

Crime and Police

The first Policeman in Upper Hutt was Constable David Lyster.

1875

New Zealand Times newspaper 28 December 1875

Murderous Attack on four men at the Upper Hutt – Two men not expected to live – Capture of the would be murderer – Yesterday morning the town was thrown into a state of excitement by the arrival of a telegram from the Upper Hutt to the effect had during the previous night a German named Sapphire Maj (or Smat) had attempted to kill four men. The Inspector of Police (Mr Atchinson) at once took steps in the matter and after receiving the telegram from Constable Lyster who is in charge of the Upper Hutt station kept the wires busy in making arrangements for the capture of the perpetrator of the outrage. By the mid-day train the three men were brought into town and taken to the hospital where they were attended by Dr Johnson (the Provincial Hospital surgeon), Dr Doile and Dr Bradford. All the men were found to be in a very precarious condition and such apprehensions were felt that death would ensure that it was considered desirable that depositions should be taken. Colonel Reader (a Justice of the Peace) with Mr Baker (clerk of the Resident Magistrates Court) were in attendance and the statements of two of the men – Harry Young and William Paul were taken but the other man William Leedle was insensible and nothing could be got out of him. Indeed it was with very great difficulty that so much could be obtained from the other poor fellow.

The circumstances attending the occurrence as far as can be gathered so far are as follows: Harry Young a fireman on board the steamer Stormbird some four or five months ago was staying at Peterson's boarding house Willis street in this city and at the same time a German who was best known as Phillipper the gardener" but whose real name is Sapphire Maj or Smat was also staying there till he robbed Young of 8 or 9 and bolted up country. His whereabouts was unknown till some time ago when Young learned that he was employed on the railway line about four miles above the Silverstream and was living in McKirdy's camp about a quarter of a mile from Walden's. Accordingly just before Christmas he obtained leave of absence from three days in order to visit the camp and arrived there on Christmas Day or on Sunday. Smat received him in a very friendly manner TBT

Attempted murder at the Hutt –

27 December 1875 a man injured 3 men and was arrested

SEARCH article in Evening Post newspaper 28 December 1875 page 2

SEARCH article in The Leader (Upper Hutt) 28 June 1872? title "Yesterday in Upper Hutt"

1876

Taranaki Herald newspaper 12 January 1876

A Murderous Assault - A telegram from Wellington states that on 27th December a German at McKirdy's camp Upper Hutt, was accused of theft, upon which he struck his accuser down with an axe, and served three other men in the same manner. He then made for the bush, and has not yet been captured. One only of the four escaped with slight wounds, the other three were brought into the hospital, but two are not expected to live many hours. Sapphire May is the name of the man who committed the murderous assault. One victim (William Paul) has his brains protruding from a fearful gash in the skull. Harry Young has his skull also laid open, and the jugular vein cut. William Leedle has six terrible wounds, the collar bone is cut in two, and a thick part of the thigh cut into the bone. The armed police are out searching with people in the neighbourhood, and the road is guarded. The assault was committed with an American axe, used for felling timber. May went to the tent and called Harry Young first, and as he came out he was struck down, and one by one the others were struck as they came out of the tent. May was also armed with a revolver. When he made off he had the revolver and axe with him. Sapphire May the murderer, was caught in the bush on 3rd January, after running half-a-mile. When discovered he gave in without resistance, and was brought up the following morning, but was at once sent off to the hospital to be identified by the dying men.

May was again brought up on 4th January. Further evidence was adduced, and he was taken to the hospital and confronted with Reid and Paul, who are in a pitiable state. Reid, who has severe ghastly wounds, was sensible, and gave evidence (important) for a few minutes, then relapsed into unconsciousness. Paul is quite insensible. The recovery of either is quite hopeless. Young, the other victim, though not out of danger, is slightly improving. One of the witnesses said I saw the prisoner strike Leedle, then he turned to me. I thought he was going to make a blow at me. He was holding an axe with both hands over his head. I went round the corner of the whare. Prisoner did not follow, but returned to Leedle, who was lying on the ground. I heard several blows. It seemed to me that some of the bones are crushing. Prisoner was further remanded till the 10th January. He had changed much since he was arrested, and seems to be in abject fear or despair.

(Reference Papers past website Taranaki Herald newspaper 12 January 1876 page 6)

09 January 1876 Upper Hutt
Constable Lyster
Frantz Smart Sapphire
Harry Young
William Paul
William Leedle

1877

West Coast Times 02 October 1877

Supreme Court Sittings – Wellington 01 October – Frederick Fillman charged with criminal assault upon a little girl at the Upper Hutt pleaded guilty sentence was deferred. In the evidence taken before the Grand Jury it was stated he has recently come from Christchurch where he had been working in a boot manufactory.

(Reference Papers past website West Coast Times 02 October 1877 page 2)

1906

Taranaki Herald newspaper 25 June 1906

Wellington Assault Case – Meilsch cuts his throat – Wellington 25 June – This afternoon a constable at the Upper Hutt arrested a man supposed to be Max Mielsch who is wanted on a charge of attempted murder of his wife. The man denied that he was Meilsch but after being taken to the police station cut his throat being taken to hospital.

(Reference Papers past website Taranaki Herald newspaper 25 June 1906 page 1)

1932

Auckland Star newspaper 24 August 1932

The death sentence on Horace Fran Livermore aged 20 for the murder of a child Vera Forster of Upper Hutt has been committed to imprisonment for life.

(Reference Papers past website Auckland Star newspaper 24 August 1932 page 8)
