⁴³. Over time, other cabins and baches became available as rentals. A case in point was J E F Vogel's holiday cabins at Mistletoe which, under the management of the Department of Conservation and now of a private Trust, evolved into cottage and camping ground accommodation used by 10,000 people each year⁴⁴.

The second Lochmara Lodge, in Lochmara Bay with a restaurant in a house owned earlier by the Vavasour family, more up-market commercial accommodation and (initially) a back-packers' hostel, was a remarkable innovation in 1997 and it has been followed by several other purpose-built lodges. The second Lochmara Lodge is of particular interest because it targets tourists walking the Queen

⁴² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coastal_Pacific

⁴³ Sounds Maintenance, soundsmaintenance@xtra.co.nz, personal communication 2015

⁴⁴ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/nz-life-leisure/67888190/Teaching-nature-s-lessons-at-Mistletoe-Bay>

Charlotte Walkway, now more than 30,000 annually⁴⁵, and day-trippers who visit the Lodge (sometimes off cruise ships) for its interpretation of the local environment.

Portage and Te Mahia, longer-established as tourist resorts, also have moved up-market from 'local' pub and guesthouses to tourist hotel in the case of the former and from C M Bay's guest house of 1921 (in what was then spelt officially as Te Mehia Bay)⁴⁶ to self-catering motel units in the latter case.

As holiday housing developed changes came to the regular launch services that had served Lochmara and its neighbourhood since the early twentieth century, from weekly steamers (albeit supplemented by private trips to Picton, such as by the Julians commuting to school and work) to launches several times weekly and, later, often-twice daily in summer, carrying tourists as well as delivering stores. By the early 1950s large fleets of launches were being operated by the Queen Charlotte Transport Company Ltd and (with water taxis, perhaps an idea before its time) Picton Ferries Ltd⁴⁷.

In 1953 Queen Charlotte Launches Ltd was formed for 'Miss Picton', 'Miss Onahau' and 'Miss Portage' to serve mainly the bays between Onahau and Torea until around 1977⁴⁸ but, as fizz boats became more common in the 1970s (enabling holiday-house owners to shop in Picton), its services were replaced by those of larger launches more devoted to carrying tourists on scheduled trips and water taxis for more occasional trips between the bays and Picton.

About 1950, these launch services were supplemented by those of literally a 'store boat', the 'Pat' which traded as a retail shop. This service lasted for one summer only but it was followed by later efforts to operate small shops in connection with accommodation at Oxford Lodge (about 1963) in West Bay and (later) at the second Lochmara Lodge, neither of which lasted long. Perhaps, like the earlier water taxis, these were ideas before their times. Today, though, Lochmara Lodge has a café and offers water taxi services.

Holiday accommodation and other recreation activities have not come to Lochmara and its neighbourhood without problems. Until 1965, when the locality (which had been part of the former Sounds County) was incorporated into Marlborough County (now Marlborough District), much of what went on was either unregulated or regulated in an ad hoc manner.

Until 1965 there was no building control, except of the proliferating jetties and boatsheds on the 'Queen's chain' and moorings (controlled by the Marlborough Harbour Board). Even fire control was ad hoc, by rural fire brigades made up of farmers and fishermen who came from afar by boat to work long hoses and bucket brigades, remarkably efficiently in the wildfire events of 1957 in Lochmara Bay [Figure 12] and of 1965 from Mistletoe to above Lochmara Bay.

The 1965 transfer to Marlborough County brought a degree of order felt by some as restrictive but it also led to an improved quality of things such as building development regulation, fire control and biosecurity in the face of increasing populations. The management of water and waste water illustrates the point.

Traditionally effluent went to 'long drops' or septic tanks with outfalls into the bays, with attendant risks as populations grew. Marlborough Council now monitors bay water quality and encourages

⁴⁵ Peter Sutton, *Queen Charlotte Track User Research 2004-2005*. Department of Conservation 2006. <http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/about-doc/role/qc-track-user-research.pdf>

⁴⁶ *The Press* 16 March 1935

⁴⁷ Henry D Kelley, *As High as the Hills*, Cape Catley, Whatamongo, 1976, pp 168-9.

⁴⁸ The company was restructured in 1977. <http://nzcompany.org/co.php?id=119913>

innovation in effluent treatment⁴⁹. Similarly, where water supplies often came from primitive dams on streams at risk of contamination, innovative alternatives such as the communally owned water supplies from artesian sources on the western side of Lochmara Bay are being developed.

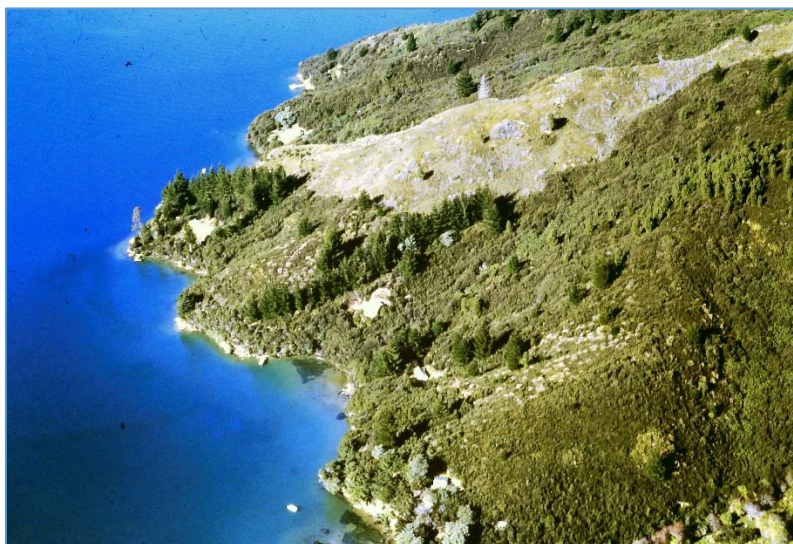


Figure 12. Traces of a wildfire above Lochmara Bay, 1962

The fire occurred in 1957 when burning rubbish near one of these holiday houses went out of control

In dealing with another issue linked to holiday housing, the spread of radiata pines, regulation may have been less successful. Like the invasive woody weeds that have successfully colonised pasture land, radiata pines are prolific seeders that flourish on low-nutrient soils. If their spread is left unchecked they have a potential to transform secondary-growth landscapes that is as great as the potential of woody weeds to transform pastoral landscapes in the past [Figure 13].

The spread of wilding pines across the Sounds is often a problem near commercial plantations. In Lochmara Bay though it is largely a spread from pines planted in the 1940s as windbreaks on the western side of the bay, but including a small plantation on a point immediately south of what is now the second Lochmara Lodge

During the 1990s the small plantation was logged and floated away to be chipped but radiata pines became the dominant vegetation elsewhere in this area, arresting the earlier processes of secondary succession. For lack of access, clear-felling is not an option for curbing the spread of pines in the Lochmara Bay Scenic Reserve. Pulling of seedlings and poisoning of adult pines is now being widely practised with some success by landholders and by the Marlborough Sounds Restoration Trust⁵⁰ but there's a long road ahead.

⁴⁹ <http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Services/Solid-and-Liquid-Waste/~media/Files/MDC/Home/Services/Solid%20and%20Liquid%20Waste/Sounds%20Sewage%20Report%202010.ashx>; and <http://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/news/8166396/Lodge-enters-sewerage-system-in-Enviro-Awards> 12 January 2013

⁵⁰ <http://soundsrestoration.org.nz/where-are-we-working/>; and www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/news/picton/3961662/Wilding-pine-control-in-the-Sounds-gets-a-boost, 27 October 2007



Figure 13. *Radiata* pines above the second Lochmara Lodge, 2002

Pines had spread from a small plantation that was to the left of the photo. The restaurant building at the right of the photo contains fabric dating from around the time of World War I

The future

As in most of the Sounds, the landscape of Lochmara Bay and its neighbourhood has been in a state of continuous transformation over the last 150 years and perhaps for longer. A century ago it would have been impossible to imagine that landscapes so hard-won from bush could revert rapidly from pastures to secondary growth or that the place could become a haven for holiday-makers. Today, it is hard similarly to imagine the future of this place in a world where Nature seems to be resisting Hominid-centred development.

Much of the Outer Sounds, with generally higher nutrient-status soils on the lower hills and more moderate rainfalls than around Lochmara, is likely to remain as farmland, though it is increasingly accessible to holiday-makers as the Kenepuru and French Pass roads are upgraded. In the Inner Sounds the future appears likely to be one in which reversion of pastures on slopes to secondary growth will continue as it did around Lochmara, and it will be predominantly a holiday destination.

Around Lochmara a secondary succession towards its pre-European podocarp and beech forest seems unlikely for lack of seeding trees in the area and while I can imagine a landscape in which secondary growth towards the kamahi-rewarewa vegetation community that was widespread elsewhere on the lower slopes of the northern side of Queen Charlotte Sounds by the nineteenth century (according to Lands and Survey Department block sheets) there still remains a real prospect of a pine-dominated landscape.

Regardless, Lochmara no doubt will continue to be a haven for outdoor recreation and for people seeking somewhat 'independent' lifestyles, though these could change as getting to and from Lochmara becomes more difficult in an energy-constrained and perhaps financially-constrained world. Could Lochmara become again a wild and remote place, more so than it was when I first holidayed there some seven decades ago when it began to be important for me?

I don't know the future, but I imagine that Lochmara will continue to be a magical place for others and I hope that this short history contributes to their better understanding of that place.