

# **The Body in the Burning Bach**

**The Hidden Stories of the West**

**West Auckland Heritage Conference**

**Sandra Coney**

**11 April 2021**



# ROLL OF HONOUR

EMPLOYEES, STATE SAWMILL,  
PIHA VALLEY,  
WHO TOOK PART IN THE WAR.

← 1914 - 1918 →

## KILLED.

ALLEN, J.  
DENYER, H.  
DOWNER, W. B.  
DUFFY, P.  
LAURIE, P.  
MCBRIDE, A.  
MATHESON, N.  
MITCHELL, D.  
O'DONNELL, W.

O'NEARA, W.  
PAGE, W.  
PARKER, E.  
SEAL, J.  
SMITH, J.  
STITCHBURY, J.  
STOCKMAN, J.  
TONKS, B.  
WARREN, W.

## WOUNDED.

BACKHOLM, F.  
CONDELL, W.  
COWAN, C.  
COWAN, D.  
COWAN, K.  
DOWNER, L.  
ELDER, S.  
GASPARICH, F.

HASTIE, J.  
INGRAM, R. S.  
KEANEY, C.  
PEARSON, W.  
SMITH, A.  
SMITH, P. A.  
STOREY, E.  
WHEELER, J. O.

## AT FRONT AND IN CAMP.

ALLCOCK, H.  
BAILLIE, R.  
BELCHER, H.  
BLACK, E.  
BOWDLER, V.  
BYLES, R.  
CONSTABLE, E.

FARLEY, F. C.  
FARLEY, W. W.  
GIBBONS, R. H.  
JONES, E. L.  
MC LACHLAN, J.  
WHEELER, N.  
REEDE, S.





ROLL OF HONOUR  
EMPLOYEES STATE BATHING  
PINE VALLEY  
WHO TOOK PART IN THE WAR.

1914-1918

KILLED.

ALLEN, J.  
DENVER, H.  
DOWNER, W. D.  
DUFFY, P.  
LAURIE, P.  
MCBRIDE, A.  
MATHESON, N.  
MITCHELL, D.  
O'DONNELL, W.

O'NEARA, W.  
PAGE, W.  
PARKER, E.  
SEAL, J.  
SMITH, J.  
STITCHBURY, J.  
STOCKMAN, J.  
TONKS, B.  
WARREN, W.

WOUNDED.

BACKHOLM, F.  
CONDELL, W.  
COWAN, C.  
COWAN, D.  
COWAN, K.  
DOYNER, L.  
ELDER, S.  
GASPARICH, F.

HASTIE, J.  
INGRAH, R. S.  
KEANEY, G.  
PEARSON, W.  
SMITH, A.  
SMITH, P. A.  
STOREY, E.  
WHEELER, J. O.

AT FRONT AND IN CAMP.

ALLCOCK, H.  
BAILLIE, R.  
BELCHER, H.  
BLACK, E.  
BOWDLER, V.  
GILES, S.  
CONSTABLE, E.

SHINE, J. E.

FARLEY, F. O.  
FARLEY, W. W.  
GIBBONS, R. H.  
JONES, E. L.  
M'LACHLAN, J.  
WHEELER, N.  
REEBE, S.





Piha  
Fire  
Tragedy

DEATH IN FIRE  
AT PIHA







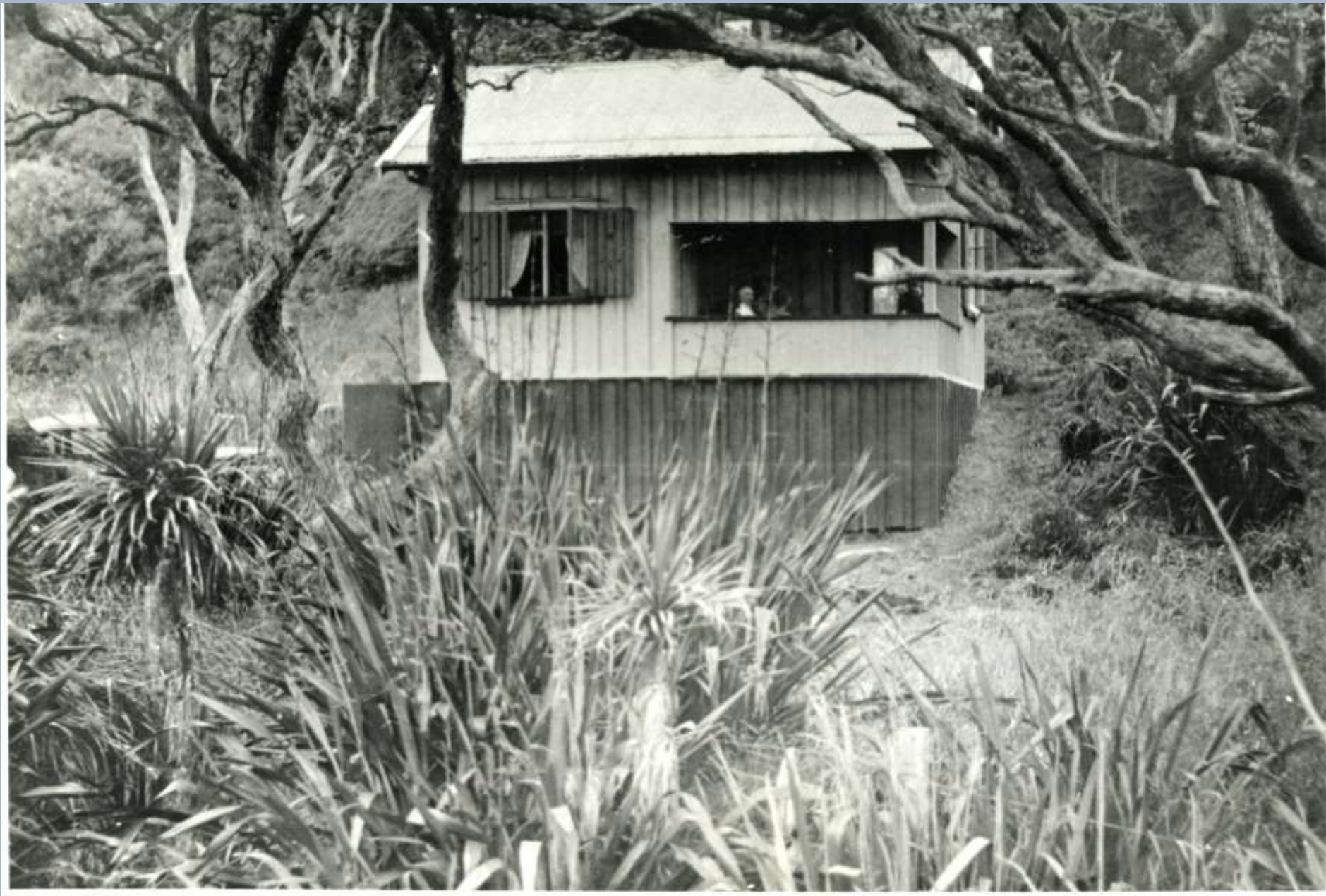














● James Talbot













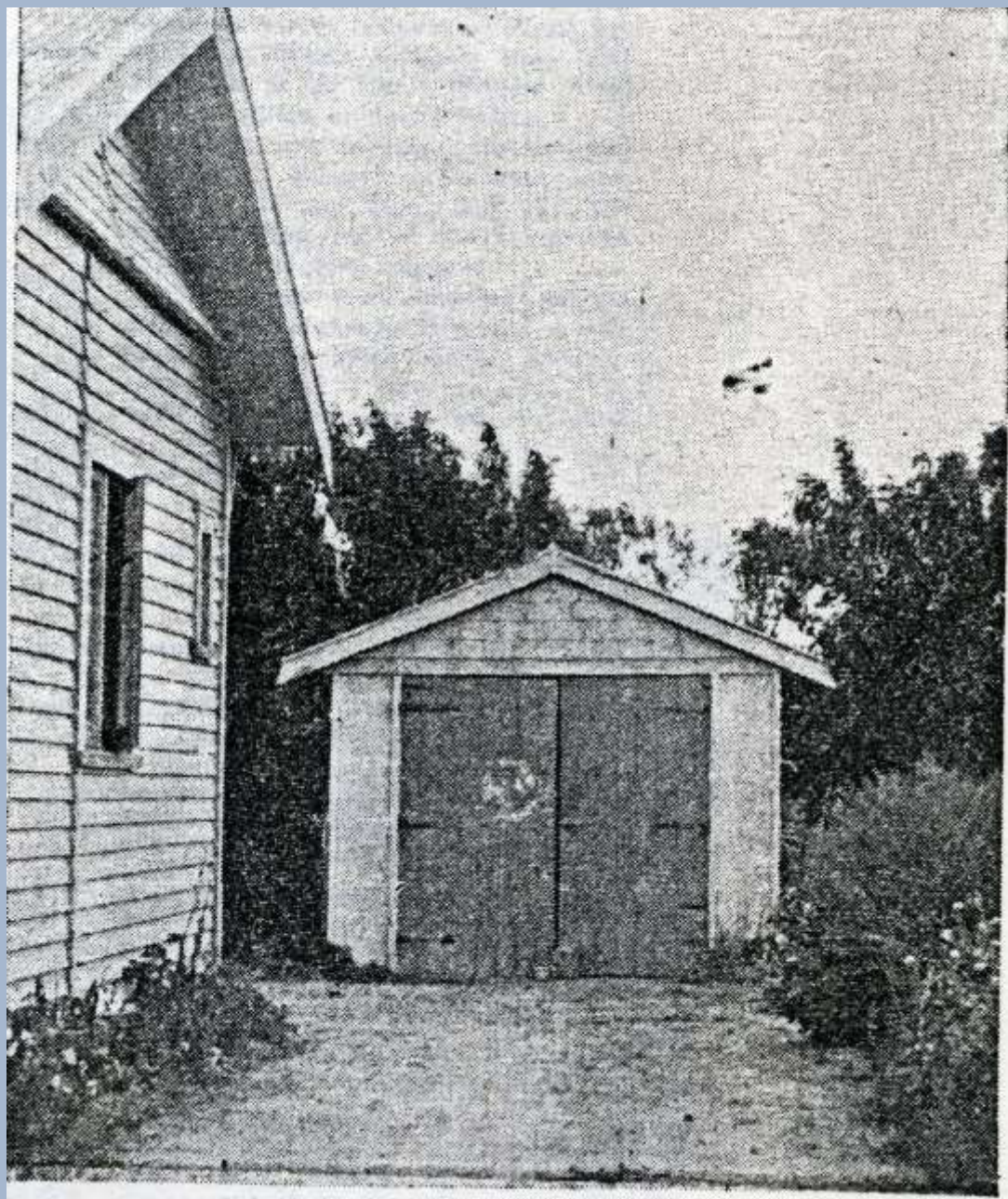


*Piha Fire Victim Was  
Insured For £40,000;  
Police Investigating*









MRS. HEARLING'S GARAGE AT 17 ASH STREET, AVONDALE

# Bones of Fire Victim Exhumed







*Finding Of Empty  
Coffin Follows Piha  
Fire Investigations*



● Mr Shine's son Trevor, approached by McKay on the morning of his father's funeral

The Police Gazette is a **CONFIDENTIAL** publication, and is issued for the information and exclusive use of Members of the Police Force and Prison Officials, and its contents **MUST NOT** be disclosed to other persons.



## NEW ZEALAND POLICE GAZETTE.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

WELLINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 1939.

### SPECIAL NOTICE.



Gordon Robert McKay.

**SEARCHED.**—The above are photographs of Gordon Robert McKay, 42, whose a warrant to apprehend was issued on the 12th instant for that on or about the 2nd ultimo he did unlawfully interfere with a dead human body. His description is as follows: Age forty-three, height 5 ft. 8½ in., nose and chin Greek, nation of Australia, stout build, dark complexion, fair hair, blue eyes, artificial upper teeth and five artificial lower back teeth (no natural teeth, made at Auckland where none), dressed in a blue serge suit, a hat, and black shoes, in case of which he wears an arch support, and he will probably be wearing dark brown-tinted glasses. James Arthur Talbot (who has been arrested and charged with the offence and removed abroad at Auckland from Sydney (Australia) on the 6th ultimo, and on the 10th ultimo they were to stay at a Continental hotel at 511a, Havelock Street, Auckland) on the 12th ultimo the bar was destroyed by fire, and Talbot, who occupied in his right arm, recalled that McKay had been burned to death, and before which James Talbot was found amongst the debris. On the 12th instant the grave of Patrick Henry McKay at the Wakefield Cemetery was opened by the police and the skeleton was found to be empty. It has since transpired that accused was located in Dunedin for £20,000, and it is expected that every effort be made to locate him.



McKay Arrested;  
Sensational Episode  
In Piha Fire Mystery

**‘I’m Not McKay’  
Declares Accused**

---



Piha Case Opens at  
Supreme Court; Great  
Interest Manifested

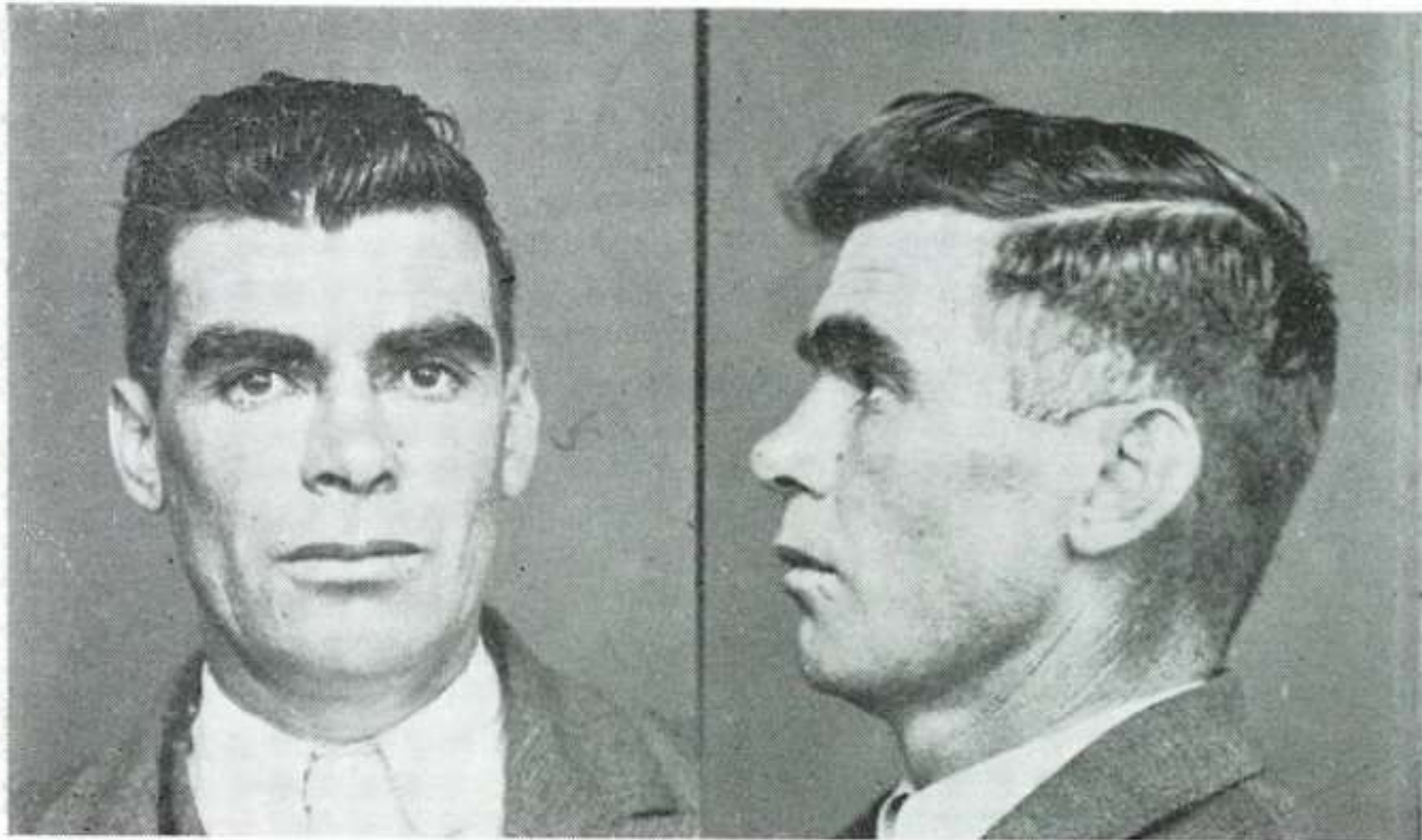






McKay Gaoled for  
Four Years, Talbot for  
Two in Piha Case





TALBOT, JAMES ARTHUR.

P.G. 39/509.

F.P. Class  $\frac{9}{9}$   $\frac{R}{R}$   $\frac{I}{IO}$   $\frac{17}{7}$



McKAY, GORDON ROBERT, *alias* BOWLANDS, TOM.







GEORGINA HAGGEL

(TIRI)

Date of Birth: 1877

Birthplace:



Died: 11 November 1956

Aged: 79 Years

Buried: Hamilton East Cemetery



2839 PTE  
P. H. SHINE  
34<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION  
DIED 8-2-1939.















Fearless Mutton.

# Criminal history Talbot McKay and possums

1933 – possum skins found in  
garage at McKays' house -  
400 pounds fine

1933 – Talbot & another in court  
for having 88 possum skins,  
1933- McKay fined for failure to  
lodge tax return

1933 – McKay & Talbot had  
charge of exporting 1853 possum  
skins dismissed

1935 – McKay & Talbot had new  
charges dismissed

1937 Talbot and McKay's brother  
Leslie fined 1870 pounds for  
having 400 illegal possum skins

























Grave site  
Gordon  
McKay



The End