**URBAN HUT CLUB AUDIO DESCRIPTION**

**By Perry Piercy**

**WHAREROA HUT**

Beneath our feet, short, green grass.  Either side, longer dry grass with fat seed heads nodding and swishing in the wind. We’re tramping up a gently sloping grassy path. Past a tall stand of bush to our left, we glimpse the hut up ahead, tucked down in the lee of a small hill.  The hills behind it funnel down to a valley, and the hut sits just below a place where you might cross the sloping hump of the bottom of the hill, and walk further up the valley behind.

The hut is clearly visible, with its sharp angles and spash of orange colour, standing out against the ochre of the grass and the patchy green of the bush that clings to the lower slopes of the hills behind.

As we get closer we see that almost the whole outward face of the hut is comprised of big double wooden doors, while the chimney on the right hand side juts upwards, the black corrugated iron separating from the body of the hut two thirds up the wall, and shooting off on a sharp angle skywards.  The hut resembles a strange flying cupboard, or a tardis that has just landed.

The main body of the hut is rectangular, with a roof that slopes back on a 45 degree angle towards the hill behind.  Circling the hut, the left wall is unpainted corrugated iron, oxidized and grey, with a rusted metal triangle above head height that you could hang belongings out of the way on.

The back of the hut, is a much lower wall, finishing at chest height.  It is composed of overlapped, horizontal weather boards, painted matt black.  The matt black roof is made of four flat tin panels, with raised ridges between each panel.  The ridges are perpendicular to the black metal ridgeline at the top, but they are twisted - they flatten at the top and slip under the top ridgeline.  The roof slopes down steeply to an angled metal gutter below.  In rain, water would cascade off to the left.

Finally, the black corrugated ‘baby’ iron chimney is the most flamboyant part of the structure.  The ‘baby’ iron has smaller corrugations than the standard grade.  The chimney is attached to the hut at its bottom half, while the top funnels up and away on an angle.  When we face the chimney squarely, we see that almost the whole face is made of two windows, with bright orange frames.   We can look into the hut, and once inside, we can see out, the view is framed in glowing orange, its two panes one on top of another.

Having circumnavigated the hut, we face the doors again. They are solid wooden double doors, made of vertical rimu tongue and groove planks, the timber dressed and oiled.  They are lovingly patched in places with thin tin patches, which are nailed down neatly on the edges with many small metal nails.  Halfway up the left hand door is a square opening, which hinges upwards on a flat rubber hinge on its top edge. The door opens with a hand crafted, wooden sliding latch, set halfway up in the door on the right.  Swing the doors open and since it is set on a slope, you step up, off a rammed earth step, and into the hut. The hut is just big enough for two people to sit side by side, and unless you are very tall you can stand up, with care, inside.

The floor is solid wood, tongue and groove, oiled to bring out its warm tones and rich grain.  The floorboards run longways down the hut and right into the floor of the chimney.  The wooden uprights and horizontals of the chimney are all bright orange, on the left-hand side it is augmented with smooth silver aluminium plate a third of the way up from the floor – reminiscent of the back of a fire. The uprights and dwangs of the wall the chimney sits in, are painted green, as is the corrugated iron of the wall facing it.  The timber has signs that it has had a life before this incarnation: nail holes and evidence of past fixings can be seen and felt.

The sloping ceiling is also painted a dark green, with a dressed timber board across it, halfway up. parallel to the roofline. On the left-hand wall, before it begins to angle up towards the roof, is a dressed wooden horizontal.  Below this, is another wooden horizontal, and just above that, two fine, stripped manuka branches run the length of the wall, fixed at either end, behind them are tucked two colourful copies of the Arts Festival programme, and the hut’s visitors book, a small green spiral bound A5 book, with a pen attached.  It’s filled with notes and drawings from appreciative visitors.

Sitting inside the hut, on the wooden floor, our backs against the smooth unpainted weatherboards, there are two beautiful views.  One through the open double doors and out across the grassy hill that falls away below us to a stand of bush, with a lovely big matai and surrounding trees.  Beyond this, on the other side of the valley are rolling hills and a mixture of scrub, bush and gum plantation.  In the distance on the hill to the right is a power pylon, the wires dropping down the hill off to the side and out of sight.

Through the window that is the chimney – the orange verticals and horizontals frame: first grass, then a taupata tree, a cabbage tree, then grassy hills that fall away to the seaward plain, and further beyond it, the sea itself, and the southern part of Kāpiti Island.