



Medal celebrating the Temperance Declaration instituted in 1833
Engraved by Thomas Ottley (1813-1890) a medallist of Birmingham¹

1862 Nov 29 – Society is Established – by the detachment of the 14th Regiment stationed in Wellington.² It was founded by three men of the regiment. They called a meeting at which 200 were present, and so forcible were the arguments adduced that 50 joined the Society there and then. Shortly afterwards the number of members rose to 200. After dispersal of soldiers away from Wellington there were only three members amongst those that came to Wanganui. They formed themselves into a committee, held meetings, and were shortly joined by others.³

1863 Jan 22 – The Military Total Abstinence Society – held a temperance fete at Karori in a paddock adjoining the Asylum. Mr Trueman of the Alma Temperance Society was in attendance as a guest.⁴

1863 Feb 6 – Military Total Absinence Society - members held a meeting in the reading room of the lower Mount Cook Barracks. Sergeant F. Hartnett, President in the chair. Rev Mr Moir delivered an address.⁵

1863 Apr 21 – Opinion – In Wellington we have a Total Abstinence Society, which has, in its humble way done an immense deal of good. Commencing its operations in an humble room, where three or four persons met together and pledged themselves to become abstainers, its sphere has gradually extended, until, at the present day its members can be counted by hundreds. By lectures; by soirees, by gatherings and fetes of little children, a powerful influence for good has been exerted, while even yet the Society is but in its infancy. It is by means such as these that the demon of intemperance can be combated, and its evil influence lessened. So long as temperance societies rely on moral suasion as the mainspring of their influence, so long will they have the hearty sympathy and good will of a majority of the community.⁶

1865 Apr – Corporal Gibson becomes Secretary – obtained a first supply of 200 cards which were all distributed and a second 200 started upon. Some of those who had received cards had broken the pledge, the chief cause of which had been the introduction of ration rum; but there were still 212 members of the Society, and of those 160 could be counted on as thoroughly staunch.⁷

¹ Science Museum Group: Medal celebrating the Temperance Declaration, England 1833-1870
<https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co68160/medal-celebrating-the-temperance-declaration-england-1833-1870-medal>

² Wanganui Chronicle 23 Sep 1865 Military Total Abstinence Society

³ Wanganui Chronicle 2 Dec 1865 Military Total Abstinence Society

⁴ Wellington Independent 24 Jan 1863 Military Total Abstinence Society

⁵ Wellington Independent 10 Feb 1863 Military Total Abstinence Society

⁶ Wellington Independent 21 Apr 1863 Law for the Drunkard

⁷ Wanganui Chronicle 2 Dec 1865 Military Total Abstinence Society

1865 Sep 20 – Tea meeting in schoolroom connected with the Roman Catholic Church – the programme presented a good selection of songs and speeches which were given with great precision and ability. The members of the committee were decorated with white silk sashes and rosettes, which, with the banner of the society displayed, agreeably diversified the aspect of the meeting. Addresses were given by Rev M. Pezant and Mr O'Callaghan. The banner is made of white silk with a border of blue fringe, with the centre ornamented by a rich painting in water colors. Several ladies graced the meeting with their presence. The Society is open to all members of the military and naval services, and civilians are admitted as honorary members.⁸

1865 Nov 30 – Tea meeting in Roman Catholic Schoolroom – to celebrate the anniversary of the formation of this society which has now been in existence three years. The walls of the room were tastefully hung with flags, and behind the chairman was the very elegant silk flag of the society. The room was quite filled by soldiers and civilians – principally members of the Society, and there was a considerable sprinkling of the fair sex. Among the visitors present we observed the Rev M. Pezant, Mr and Mrs Jenkins, Mrs Earle, Mrs Sergeant, and Mr O'Callaghan. A profusion of delicacies was served up along with tea, and thereafter the intellectual part of the entertainment began. The chairman, Sergeant Walker, of the 14th regiment, made a few remarks with reference to his own position and that of the Society, for the history of which he referred to the Secretary, Corporal Gibson, of the same regiment. Mr Jenkins, being called on by the chairman, related an anecdote which has already been published, regarding the difficulty which the New Zealand chiefs, whom he took to England, had in refraining from wine which were offered to them by ladies and by bishops. He also adverted to the design on the Society's banner, which had been drawn at the suggestion of himself and two other young men thirty years ago, in Birmingham, when it was used as a design for a medal – the first temperance medal struck, and the sale of which was soon enormous.⁹

1866 May 16 – Half yearly and farewell tea meeting held in new School room, Victoria Avenue – kindly granted for the purpose by the Rev Mr Pezant. The hall was decorated round with paintings and dressed at the upper end with flags. About 100 were present. Corporal Gibson occupied the chair and gave an encouraging account of the Temperance cause in the various corps that had been stationed in Wanganui. He said there was hardly a meeting of the Society, at which one or two new members had not been admitted. The 50th Regiment had left Wanganui with exactly the same number of abstainers as the number of the regiment, now he was informed by a correspondent from Taranaki that these were increased to 203. The speakers at the meeting were the Rev Messrs Stannard, Hall, and Hogg, also Mr Freeth and Mr Cunnabel. Here were these few soldiers of the 14th regiment; they wished to make themselves useful, and they have been so, were it for no more than bringing together a number of people to enjoy themselves socially from time to time, as on this occasion, without calling in the aid of intoxicating drinks. This was their farewell meeting; we are sorry for it, and regret losing such men – but hearty good wishes go with them in their wanderings.

1866 May 31 – Catholic Soiree – at the new Catholic schoolroom, Victoria Avenue, intended as an inauguration of that building for the purposes to which it is henceforth to be devoted. The band of the 14th regiment were in attendance. T. W. Gudgeon occupied the chair and Rev Father Pezant thanked those who had kindly given them both aid and sympathy in the erection of the school building and the military, both those present and those who had recently left Wanganui, for their uniform kindness and courtesy. Corporal Gibson returned thanks on behalf of the military. Mr O'Callaghan gave an address upon education followed by Mr O'Farrell on the same subject. Mr C. R. S. McDonnell and Mr Gillies also made a few remarks.

⁸ Wanganui Chronicle 23 Sep 1865 Military Total Abstinence Society

⁹ Wanganui Chronicle 2 Dec 1865 Military Total Abstinence Society