

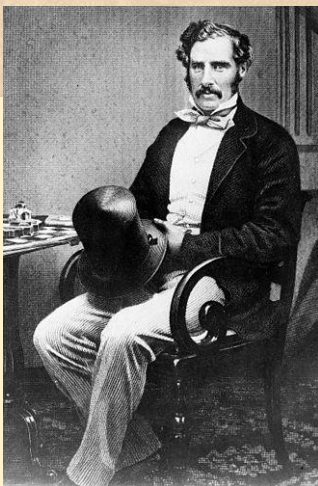
A treasure from the Governor

At the close of the 19th Century a young lass held out her cupped hand to the Governor of the new colony of New Zealand. He offered her treasure.

Jemima Algie in her twenties had settled at a beach on the shores of Kawau Bay with her husband, Alexander. Jemima from the Orkney Islands and Alexander from Barrhead, Glasgow. Life was hard. Land to clear, gardens to cultivate, chickens to tend. Children to rear. The surrounding bush, consisted of endless teatree with dense undergrowth as well as areas of virgin native forest. Everywhere oppressive evergreens, not a familiar deciduous tree to be seen.

The Governor Sir George Grey had purchased the nearby Kawau Island for his home base; building a Mansion by New Zealand standards and extensively establishing all kinds of exotic fauna and flora. Once in residence he decided to make the acquaintance of his neighbours on the mainland. The young Algie couple were honoured by a visit. During this meeting he produced a small leather bag, asking Mrs Algie if she would like a few acorns to plant. She was delighted to receive four. With garden centres almost at our door these days, we cannot conceive the importance of these four gifts; evoking memories of the "Old Country". The colours of Autumn. The gentle rain of falling leaves in the crisp air of home. The rustle of dry leaves up the narrow village streets. The bare trees of winter, with or without the hoarfrost. The delicate green of spring foliage. What a treasure. Sir George knew the right gifts to bring.

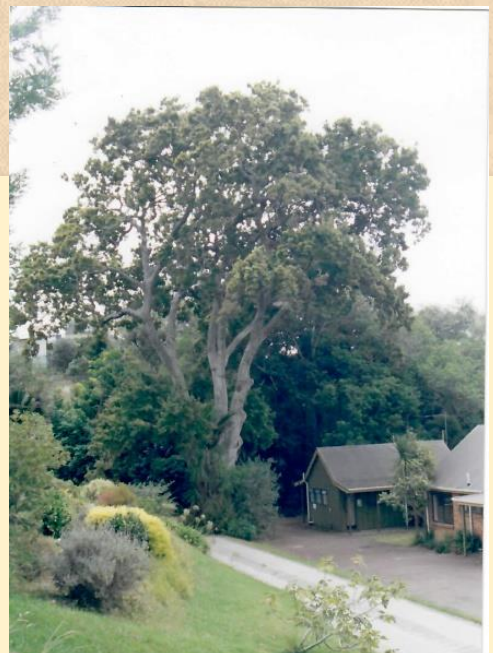
All four acorns sprouted. Alas one got eaten by the cows and one died of natural causes a decade ago. The other two of these trees survive to this day. Giants among oaks, a visiting arbourist measured their girth and knew of only one bigger in New Zealand. They grow at the bay named after those early pioneers, Algies Bay, near Warkworth, in the grounds of Bethshan Motel, the accommodation business establish over one hundred years ago by Jemima and Alexander and still run by their descendants. **Have you ever been to Algies ?**



Governor Grey



Oak Tree Acorns



Original Oak Tree at the [Bethshan motor camp](#)