

What's left to see?? KUAOTUNU'S MINING AREAS



The refurbished 1864 miner's cottage at left is available to rent through Stargazers B&B. Besides enjoying the Stargazer Tours offered on the property, the guests in the photo above are also having a 'gaze' at the old mine tunnels, located just behind the cottage.

A RESTORED MINER'S COTTAGE YOU CAN STAY IN!

As luck would have it, our "Stargazer" columnist Alastair Brickell owns a historic miner's cottage which has been restored and renovated. It is available as a holiday rental on their Stargazers B&B property.

"Built in 1894, the cottage was owned by John Carroll, who taught at the Kuaotunu School of Mines, also located on the property", explains Alastair. (See #129-130 on the historic map, page 19.) "But sadly nothing remains of it today as it was eventually dismantled and shipped to Auckland." It was one of only four Schools of Mines on the Coromandel with the other three at Waihi, Thames and Coromandel serving today as great local museums.

During the renovations in August 2011, a TV crew filmed the cottage as well as the Kuaotunu Hall for a documentary series *Descent From Disaster*. "One of Mr. Carroll's sons, Terence, born in the cottage in 1898, died of Spanish Flu off Sierra Leone en route to fight in WW1 on the troop ship *Tahiti*. See tvnz.co.nz/descent-from-disaster/s1-ep6-video-5527724.

It was through Alastair that we learned there were also shafts nearby with 'ore-roasting ovens' in them. That lead to another article (see previous page), as we learned more.

Find out more at www.stargazersbb.com.

COFFEE'S THE 'ROAST' NOW

Another type of roasting has replaced the previous 'ore roasting' on the old 'Try Fluke' land – Coromandel's award winning **Coffee LaLa**. Owners Mark Tugendhaft (pictured) and Nedilka Radjkovich have been

fresh roasting their popular coffee for customers here since 2002.

Their children used to play in and around the shafts when they were growing up. "The shaft area is now quite overgrown with bush", says Nedilka, "and too dangerous to explore after so much water has weakened the structure over the years."

They found a couple of trolleys and wheels from the old mining days which are now exhibited at Mercury Bay Museum in Whitianga.

While in nearby Kuaotunu, have a cuppa or purchase a bag of their coffee at Luke's Kitchen Cafe or order online at www.coffeelala.com.



MORE TRY FLUKE, BUT NOW AN ART STUDIO

Nearby is the 'Try Fluke Studio'. Artist/ceramicist Lutz Gaebler works, exhibits, teaches and lives with wife Ursela and family on the old mining land. The battery and the Kapai-Vermont ore kilns (see previous page) were actually located on this property.

Immigrating from Germany in 1981, Lutz headed straight to the Coromandel. One of the first people he met was Alastair Brickell of Stargazers, who kindly went out of his way to give him a lift to Rings Beach.

Lutz bought Simpson's book *This is Kuaotunu* shortly after arriving. (He told us that being unfamiliar with the area, he mistook the map in it for a current one and was perplexed when he couldn't find the butcher or the other businesses listed in the village – who would think a bustling town would have all but disappeared?) Discovering that the author was still alive, Lutz met with Alf several times to learn about the area and his historic property.

The studio is open by appointment, and Lutz is happy to direct interested guests to a few existing mine shafts. Email Lutz at tryfluke@xtra.co.nz or see his studio information on the Mercury Bay Art Escape website.

OLD KUAOTUNU TAILOR SHOP NOW IN WHENUAKITE

Also a research 'fluke', while identifying buildings in the old street photos, Rebecca Simpson told us that the tailor's shop was one of the few buildings that has been preserved. It was dismantled and moved to Whitianga where it was home to an old boot shop, a haberdashery, and served as offices for a solicitor and a real estate company.

Popular local artist Airdrie Hamilton had her eye on it for years and finally convinced the owner to sell it about 2 years ago. She then moved it to their farm in Whenuakite where it received a bit of refurbishing and is now her charming cottage studio. Call for an appointment to view her art and her 'historic' studio (see photo on page 51). Ph (07) 866-3705.

Some Kuaotunu mine area property owners will allow visitors to see the abandoned mine shafts, but first, please seek permission before entering onto any private land.

IN COROMANDEL TOWN SEE A HISTORIC GOLD STAMPER BATTERY IN ACTION

To see a fully functioning gold stamper battery, tour the **Coromandel Gold Stamper Battery Centre**, founded in 1900 to stamp ore for dozens of local mines.

The batteries are not just exhibits; they still crush ore, and extract gold. Try your luck panning! (Nominal Admission fee.)

Location: 410 Buffalo Road, Coromandel Town.
Hours: Winters closed Fridays; other hours by appt.
coromandelstamperbattery.weebly.com/index.html