

change. In 1965, Maori Mass was stopped in Taumarunui by Fr. O'Brien after consultation with Fr. Curtin because many Maoris had started to attend the regular Sunday Mass. All the mills and bush camps gradually closed and whole communities moved away. Mangakino became accessible when a road through the forest replaced a former horse track, and railway settlements were also phased out.

The final big change came when Te Kuiti parish was given to the care of the Mill Hill Missionaries, and was to incorporate the Piopio/Aria parish as part of it to form one new parish. Fr. Aherne moved from Piopio to Te Kuiti early in 1982, making his home there in what had been the convent. He remained there until 1987 when Fr. O'Brien returned to stay until he left for England in 1989. The final chapter of the Mill Hill Missionaries' stay in the King Country was written by Fr. Flannery. He had left Piopio in 1966. Now in Te Kuiti, he remained until he moved to Taumarunui in 2000, and the Marist Fathers took over. Father Flannery left Taumarunui for retirement in England in 2006.

Thus ended the work of the Mill Hill Missionaries in the King Country, or as the Maori people familiarly call it : Te Rohe Potai! No one would surely deny that, one and all, they remained true to the motto of their missionary Society .....  
.....Amare et Servire = To Love and to Serve!!

Bishop F. Gaines Fr. A. Aherne



Author Fr. Sean O'Brien (left)  
and Fellow Diamond Jubilarian  
Fr. C. O'Connor