

Empire Hotel

The first buildings to occupy the section in 1886 on the corner of Fenton Street and Broadway were the Farmers Co-Op and stables, later destroyed by fire.

*...a hotel owner
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Fox Terriers in the
back of the hotel.*

The next building was known as Hutchenson's and then Fitzgerald's Empire Hotel. The first owner Mr Ruston gave way to a Mr Barnes from Wanganui, followed by a notice in the local newspaper "*The Empire Hotel has not passed under the scepter of Mr Mehaffy after all, Mr Duncan, Mr Kay late of Tariki Hotel having succeeded Mr Barnes*". Proceedings in the bankruptcy of Mrs Barnes late of Empire Hotel were opened on Friday 10th December 1893, by the DOA.

On 8th July another notice in the local newspaper stated that Mr T Walsh, late of Waitara and formally in the railway service entered into possession of the Empire Hotel.

Next on the 3rd October it was reported Mr R R Hutchinson had taken over the Empire from Mr Tom Walsh. Then on 17th August 1900 Mr Hutchinson disposed of his interests to Mrs McLellan. And on 28th May 1904 the goodwill of the Empire Hotel was sold by auction and was knocked down to Mr Fitzgerald. A very busy stables occupied the rear of the section in Fitzgerald's time.

Later in 1938 a hotel owner named Bill Pellet bred champion Fox Terriers in the back of the hotel.

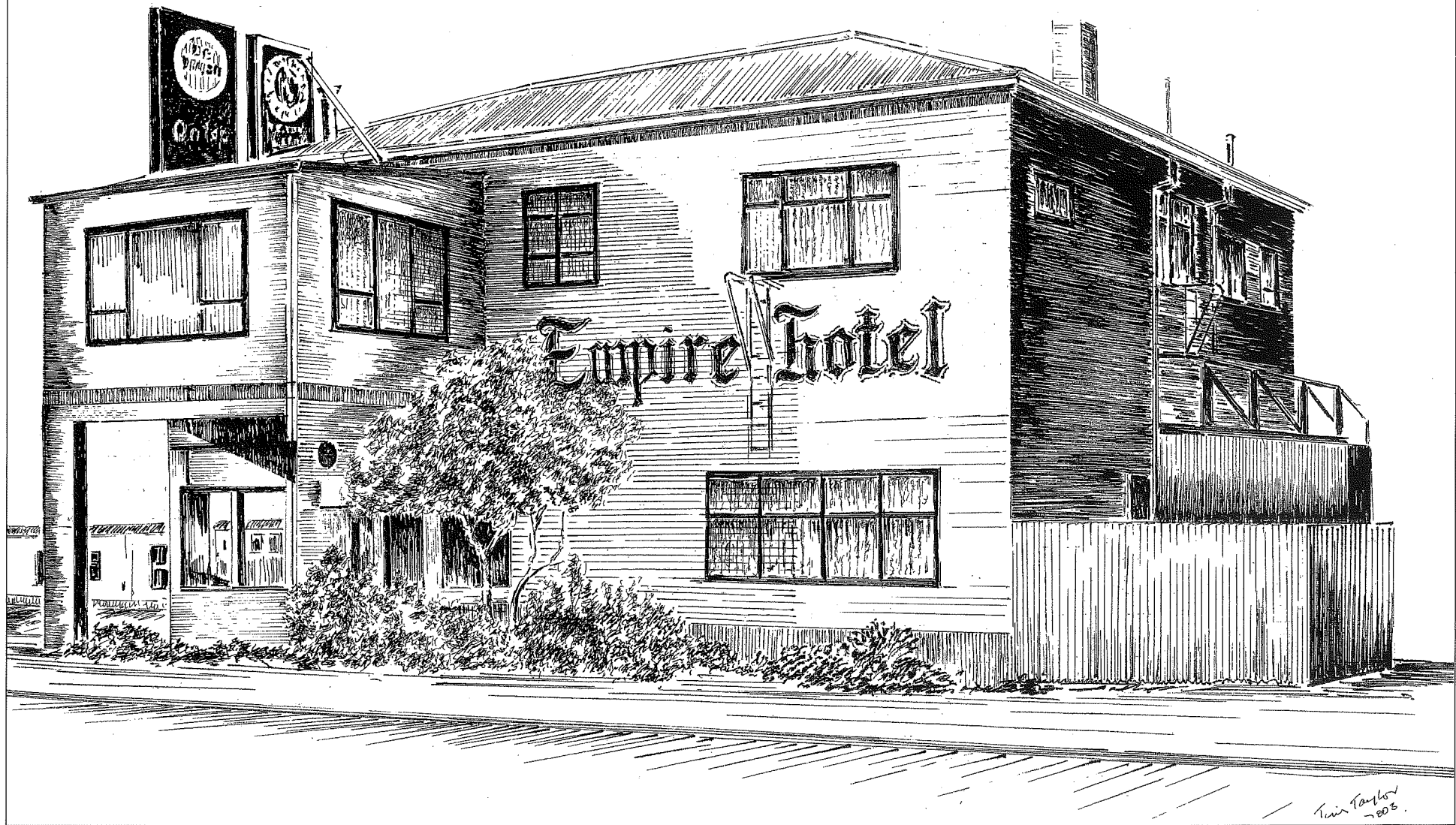
The next owner was Mr Bourke who had the hotel about 3 years, followed by Ron and Noel Simpson. It was run by Ron, as Noel was busy as a trotting administrator in Auckland.

The following proprietor was a Mr Adams before Brian's parents N E (Dick) Childs and his wife Agnes took over.

Another early publican was a brother of great All Black Mark Nicholls and one can easily imagine that business was brisk at the bar of the Empire those days before TV.

About this time the popular Pie Cart known as Tim's Diner was run by Tim Crowley until the railway lease was taken over by the hotel in 1969.

The Empire Hotel has played an important role in Stratford's checkered history and after the usual ups and downs, continues to be a popular meeting place for loyal patrons.



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