



# The Piano



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## **The Piano**

The Piano mysteriously arrived on the dunes 2.5km south of the village early one morning in late December 2005.

While most of the village were still having their morning sleep-in, a piano laden tractor was navigated down the track via the forest to secretly deposit their soon to be discovered load.

Alas it was only a matter of a few hours later when two young ladies, who were out doing their early morning exercise of riding quad bikes up and down the beach, discovered 'The Piano'.

The village was alerted, and when the rest of the world heard about it in January 2006, Koitiata and Turakina Beach were on the world stage.

It was the new-year-dead-news-period, and the media were waiting poised for anything to disrupt their boredom. This was in the days when the media had reporters who would go out into the sticks and battle the elements to cover especially important stories.

Locals were prevailed upon by media for transport down the beach to the location, and they were prevailed upon to pose playing, or pose pretending, for the cameras. Champagne corks popped. They became stars. Television news, newspaper reports; they were heady piano at the beach days!

Eventually The Piano capitulated to the inevitability of being overcome by the elements of salt, sand, wind, and rain. Just like the Fusilier.



It's 10.30am on Friday morning, 30th December 2005, and The Piano has been discovered!

Only a matter of hours after it was deposited on the dunes, this young lady and her friend made the discovery. The message arrived back in the village, "*Granddad, there's a piano on the beach!*"

Duly guided to the location, while a tune was played the photos were taken to record the event ... and then Koitiata was at last on the world map!







Tunes were played .....

..... and the champagne flowed!





# Piano with a view

By Francesca Lowe.

A piano found dumped in the sand dunes at Turakina Beach looks set to become an icon for the small seaside settlement of Koitiata- with Mayor Bob Buchanan's seal of approval.

Over the Christmas/New Year period the upright piano, made in London in the 1800's, was discovered in dunes hidden from visitors to the beach. How it got there, and who abandoned it is a mystery that still has locals baffled.

Mr Buchanan agrees with Koitiata residents, the piano should remain in its hilltop spot overlooking the Tasman Sea.

"I think it should be a Turakina Beach icon. The Koitiata Community Committee should get together and run with that idea. Taihape's gumboot icon came about through a similar incident several years ago. Whoever it was that left the piano in the tussock had a great sense of humour and that is exactly what's needed these days," he said.

Koitiata residents had no need to leave their houses to see the New Zealand made films, *Whale Rider* and *The Piano*, as parallel performances were played out, almost in their backyards, on the same day. Two young whales were stranded on the beach and got left behind. The pair may have been attacked by sharks.

Koitiata resident Gay Hammond is sure she saw the piano

go past her house on a tractor.

"I remember the people around the corner had sold their house, and I remember thinking that whoever bought the house had bought a piano off them. I have strong suspicions who the people are that put the piano out there.

Mrs Hammond was not prepared to reveal names. She said, "I just thought it was strange when I saw a piano going past. I have seen rubbish and all sorts of other things, but a piano? I thought they must be having a concert at the beach domain, but the cargo kept going, I saw two people on the back of the tractor and I thought, "My God they are small, I hope they've got someone to help them lift it- all I remember is seeing the piano going past on the tractor and I thought, "Now I have seen everything. The people I think it was that took the piano down are people with a sense of humour. I think they are a wonderful family."

Writer and Actor Peter Hawes who lives at Turakina Beach said the origin of the Walter Collinson upright piano is a mystery. Piano maker Walter Collinson started business in London in 1882. A piano of the same make was offered for sale on the internet trading site TradeMe by a Palmerston North resident. The piano has been finally tuned by an expert who offered his services after he saw Mr Hawes playing the piano on the TV news.

There is word that a public concert might happen at the Beach sometime in the future....all will be revealed.



Tuesday was significant for Turakina Beach residents-they not only had a decent shower of rain to fill their water tanks, the first since new Year's Day, a day in the rain was a first for the piano abandoned in the sand dunes. Local resident Veronica Hodges attempts to play a tune on the ageing "Joanna", while Tom Dooney looks on.



## Piano still playing its song

By Francesca Lowe.

A piano found in sand dunes at Turakina Beach is still attracting visitor attention- seven months after it was abandoned.

Koitiata resident, Gay Hammond, was out on the beach two weeks ago gathering driftwood. On Tuesday she said, "You can see by the footprints in the sand, there's still interest in the piano. And there are wine bottles sitting on it. It is quite famous and visitors to the beach ask, "Where is the piano? In the Summer, I am sure there will be a lot of people coming down to the beach to have a look."



Over the Christmas/ New Year holiday period the upright piano, made in London in the 1800's, was discovered in the dunes hidden from visitors to the beach. How it got there, and who abandoned it is still a mystery. Mrs Hammond said she knows the owner's identity, however, she was not prepared to reveal names. She said, "I think they have a great sense of humour, and it came off. The piano is something unusual for a change, and a good reason for our community to be put on the map for something nice."



It was famous and there have been imitators, but without the aura or fame of The Piano.

And of course, all have been swallowed up by The Beach.